

# NOEWAIT

National Organization to End the Waitlist



Prepared message for:

- **Reggie Bicha** – Executive Director of the Department of Human Services
- **Sue Birch** – Executive Director of the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (Medicaid)
- **Dr. Chris Urbina** – Executive Director of the Department of Public Health and Environment

Presented at Atlantis/ADAPT in Denver, Colorado on April 7, 2011 at an event sponsored by the Colorado Cross-Disabilities Coalition.

Thank you for inviting me to speak today.

I am Dr. Denver Fox, the father of a 43-year-old son with profound developmental disabilities. I am the founder and coordinator of NOEWAIT, the National Organization to End the Waitlists and PAD-CO, Parents of Adults with Disabilities in Colorado. I worked extremely hard with teams of persons in this room and others three years ago to get Colorado Amendment 51 passed, which would have ended the years-long waitlists for services for an estimated 12,500 individuals, mostly adults - with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Colorado.

It's not just Colorado. Across the country there are hundreds of thousands of individuals waiting in almost every state for services such as employment assistance, therapy, day programs, residential services, transportation, and training. These individuals are also faced with the inability to move from state-to-state and maintain their presence on the wait list and/or receive continuity of services, as they go to the bottom of the waitlist in the state to which they move, and start all over again.

Individuals with developmental disabilities leave the school systems at age 21, after many years of expensive education, and then step into a world of "nothingness" with the only supports being provided by a parent or parents, who are typically exhausted and perhaps broke from providing 24/7 care for 21 years.

We believe that we have some great ideas for reducing the waitlist and making the system more efficient. For example, there are some options for additional funding that are not being utilized. One is that 6 counties in Colorado have voter-approved county mill levies providing \$38 million dollars in tax revenues. This \$38 million could be matched by the federal government under the Federal Medicaid matching program, providing an additional \$38 million, if we could get the County Commissioners and Community Centered Boards on the same page. The tremendous efforts of several of us in this room in this regard have utterly failed to date, despite both HCPF and DHS providing appropriate procedures to accomplish this task.

We believe that every option for additional funding and greater efficiency needs to be fully explored and utilized, and we have additional thoughts and ideas which we would wish to share with you at an appropriate time to save dollars, increase efficiency and provide for more services to individuals on the waiting lists.

We encourage you to utilize the expertise of those of us "in the trenches" to make a better system for Colorado. We will give gladly of our time.

**NO WAIT, NO BOUNDARIES**  
*Services when we need them, where we need them*