



ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL CENTER AGENCIES

915 L Street, Suite 1050 • Sacramento, California 95814 • 916.446.7961 • Fax: 916.446.6912

March 19, 2002

Dear Friends:

I am writing to you as the mother of a 23-year old son with developmental disabilities, a Golden Gate Regional Center board member and the president of the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA). I am, like you, concerned about California's budget and how cuts to the Department of Developmental Services' (DDS) budget will affect services for my son and others who depend on the regional center system.

As we all know too well, regional centers and the programs they support are already under-funded. In recent years, many programs have been lost due to the lack of raises in wages and cost allowances. In the current budget year, the absence of an increase or any cut in current funding will negatively impact people receiving services. It would be unrealistic, however, to think that DDS will weather the current budget crisis unscathed.

The legislature is just beginning to craft the budget, and the final process will not "heat up" until May. Still, we can take action now that will positively affect our system:

- **Get involved** with your regional center. These locally owned and operated non-profit agencies are structured to help persons with developmental disabilities. Through them, you have a voice and a partner.
- **Keep informed.** Visit your local regional center's Web site and the ARCA Web site (www.arcenet.org). You will learn about programs in your area and issues within the state. The ARCA Web site lists legislation that may affect you or your loved one.
- **Write letters.** Voice your opinions! Legislators listen to their constituents. Let them know the services provided by regional centers are of vital importance to the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities, and cannot be cut further.

Over the past 30 years, California has built a wonderful system for serving its people with developmental disabilities. No other state has a comprehensive law like the Lanterman Act, which mandates that people with developmental disabilities receive services in their community. With continued vigilance, we can insure that this law not only survives the current budget crisis but that the system it was founded upon thrives. I encourage all of you to become involved.

Sincerely,

Laura Repke, President
Association of Regional Center Agencies