

Letter to the Editor- Johnson County Sun, 2.24.10

No more cuts

The state of Kansas has made severe cutbacks on the order of \$1 billion to services and agencies. Cuts to services are landing heavily on the backs of people with disabilities. At The Whole Person, a non-residential Center for Independent Living serving Kansans with disabilities, we have grave concerns for the ability of Kansans with disabilities to live with dignity and safety in the community, and avoid nursing home placement.

These cuts will reduce employment and valuable services that Kansans need. Staff reductions, Medicaid reimbursement cuts, and reduced funding for home- and community-based care are creating longer and longer waiting lists for 3,600 people with disabilities. Many people can't afford the wait. People are literally dying while waiting for services.

In addition, durable medical equipment suppliers are curtailing services for delivering/servicing complex rehabilitation equipment such as wheelchairs and other services. People are being forced to live without critical equipment that keeps them safe and independent.

The irony in all this is that nursing home care is much more expensive to taxpayers.

If your family encounters tight times, do you stop buying food and medicine for your most vulnerable members? Or do you find a way to increase your income?

Legislators, you have to find the revenue to balance the budget and keep Kansans safe and healthy. We cannot live with more cuts.

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