

THE PROBABLE EXTENSION OF THE FEDERAL DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES PROGRAM

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PROBABILITY is the likely proportion of successes to a total number of attempts in the long run. Despite recent Federal policy initiatives to the contrary, it now seems highly probable that the Developmental Disabilities Program will be continued for the next several years. This is probable, not certain.

• **Senate Acute/Chronic Disability Proposal.** A number of Federal public policy thinkers have advocated the need for one Federal program to serve all disabled adults (the assumption being that Public Law 94-142 already provides comprehensive services to all disabled children.

These proponents argue that this adult program would be divided administratively into two separate programs—one for the acutely disabled (those easily served by the employment orientation of Vocational Rehabilitation), and the other for the chronically disabled (those more severely disabled, which Vocational Rehabilitation cannot easily serve).

This approach has now found Congressional sponsorship: S.2600, the "Rehabilitation Amendments of 1978." The bill continues the basic Title I Voc Rehab program and authorizes grants to the states, based on annual statewide plans to strengthen and expand services for all severely handicapped individuals.

S.2600, as originally introduced, would have abolished the Developmental Disabilities Act, eliminated any targeting on persons severely disabled early in life, and abolished State DD Councils. The bill is sponsored by Senator Jennings Randolph (WV), chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on the Handicapped.

Because of advocacy in the developmental disabilities field, including UCPA and many of its affiliates,

Senator Randolph has agreed to retain the DD Act. Senator Robert Stafford (VT), ranking minority member on the subcommittee, has insisted that S.2600 must contain a Title IV which would continue the DD program for five years.

Senator Stafford believes that the S.2600 definition of severely handicapped "may be so broad as to include all disabled individuals, without much regard to the severity of the disability."

• **House Limited-Service DD Proposal.** Since its inception in 1970, the DD Act has continually been criticized and misunderstood because of the extremely broad goals contained in the Act, and the difficulty in quantitatively assessing their impact.

The seed-grant/gap-filling/role-modeling mechanisms have permitted the initiation of many individually worthwhile projects, but they have frequently failed to impact significantly upon the overall delivery systems in the states.

Representative Paul Rogers (FL), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Public Health and the Environment, has introduced H.R.12326, the "Developmental Disabilities Act Amendment of 1978." *It is based on recommendations made by the Consortium Concerned With The Developmentally Disabled, a group which includes UCPA's Washington office staff.*

H.R.12326 attempts to continue state planning efforts while recognizing that the ongoing filling of service gaps is an outcome of planning. And it recognizes that the program is most likely to have significant impact if service activities are focused on a limited number of nationally identified priority areas.

The bill targets the filling of state

service gaps specifically on individual client management services, infant development services, alternative community living arrangements services, nonvocational social-development services, and any fifth area chosen by the state.

Not less than \$100,000 or 70 percent of a state's federal allotment must be allocated to the above areas of priority services. In addition, the bill contains a hold-harmless provision to insure that no state receives a lower planning allocation than that awarded for this fiscal year.

• **Administration Proposal.** The Carter Administration has proposed a two-year extension of the DD Program in order to give the administration more time to study the existing program and any alternative proposals.

• **Conclusion.** Recent DHEW reorganization decisions have downgraded the visibility, authority and responsibility of DHEW's Developmental Disabilities Office. This should be a warning to us. Economic considerations impose real restraints on public expenditures at a time when more and more social needs are being articulated and documented.

One easy approach is to consolidate all programs for disabled adults into one, such as S.2600 without DD amendments. Another is to recognize that persons with severe disabilities that occur early in life have unique service needs and attempt to target attention on those needs, such as does H.R. 12326. A third option is incremental—S.2600 with a DD extension.

Public concern for our developmentally disabled citizens will largely depend on our advocacy efforts.