

Arc Minnesota
770 Transfer Road, Suite 26
St. Paul, MN 55114
651-523-0823 or 1-800-582-5256
mail@arcminnesota.com
www.arcminnesota.com

ACTION ALERT
FEBRUARY 7, 2003

Thank you for your response to the 12/13/03 Action Alert. Many Arc members have contacted their legislators or have scheduled appointments. We need to redouble our efforts.

Background Information:

The Governor is getting prepared to announce his proposed budget for the 2004/2005 biennium by February 18, 2003. His proposal will almost certainly include cuts to all current services. All Arc members will need to be prepared to respond to this challenge. The Governor's budget could include substantial reductions in the following programs:

- MR/RC WAIVER
- FAMILY SUPPORT GRANT
- TEFRA (POTENTIAL INCREASE IN PARENTAL FEES)
- SEMI INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES
- CONSUMER SUPPORT GRANT
- DAY TRAINING AND HABILITATION
- ICF/MR GROUP HOMES

Because the Legislature was unable to agree this week on a plan to balance the budget for the remainder of this fiscal year, **Gov. Pawlenty used his authority, called "unallotment," to make cuts in state spending on his own.** Health and human services spending was cut by over \$11 million. The cuts there included some of the proposals included in earlier House/Senate budget balancing bills, such as \$106,000 from a fetal alcohol syndrome grant, \$562,000 from a new autism program, and \$934,000 for improvements to waivers other than the MR/RC waiver. In addition, \$199,000 was cut for rate adjustments for ICFs/MR, \$3.3 million was sliced from the Department of Human Services operating budget, and \$73,000 was taken from the operating budget of the Ombudsman Office for Mental Retardation and Mental Health. K-12 Education received almost \$27 million in cuts. You can get a more detailed breakdown of the Governor's cuts at <http://www.governor.state.mn.us/030207unallot.pdf>. More information about the rebasing, or recalculating, of the MR/RC waiver will be sent by Arc Minnesota the week of February 10th.

Action Steps:

1. **Meet with your Legislator:** Prior to the Day at the Capitol on March 6, 2003 we need to have personal contact with each of our legislators. We have been repeatedly told by legislators that visits from their constituents telling their personal stories is one of the most effective things we can do. Go the Minnesota state Legislature web site at www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/Districtfinder.asp to find out who your legislator is. Please work with your chapter to coordinate your visits.
2. **Come to Day at the Capitol.** We have information on this event on our web site at www.arcminnesota.com, including a registration form for you to fill out and send to Arc Minnesota.

3. **Write a Letter to the Editor:** Arc members need to get the public engaged in talking about the necessity of services for persons with developmental disabilities. Please write a letter to the editor of your local paper, and tell about the importance of the services that you or your family receive. Sample letters are available on our web site at www.arcminnesota.com.
4. **Ask your friends, family members, co-workers and members of groups you participate in to join in our efforts.** This is serious business, and the Governor and Legislators need to hear from the public.
5. **Send Letters/E-mails to the Governor and Legislative Leaders.** In addition to contacting your own representative and senator, we need you to contact Governor Pawlenty and the House and Senate leadership, too. Here's the contact information:

Gov. Tim Pawlenty
130 State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155
Tim.Pawlenty@state.mn.us
651-296-3391

Speaker Steve Sviggum
463 State Office Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155
rep.steve.Sviggum@house.state.mn.us
651-296-2273

Senate Majority Leader John Hottinger
208 State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155
Sen.john.Hottinger@senate.leg.state.mn.us
651-296-6153

If you don't know who your legislator is, you can find that information by: 1) calling House Information at 651-296-2146 or 1-800-657-3550 (or Senate Information at 651-296-0504 or 1-888-234-1112) and giving them your street address, city, and zip; 2) going to the District Finder page of the Minnesota state Legislature web site at www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/Districtfinder.asp.

6. **We Need to Organize our Efforts to be Effective! Please work with your local Arc chapter to do the following:**
 - a) Each chapter needs to designate a Legislative Liaison. The legislative liaison will keep track of visits with legislators made by members of your chapter and ensure that Arc Minnesota receives a report.
 - b) Notify Don Bordsen at don.bordsen@usfamily.net, 651-523-0823 or 1-800-582-5256, ext. 402, or 651-489-9577. Let him know who the Legislative Liaison is for your chapter. Don has volunteered to help coordinate this effort.
 - c) Begin to identify Arc members in each of your chapter's legislative districts.
 - d) Contact those Arc members and help facilitate their contacts with their legislators. Be sure to complete a Legislative Contact Sheet; these will be available soon through your local chapter and on the Arc Minnesota website.
 - e) Notify Don about any past contacts and current contacts you have with legislators.

Go to Arc Minnesota's website (www.arcminnesota.com) for resource materials to use when visiting with legislators or writing letters. Check our web site for updated information on what's going at the Capitol, or call our Public Policy Hotline at 651-523-0879, ext. 300.

Volunteers Needed: Thank you to Don Bordsen for volunteering to help coordinate our efforts to personally contact all legislators. Arc Minnesota needs an additional volunteer or two to help with starting a more sophisticated action alert system provided by The Arc. The volunteer would be responsible for transferring current participants of Arc Minnesota's Action Alert list to the new system and updating lists from Chapters and adding those members. Please contact Steve Larson at arcmn115@yahoo.com or (651) 523-0879, ext. 115 if you would be available to help with this project.