



# Policy Recommendations for Presidential Transition

The Lutheran Services in America Disability Network (LSA-DN) supports public policy that preserves and strengthens Medicaid for people with developmental disabilities. In order to ensure that Medicaid policy continues to meet the needs of people with developmental disabilities, LSA-DN supports the following principles:

- (1) People with developmental disabilities depend on Medicaid policy that provides adequate and equitable services based on individual needs;**
- (2) People with developmental disabilities depend on Medicaid policy that mandates flexible services and regulations for integrated community living;**
- (3) All people with developmental disabilities must have access to Medicaid supports as needed and**
- (4) Medicaid policy must be coordinated with other vital supports and services.**

LSA-DN will partner in using the expertise of our social ministry organizations to help make community-based living for people with developmental disabilities a reality in every state. The 2007-2009 Strategic Action Plan for the Disabled and Elderly Health Programs Group, Center for Medicaid and State Operations, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services supports the goals and objectives that LSA-DN believes will lead to the changes needed to ensure that Medicaid continues to work for people with developmental disabilities. Community-based services that are available and accessible is a primary CMS objective that must be met.

LSA-DN believes the following critical issues regarding disability services legislation and regulations must be addressed as a priority by your Administration:

- **Waiting Lists: Access to Home and Community-Based Services and Supports**

Comprehensive health care reform must include a focus on *access* to the long-term services and supports needed by people with developmental disabilities. Many individuals who are eligible to receive community-based services and supports through Medicaid are unable to access those services due to lengthy wait times in their states; thus, increasing their risk of institutionalization and isolation in their communities. As part of health care reform, states must be required to perform comprehensive assessments to accurately determine the number of Medicaid eligible individuals who need services and supports. States must then take that data and work in partnership with CMS to develop effective steps to end the need for waiting lists.

- **Supportive Housing: Ensure Affordable and Accessible Housing in Communities**

Support legislation that increases the number of supportive housing units available for people with developmental disabilities. In fiscal year 2007, the Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities program funded only 1,008 units. It has been estimated that 2.3-2.4 million non-elderly adult disabled households with and without children have the most urgent housing needs. By mandating adequate and accessible housing, individuals with developmental disabilities will have opportunities to live in and be active members of their communities.

- **Ineffectual Regulations: Promote the Efficient and Effective Delivery of Quality Services and Supports**

Medicaid regulations must not inhibit the ability of providers to provide the services and supports needed by people with developmental disabilities. Regulations which are efficient, effective and hold all accountable will enhance the delivery of quality services and supports. Regulations must include a focus on allowing people with developmental disabilities to live in their communities and enjoy the same rights, privileges and challenges as other individuals.