

VBPB Partners in Policymaking

Mock Committee Hearing

on

Medicaid Waiver Programs

April 10, 2010

By James Rapp

Thank you for taking the time to hear our concerns on disability issues. My name is James Rapp. I live in City of Fredericksburg. I work as youth mentor and advocate for people with disabilities at the disAbility Resource Center in Fredericksburg.

Today, I'd like to share my concern about Medicaid Waivers. I would like to thank you for your efforts to restore services that were proposed to be cut. I am pleased to see restorations of home and community based services in the 2010 to 2012 budget. I understand that our economy is not doing well and it is hard to preserve services with limited funds.

I have a Developmental Disabilities Medicaid Waiver and it helps me to live in the community with resources. Using a the Developmental Disability Waiver, I can hire personal assistants to help me with my daily living activities and purchase needed assistive technology, such as my communication device.

According to E-Newsletter on March 15th of this year, some cuts that remain in the 2010 to 2012 state budget include the elimination of 750 Intellectual Disability Waivers and 134 Developmental Disability Waivers and the reduction of funds for Assistive Technology and Environmental Modifications from \$5,000 to \$3,000 per year. The budget does include \$47,000,000 to protect state institutions at Southeastern Virginia Training Center in Chesapeake and Central Virginia Training Center in Lynchburg from eliminations. If these cuts for the waivers remain, it will restrict people with disabilities from living in the community. They would have no choice but to go to an institution because financial resources are being allotted to the institutions and not to services in the community.

Last October, I interviewed two individuals who came out from the institution. They explained to me how their lives were miserable in the institution. While they lived in the facility, their health were doing no good, because they ate same old food almost every day, they were stuck in their own room all day long, they had limited assistance from nurses, and they had very

limited visitors. As you see can see, community based services and Medicaid Waivers are very important for people with disabilities.

Also, assistive technology is the major part in the lives of people with disabilities. I have a communication device to help me to talk to people in my community. Without having a communication device, people would have a hard time understanding what I'm trying to say to them. Assistive technology is very expensive and I could not afford it on my own which is why the waiver funding from the Waivers is important to me.

People with disabilities have the right to live independently in the community. The Medicaid Waivers and the services they provide are needed to help me and others live independently.

Thank you for taking your time to listen to my concerns about the Medicaid Waivers. Hopefully, this presentation will help you to understand why Medicaid Waiver Programs are beneficial to the disability community.