

LOUISIANA CITIZENS FOR ACTION NOW

Advocating for Louisiana Citizens with Developmental Disabilities

~~~~~  
Letter from Governor's Office **July 27, 2009**  
~~~~~

- Did You Receive a Letter from Governor's Office?
- Letter I Sent to the Governor
- My Letter (continued)
- Contacting Governor Jindal
- Any Questions?

If there are any questions about the information in this email contact LaCAN's Coordinator by replying to this email, or calling the toll free number listed below.

Did You Receive a Letter from Governor's Office?

~~~~~

Many have received a letter from the Governor's office that doesn't appear to realize the negative impact budget cuts to the New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) and other community supports will have on recipients. Instead the letter says a "significant amount" of funding was restored to ensure "critical services for the developmentally disabled continued. It points out that \$10 million was "restored" to the New Opportunities Waiver (NOW). However, according to DHH officials and the legislature the NOW was first cut by \$37 million.

Some have said they are still frustrated and asked "what they can do". A couple of suggestions that you may want to consider:

1. Write to the Governor again expressing your concerns about the reduction in the NOW program while increasing funds to institutional services. Below is the letter I wrote to the Governor.
2. If the Governor should come to a public event near you, attend and try to speak with the Governor about your concerns.

## **Letter I Sent to the Governor**

~~~~~

Dear Governor Jindal: I received a letter dated July 20, 2009, from Sean Smith responding to my concerns about the Department of Health and Hospitals' (DHH) budget and my specific concern about your veto and budget cuts to the New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) program. The letter says that \$10 million was restored to the NOW. However, \$37 million was cut from the program. So the \$10 million restored is not a "significant amount" and falls far short of what is needed. It is anticipated that individual's access to quality services in this vital and cost-effective program will be negatively affected. In addition, no funds were

appropriated from the NOW Trust Fund to address the very long and growing waiting list.

The letter also mentions the importance of a "more efficient" system that will "ensure quality" services to "all of our citizens." I couldn't agree more. However, this year's budget does not move our state's developmental disability system in that desirable direction. The increase in funding provided in the budget to very costly, out-dated, and underutilized developmental centers is not an efficient use of the limited resources our state faces. Reducing funds for the cost effective NOW program is also not an efficient use of public funds and may well force some individuals into the most costly, least desirable institutional model.

Inefficiencies in the already cost-effective NOW program are being addressed through reforms such as resource allocation based on a recipient's assessed individual need. However, inefficiencies continue in other programs for individuals with developmental disabilities, including the developmental centers. To achieve the system that your administration desires, inefficiencies must be addressed system wide and include the consolidation and closure of developmental centers.

Thoughtful and bold leadership is desperately needed and long overdue to reform the developmental disability system to be "more efficient" and to "ensure quality for "all" those who must rely upon that system.

Contacting Governor Jindal

~~~~~

- Email: Click on link below. In "Topic" line select "Medicaid" from the drop down menu.
- Fax: 1-225-342-7099
- Mail: P.O. Box 94004, Baton Rouge, LA 70804- 9004

[Email Governor Jindal](#)

**Any Questions?**

~~~~~

If there are any questions about the information in this email contact LaCAN's Coordinator by replying to this email, or calling the toll free number listed below.

Contact Information

~~~~~

Email: [list@lacanadvocates.org](mailto:list@lacanadvocates.org)  
Phone: 1-800-450-8108  
Web: <http://www.lacanadvocates.org>

~~~~~