



## 2019 Legislative Priorities

**Maintain / Strengthen Waiver Services (Traditional and Self-Directed):** The Department of Health continues to espouse the need for cost containment. The Arc New Mexico supports the appropriate and efficient use of resources and is against over-use of any services which promotes dependency instead of independence. Both systems of services face challenges and threats. The Arc NM will continue to advocate for strong, well-funded and appropriately monitored waiver services.

- 1. Reduce the Wait List:** The Legislative Finance Committee recommended that “the Department of Health, in consultation with the Legislative Finance Committee and the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee, should create a five-year plan to reduce the waiting list by 25% to 50%.” The Arc NM supports the reduction in five years of at least 50%. The Arc NM would be in support of innovative approaches to assure continue long term funding is in place for movement of individuals into existing waiver services or is in favor of a supports waiver as long the other two waiver continue to have strong support.
- 2. Guardianship legislation:** The Arc NM supports strong judicial oversight and monitoring to assure that individuals adjudicated as incapacitated have rigorous protection. We support either assigning attorneys to represent an individual’s point of view during the adjudication or, as an alternative, strengthening and defining the guardian ad litem role to distinguish it from the court visitor’s role. We support attempts to require and to formalize Supported Decision Making as an alternative to guardianship.
- 3. Violence and Crime against Individuals with Developmental Disabilities including abuse, neglect and exploitation.** Statistics relating to violence against individuals with developmental disabilities are staggering. The impact of trauma among this population cannot be overestimated. Abuse, neglect and exploitation reports are not being investigated in a timely fashion. Additionally reporting and data collecting in New Mexico is confusing and unclear. The Arc New Mexico will support legislation to reduce violence and crime, to bring offenders to justice, to increase trauma and disability services and to streamline reporting and data collection as it relates to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- 4. Direct Care Giver Recruitment, Pay Rate, Benefits, and Professional Development.** The Direct Care staff are the most important component of quality long term community supports. The pay for Direct Support Staff is close to minimum wage. This

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wage undervalues the work of the Direct Support Staff. Additionally, the shortages of direct caregivers are estimated to increase drastically as aging family caregivers are unable to continue to provide care. The Arc NM will support legislation that strengthens and enhances the direct caregiver value.

- 5. Medicaid Buy-In:** Individuals who might otherwise enroll in high-cost insurance programs with limited benefits to “Buy-In” to Medicaid coverage instead. This impacts individuals with disabilities who work and whose income means they do not qualify for Medicaid. It would remove the loss of Medicaid as a barrier to work among individuals with disabilities. It would benefit the low wage health care work force by allowing better coverage and might have additional benefits such as inducing providers to come to or stay in the state. The Arc NM supports a Medicaid Buy-In Program for New Mexico.

Approved by the Board of Directors on 10/20/2018

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