

Dear Dr. Block,

I am Nancy Wenlock, mother to one of the indirect clients of Denver Options: Sean Wenlock, a 29- year old deaf-blind, DD person who lives at home with his father, Mick Wenlock, and me.

Denver Options has been there for years for Sean and there are no words to express how much his life has been enhanced and made better through the actions of Denver Options. I am writing in support of you and your fabulous staff of Denver Options. You have done a superb job of handling the reins there.

There is something different about Denver Options that other Community Centered Boards can look to as a model. As a parent, I can assure you that we have always been impressed with the quality of services, the helpful attitudes, and the genuine interest in our son's wellbeing that emanates from those we have worked with at Denver Options.

The reason I am writing you today is that the recent announcement of slashed funding from the state, and how that will impact our son, has caused us great consternation and upset. We have contacted the state about these sudden changes and demanded some answers. No doubt Denver Options will be contacted in regard to our emails and communications.

We want you to know that at no time have we pointed a finger at Denver Options. In fact, we have made it plain that the state, in trying to ramrod through huge funding and organizational changes on very short notice, has made life miserable not only for families, caregivers and clients themselves, but also for agencies like Denver Options.

To me, it seems that the state has thrown out everything Denver Options has worked so hard to build up over 10 years: the focus on individual needs of each client and his or her interaction with their environment and community.

Please understand that we have just learned that the funding Sean has had for 8 years is now planned to be slashed by 54% starting in just a few weeks. This is throwing us into total chaos. We have worked for years to establish services that work for our son. Therefore we are taking grassroots action and encouraging other parents and friends to put the State of Colorado under the microscope and to challenge its actions. The fact that the state has not informed those concerned in a timely manner of the overwhelming changes is a fact we intend to publicize.

To this end, we are active on Facebook to bring people together in support of our son and other DD people and also in support of Denver Options. The Facebook group is called "Friends of Sean". We have also just established a website called [seansvoice.org](http://seansvoice.org) in order to promote Sean's cause and the cause of other DD people impacted by the state's roughshod methods at implementing such huge cuts.

Our friends are also contacting various media outlets so you may be contacted by them too.

We also have a blog called [theseanproject.blogspot.com](http://theseanproject.blogspot.com), and we have always had a link there to Denver Options as well as links related to the deaf-blind community. This blog has been in existence for several years and it shows pictures and has stories all about Sean.

It has got to be difficult for you in your position. We understand the constraints you must be under in this matter. But we wanted to explain what we are doing so that when the state does contact you, you know what we are doing and that you have our full support. There is absolutely nothing that Denver Options needs to be defensive about it in all this. You guys are the best!!!

Sincerely,  
Nancy Wenlock  
[ranchlady@intergate.com](mailto:ranchlady@intergate.com)  
720-201-9492

From: Stephen Block <[SBlock@denveroptions.org](mailto:SBlock@denveroptions.org)>  
Date: Wed, 17 Jun 2009 17:54:11 -0600  
Subject: Re: Colorado's slashing of funding for DD population

Dear Nancy,

Thank you for writing to me and sharing your concerns and advocacy activities on behalf of Sean.

The other day I signed a letter that is going to your home that identifies the reduction in services. However, I am certainly not surprised that you have been on top of this issue. I recall meeting you on different occasions and you made an impression as a very caring and committed parent. You also have demonstrated your support and appreciation for Denver Options over the years and such support and recognition does not go unnoticed.

As you have surmised, the staff at Denver Options is suffering the impact of the state's decisions. Our most immediate concern is the gravity of the reductions and the implications for individuals receiving services and their families. Staff are planning a family forum in early July and we hope to have more information to provide you at that time. In the meanwhile, I think it is most important that state officials hear from families. Often times decisions are made without the sensitivity and awareness that there are real people associated with the names in the state's files.

I wish you and your family well and be assured that I and my staff will do everything within our means to problem solve with you and Mick on behalf of Sean. Do not hesitate to contact me, Kathy Athens (Deputy Director), Lance Wheeland (Director of Adult Services), or anyone else on our staff.

Regards,

Stephen

Stephen R. Block, PhD  
Executive Director  
Denver Options, Inc.  
303-636-5787