



News for Immediate Release

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Advocates Thank Gov. Corbett for Continued Commitment to Reduce Waiting List for Services

Pittsburgh – More than 15 organizations from the Greater Pittsburgh region gathered today to thank Governor Tom Corbett for his 2013-14 budget proposal to reduce the waiting list for Pennsylvanians living with intellectual disabilities.

Corbett's proposal includes an additional \$20 million to provide home and community-based services for approximately 1,200 people.

Intellectual disabilities – such as Down syndrome, autism or Fragile X syndrome – originate at birth, or are diagnosed before the age of 22 and provide significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, affecting many everyday social and practical skills.

"We have an obligation to help Pennsylvanians who, in many cases, don't have the resources to get the care they need and are being cared for by elderly or single parents," Corbett said. "As we prioritize our funding, they must come first."

The event was held at ACHIEVA, a non-profit organization that provides services and supports for people living with disabilities, and was co-hosted by 21 and Able, an initiative under the United Way of Allegheny County.

"Supporting people with disabilities—and family who care for them—enables these citizens to lead more productive lives, which, in turn, benefits all Pennsylvanians," Cynthia Shapira, chair for 21 and Able, said. "I commend Governor Corbett on his 2013-2014 budget proposal, which acknowledges the appropriate role of government in supporting our most vulnerable citizens."

Corbett was joined for the announcement by several families currently on a waiting list to receive services, as well as several individuals recently removed from the waiting list thanks to \$17.8 million in funding from the Governor's budget last year.

"We thank Governor Corbett for his continued commitment to individuals with disabilities," Nancy Murray, president of The Arc of Greater Pittsburgh, said. "We were honored to have him join us to see firsthand the incredible impacts that this funding has had on the citizens of our region."

The 2013-14 proposal will assist Pennsylvanians waiting for services, including adults from the emergency waiting list, those waiting to receive autism services, and special education graduates.

Many of the individuals with intellectual disabilities "age out" of receiving special education services when graduating high school or live at home with an elderly caregiver or single parent that must split time between full-time employment and caregiving duties.

Others are eligible for long-term services through DPW's Adult Autism Waiver program, which currently has a limited capacity and an interest list of more than 800 individuals. The number of Pennsylvania adults affected by autism will increase dramatically in the near future, growing to more than 10,000 by 2015.

"Across this state, I have met children and young adults with intellectual and physical disabilities, and I always leave their company inspired," Corbett said. "They, like everyone else, deserve the best."

Governor Corbett also signed a proclamation during the event proclaiming March as Intellectual Disability Awareness Month in Pennsylvania.

Corbett's 2013-14 budget contains \$28.4 billion in spending, focusing on several key areas: education, welfare, jobs, public safety, agriculture, pensions and transportation. It includes the highest funding level in Pennsylvania history for basic education; a comprehensive, long-term solution to the state's transportation infrastructure needs; continued investments to help Pennsylvanians in need; as well as a pension reform plan to address the \$41 billion in unfunded pension liability and provide both short- and long-term budget relief.

For more information, visit www.pa.gov.

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