

# DISABILITY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

## PRESS RELEASE

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University analysis confirms economic benefit of funding the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) waiting list

The University of Utah Bureau of Economic and Business Research analyzed the potential economic benefit of fully funding the DSPD waiting list. The analysis found that providing crucial services to individuals with disabilities and their families not only benefits them but taxpayers and service providers as well.

"The Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce applauds the Disability Community Alliance for its efforts to promote public policies that emphasize the social and economic wisdom of investing in individuals with disabilities and their families," said Chamber president and former Utah State Senate President Lane Beattie.

"According to the University's study, fully funding the DSPD waiting list will generate substantial job and revenue growth in both local and the state economies," stated Andrew Riggle, the Disability Community Alliances' (DCA) Waiting List Project Coordinator.

The University analysis finds that an \$8.4 million contribution from the state, matched by 20.6 million in federal Medicaid funds, will generate

- 661 jobs,
- \$18.6 million in earnings, and
- \$1.85 million in state and local tax revenue.

Put another way, every \$1 million the state commits to the Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver program will support

- 77 jobs,
- generate \$2.2 million in earnings for Utah residents, and
- \$216,000 in tax revenue - \$181,000 for the state and \$35,000 for local governments.

It is estimated that around eighty percent of those on the waiting list can hold a job and live more independently with some support. Likewise, comparatively inexpensive basic supports will enable family members to return to the workforce or contribute to their communities in other meaningful ways. However, because of a legislative mandate to serve the most "critical" first, many of these individuals and their families have been waiting for support for over a decade.

The demand for home and community-based services far outstrips current available resources. Consequently, Utah maintains a waiting list of over 1,900 individuals with

disabilities who are in need of support in order to remain with their families and/or in their communities. These are individuals who, without support, would immediately be entitled to nursing home care.

"The DCA believes this is the year the waiting list can and must be fully funded; after all, there is a \$1 billion surplus. However, to make the most of this investment, the Alliance also believes the DSPD needs to develop a concrete and realistic plan to address the needs of those on the waiting list in an appropriate, cost effective, and sustainable manner," said Riggle.

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