



**June 1, 2017**  
**For Immediate Release**

## **STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES STATEMENT ON MEDICAID AND FEDERAL HEALTH CARE BENEFITS**

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (Council) is an independent state agency established by federal and state law that advocates, promotes and implements policies and practices that achieve self-determination, independence, productivity and inclusion in all aspects of community life for Californians with developmental disabilities and their families. An important function of the Council is to provide information on program and policy impacts on persons with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD).

Services for California's developmental disability system are significantly funded by federal tax dollars and the Council is opposed to reductions in this funding.

### **Support the Availability of Services**

In order for persons with IDD to achieve self-determination, independence, productivity, and inclusion in community life, it is critically important that they have access to comprehensive, affordable, quality, non-discriminatory coverage and benefits in physical healthcare and behavioral healthcare. The Council opposes policies that would result in fewer health care services to persons with IDD including, for example, any cut in Medicaid spending which results in less access to Long Term Services and Supports. Similarly, the Council opposes policies that result in the federal government no longer sharing in the costs to provide health care services and home and community based services, which is a fundamental federal-state partnership that has existed for over fifty years. In March 2017, the California Department of Health Care Services estimated that limiting the partnership could result in \$6 billion in costs shifted to California in 2020 growing to \$24.3 billion by 2027.

### **Protect Pre-Existing Conditions**

Because the vast majority of persons with IDD also have conditions that can qualify as "pre-existing health conditions," it is especially important to ensure equal and affordable access to coverage for people with pre-existing health conditions. Policies that allow



states to seek waivers that would result in higher premiums charged to people with pre-existing conditions adversely and disproportionately impacts persons with IDD.

### Preserve Current Benefits

Essential health benefits ensure a core set of crucial services. People with IDD need treatment for mental health and substance use disorder services, prescription drugs, rehabilitative and habilitative services and devices, preventative and wellness services and chronic disease management, and pediatric services.

### Oppose High Risk Pools

Allowing states to receive additional funds from an \$8 billion fund for high-risk pools is not sufficient to ensuring people with pre-existing conditions have adequate coverage. High risk pools have been shown by a range of experts to not be effective to addressing the needs of this population.

The Council will continue to work to ensure that every person with IDD has comprehensive, affordable, quality, non-discriminatory coverage and benefits for their healthcare and long-term supports to work and live in the community. We look forward to working with community members and policy makers on ways to consider how to improve healthcare and Medicaid programs. We will continue to support people receiving Medicaid in telling their stories so policy makers know the impact of Medicaid in people's lives.

###