



October 2007

Dear Editor:

Governor Blagojevich recently made budget cuts of \$10 million to the Department of Human Services Home Services Program. These funds provided services to individuals who need assistance with daily living. The budget cuts will affect persons who are currently in the Home Services Program as well as those who are waiting to move out of nursing homes.

Approximately 30,000 Illinois residents with significant disabilities are able to live at home due to services provided by personal assistants (PAs). Those PAs are paid for by the state for the services they provide.

There are many individuals that will be affected negatively by these cuts to the program. Tony, a consumer at LINC, Inc. (Living Independently Now Center), has a job and lives independently. He currently has three PAs. If money is cut from the Home Services Program, Tony could lose some of his hours in which he needs PA assistance. If that happens, he will be unable to have all of his needs met. Tony used to live in a group home and says he may be forced to go back to one. He says these budget cuts "Will take away my independence when I fought so hard to get out of group homes."

It is not fair to force a person into a living situation that would not be beneficial for that individual and would put a larger strain on taxpayers. The cost to the state for providing PA service to a person with a disability is about half the cost the state would pay for that individual to live in a nursing home.

We must remember that all people have the right to live independently and deserve the best care available.

Samantha Christie
Intern