

# Pennsylvania Waiting List Campaign

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Dear Representative :

The Pennsylvania Waiting List Campaign looks to you for help in retaining and securing funds for the most vulnerable people in our commonwealth. The proposed waiting list budget for this year was already decreased by \$6 million dollars, meaning 400 people with mental retardation will be denied community services and supports they need. More so, that \$6 million state dollars would have been matched by federal dollars, therefore the state has lost \$24 million dollars in federal funds. Please help us to find a solution and continue funding to help people.

The waiting list for people needing community mental retardation services and supports is 4,500 in the emergency category alone. Pennsylvania has the third highest number of elderly parent caregivers in the United States. Our caregivers are also aging and there is no relief for them. We have 80 and 90 year old moms and dad's taking care of their 60 and 70 year old son's and daughters. Without families, institutions would be filled to the brim and institutional costs (at \$200K a person) would skyrocket. Strong families are and have been the backbone of our system. We believe in taking care of our own, but need support when our family or body's start breaking down. That's where we turn to the system for help.

There is an absolute assumption made by the general public that the government would never turn its back on vulnerable people who rely on the help and support of others. People are stunned when they discover that there are waiting lists. People shaking their heads in disbelief and telling us that this is the role of government just doesn't do much for a family in crisis. We are in crisis. We need your help.

Respectfully,

Sheila Stasko, Statewide Coordinator