



Please Preserve State Funding for Neurodevelopmental Centers of Washington January 2012

On behalf of the Washington State Tri-alliance associations representing physical therapy (PTWA), occupational therapy (WOTA) and speech-language therapy and audiology (WSLHA), we urge you to PRESERVE STATE FUNDING for the Neurodevelopmental Centers (NDCs) of Washington.

NDCs have endured a 54% reduction in state funding in the past 4 years while still increasing services to children. Rather than total elimination of state funding, we would like to instead propose a 20% reduction in state funding for NDCs. This is greater than the 10% reduction being proposed for similar programs that are being retained in the current budget.

Preserving NDC status through continued state funding would:

- 1) allow these centers to access the Medicaid carve-out and
- 2) address the state's responsibility to ensure maintenance of effort (matching funds) for Part C IDEA, thus preserving up to \$7 million in federal and other funds.

The Neurodevelopmental Centers of Washington are a group of 15 community non-profit and hospital-based agencies and 3 Tertiary Care Centers that provide specialized therapy and related services to young children with neuromuscular or developmental disorders. This past year, the NDCs provided medical and therapy services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech language therapy and audiologic services to over **12,866** young children with special healthcare needs.

We are concerned that the proposal to eliminate the funding for NDC programs may have several negative financial and ethical impacts:

- If the state funding for the NDCs of Washington is eliminated, the Medicaid "carve-out" that they operate under would be affected. Many years ago the NDCs were granted the "carve out" by Medicaid because of the high needs of the children served.
- The State of Washington could lose over \$7 million in federal and private funding (such as United Way) for early intervention services since NDC funding is a part of the state's Part C Maintenance of Effort requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- If eliminated, these NDC program services may place a heavy financial burden and responsibility on public school districts. Currently many school districts rely on NDCs for provision of their Birth to Three Services. They are expected to participate, but not provide all of the funding for Birth to Three Programming. They also are not expected to provide medically-based services. Without NDC participation many children ages birth to three may not receive necessary therapy services.

The Neurodevelopmental Centers of Washington have an excellent service record and history of teamwork with both medical and educational agencies. This has resulted in great core capacity support for children with special needs in communities across the State of Washington.