

## TEMPLATE: Call to Action Notice to Send to Families

Families/Friends,

It's that time in Texas again. I know we seem to say this every other year when our legislators convene at the Capitol to pass new laws or revise old ones and to pass the state's budget, but this year we need calls and visits more than ever.

Last session the rates for our services (HCS & TxHmL) received an increase of only .08% after significant rate cuts the session before and it came with more regulations, only adding costs. This year there are even more significant issues for families, friends and providers unless we let our legislators know what we need them to do. It's early, so it can change, but not without you.

**WHAT'S AT STAKE:** The current proposed budget proposes:

- ◆ **20% cut** in the HCS/TxHmL CFC Rate! (Formerly *Supported Home Living & Community Support*)
- ◆ Further expansion of **managed care** (transition of TxHmL services and supports in to STAR+PLUS)
- ◆ No funds to continue serving number of persons anticipated to be enrolled in an IDD waiver on 8/31/17! (this includes HCS & TxHmL)
- ◆ No funds or less than adequate funds to comply with the federal HCBS rules governing **Day Habilitation** sites (and no plan yet put forward by HHSC on how it intends to comply, meaning the day habilitation services your son or daughter currently receives could see significant cuts!)
- ◆ No funds to expand services to persons on **Interest Lists** or thru "Promoting Independence" (out of institutions) initiative!
- ◆ No funds to increase current levels in **ICF/IID & HCS/TxHmL** Attendant Compensation Rate Enhancement program to help boost direct support staff wages (currently funded at about \$ 8.50/hour)

**ACTION NEEDED:** Write letters, call and visit your state legislators at their Capitol offices – not their district offices. They want and need to hear from you **NOW!** Emails are better than nothing, but direct contact is more effective. Attached is the list of state Senators and Representatives that sit on the budget committees. If any are your legislators, it is critical you call them today. If none of them represent the district in which you live, then contact the state Representative and Senator who do represent you. To find out who represents you in the State Legislature go to: <http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/Home.aspx>

**WHAT TO SAY:** Request your legislators to support funds for the service needs above and, if your loved one receives services through either the former HCS Supported Home Living program or TxHmL Community Supports (both now called **CFC PAS/HAB**) **request that they do not cut these rates.** They need to understand the importance of these services and how the current funds help ensure your loved one has direct care staff you both can rely on. You also need to let them know how managed care is working for you. Most reports from the state agencies indicate it is going well and that there are no significant issues, so they continue to move forward expanding it. We hear otherwise, so be sure your legislator knows what is happening and how managed care affects you and your loved one who depends on these services. **Just tell your story!**

**WHY YOUR HELP IS IMPORTANT:** As you may have heard, there are plans at the federal level to move to block grants which means states will be allowed to use the funds without many of the regulations that, while drive some of the costs of Medicaid services, more importantly, protect the health and safety of the services your loved one receives. What this could mean for IDD services is the funding decisions they make now most likely will predict how Texas legislators will prioritize spending when there are no or minimal federal requirements. In other words, even less spending on the services your loved one receives; less funding for direct care staff and more managed care to dictate what services your loved one will receive in the future. Your calls and visits will help protect funds for these services now and in the future. **You can make a difference!**

Feel free to call me or email me if you have questions. Thank you for all you do.