

Press Release

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2006-2007 BUDGET CONTINUES SERVICES FOR FLORIDIANS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

TALLAHASSEE - Governor Jeb Bush today signed the 2006-2007 state budget, which continues funding for programs serving persons with developmental disabilities. The budget includes nearly \$1.3 billion to serve persons with disabilities. Under the leadership of Governor Jeb Bush, total program funding has increased by 159 percent.

"By signing this budget, Governor Bush continues to strengthen programs serving persons with disabilities," said Agency for Persons with Disabilities Director Shelly Brantley. "Through Governor Bush and the Florida Legislature's exceptional commitment to this historically underserved population, more Floridians than ever before are receiving the medically necessary supports and services they need to fulfill their dreams of living independent, productive lives in community settings."

Governor Bush is a leading advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities was established in 2004 to support Floridians with developmental disabilities in working, learning and community living. During the last eight years, Governor Bush and the Florida Legislature have increased funding for persons with developmental disabilities by nearly \$800 million, or 159 percent. Through the Governor's leadership, the number of persons with disabilities fully served through our Waiver programs has increased by 340 percent since he took office, with more than 40,000 individuals anticipated to be enrolled in a Waiver program by the close of this fiscal year.

Highlights in 2006-2007 budget include:

- **Waiver programs: \$851.5 million total**
Through the Home and Community Based Services, Consumer Directed Care Plus and Family and Supported Living Waivers, the Agency serves persons with developmental disabilities with medically-necessary supports and services. It is anticipated that more than 40,000 individuals will be served through these Waiver programs by the end of this fiscal year.
- **Support Coordination: \$4.85 million increase**
This budget includes a rate increase for support coordinators that serve persons with developmental disabilities. Support coordinators act as liaisons between clients who are served through a waiver program and providers to identify, develop, coordinate and access supports and services on behalf of or assisting an individual or family.
- **Mentally Retarded Defendant Program (MRDP): \$2.7 million increase**
This budget provides funding for an additional 18 beds in the Agency's forensic unit. APD's forensic system is a set of facilities and programs serving individuals with mental retardation and autism who have been charged with felony crimes but were determined by the court to be incompetent to proceed in the legal system due to those disabilities. The MRDP program provides housing and rehabilitative services to individuals determined by the courts to pose a danger to themselves or others while awaiting the resolution of the question of their trial competency.
- **Billy Joe Rish Park: \$3 million**
Billy Joe Rish Park is a 100-acre barrier free recreational park, located at Cape San Blas, near Port St. Joe, Florida. This park serves Florida residents with disabilities and their families, including campsites, cottages and dormitories available for rent. This funding will enable the Agency to upgrade safety features and facilities, resurface nature trails, install a fully accessible 18-hole golf course, and construct additional lodging sites.

For more information about the 2006-2007 budget, visit www.myflorida.com or <http://apd.myflorida.com>