

**Excerpts from a letter written by the parents of a severely disabled child, whose support funds are about to be drastically cut.**

We are writing to you in order to appeal for help in asking the state of Colorado to re-examine the way it is treating the severely developmentally disabled in this current time of crisis.

Our son Sean is 29 years old. He lives at home with his us. He was born with Congenital Rubella Syndrome and he contracted German measles during the first trimester of pregnancy. This resulted in his being born deaf-blind with developmental disabilities and a seizure disorder.

While it is, indeed, a supreme challenge to deal with the issues surrounding a disability of this kind, it has always been our intention to keep Sean at home for as long as is possible, and up until now we have done exactly that.

For the last ten years Sean has had his funding and support via Denver Options as a part of the Supported Living Services waiver. This funding has enabled us to put in place a long term daily care program involving week day swimming, walking and social interaction. The person who implements this program has been Sean's caregiver day after day for 8 years. Other than us, he is a Sean's best friend.

All of this is about to change dramatically.

Now the State of Colorado, via the Division of Developmental Disabilities, has initiated a major restructuring of the way funds are handled for the disabled. This has resulted in a drop of 54% in the funding for Sean's activities.

This restructuring have been done with NO consultation with us, very little advance notice and has thrown our lives into chaos.

We are in our mid fifties, one of us working full time and the other managing the home, because one of us has to be available all the time to take care of Sean, other than the few hours a day he is receiving his disability program. Sean can be up for long periods during the night requiring either of us to be up with him, which can swiftly lead to exhaustion on our end. We've been doing this for 29 years and can continue doing it, with the support of the state of Colorado.

With the cuts that are planned to go into effect on July 1st, the last many years of progress will vanish, and it is likely our son will be emotionally harmed.

It is not that we expect the recession and the economic crisis to leave us unscathed. We are prepared to make adjustments, but we would like for us and the state to actually work TOGETHER.

Our society should be judged by how it cares for the severely disabled. It is unconscionable to sever the safety net for the most vulnerable. We need help to get the Governor of Colorado to urge the responsible divisions to reconsider how they are dealing with this crisis.

Yours sincerely,

Michael and Nancy Wenlock  
Byers, Colorado