

MANHATTAN DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

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LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

New York City Services

March, 2011

NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)

➤ **Legislators must reject cuts to New York City's developmental disabilities services.**

DOHMH is the New York City agency responsible for providing services to city residents with developmental disabilities. Nearly 7,000 people rely on the city's family support programs, such as socialization, weekend respite, summer activities, counseling, information and referral, and remedial education for adults. And about 500 people rely on the city's vocational programs, such as work readiness and transitional employment. For a modest \$14.3 million, DOHMH services make an enormous impact on thousands of lives.

DOHMH fills a gap, serving many people who have developmental disabilities but do not qualify for services provided under the NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). There are no other alternatives for these people.

Any significant cut—by either the state or the city—will obliterate DOHMH's developmental disabilities services. Over the years, the city's financial contribution has eroded and is now miniscule. The state's contribution has shrunk greatly over the last two years, and now, the Executive Budget includes a huge cut to Aid to Localities. While the precise impact of this cut on DOHMH is not yet known, it is clear that any sizable cut would demolish these services, leaving nothing but crumbs for city residents with developmental disabilities. For the sake of a pittance in savings, as many as 7,500 people, including those who do not qualify for OPWDD services, will lose access to vital services.

City Funding for Autism Services

➤ **The City Council must continue its \$1.25 million funding for services for children with autism, which sunsets in 2011.**

This City Council funding provides a range of critical services for children with autism and their families, including crisis intervention, socialization, afterschool, weekend respite, parent and teacher training and support, bilingual services, and outreach activities. Many children with autism spectrum disorders who currently benefit from these services are not eligible for OPWDD services. The city's autism initiative is the only option for these children and their families. Loss of this funding would cut them off entirely from the specialized services they so desperately need. We urge the City Council to at least maintain this important initiative.