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## **Director Johnson Applauds APD Changes**

*~ Budget emphasizes client services ~*

**TALLAHASSEE, FL** - Governor Charlie Crist recently signed the state budget giving the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) a nearly 15 percent increase over last year's funding in its largest Medicaid waiver. The additional \$116 million covers more than half of the agency's projected waiver deficit for next year. The money will help Floridians with developmental disabilities continue to receive needed assistance. In addition, the budget calls for changes to be made in some services.

**Governor Charlie Crist** said, "This is a good first step in continuing to meet the needs of those with developmental disabilities in our state. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities will keep working with its stakeholders to streamline the most needed services so dollars can be found to serve as many people as possible."

Agency Director **Jane Johnson** said, "Thanks to an increase in funding, the health and safety of the people we serve will be protected. As we move forward, we will work to implement the required changes approved by the Legislature that will help the agency stay within its budget." The Florida Legislature approved the following changes to the waiver this session:

- The definition of in-home support services will be expanded to include some activities previously provided in chore, non-residential support services and homemaker services.
- Massage therapy and IQ testing (psychological assessments) will no longer be covered services.
- Supported living coaching will be limited to 20 hours a month for persons who also receive in-home support services.
- Support coordination to all persons under age 18 who live in the family home will be limited.
- Personal care attendants will be limited to 180 hours a month.
- Residential habilitation services will be limited to eight hours a day. Additional hours may be authorized for persons who have intensive medical, adaptive or behavioral needs.
- Crisis clients will be served from funding made available through attrition.

In addition to these waiver changes, the Legislature also provided \$2 million to address technology needs vital to the agency's ability to ensure the security of clients, \$2 million for additional family supports and \$2.8 million to address local community needs.

The agency currently serves more than 35,000 Floridians with developmental disabilities of mental retardation, autism, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and Prader-Willi syndrome. For more information on the agency, call **1-866-APD-CARES** or visit [www.apd.myflorida.com](http://www.apd.myflorida.com).

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