

*Advocacy, Inc.
The Arc of Texas
Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas
Private Providers Association of Texas
Texans Supporting State Schools
Texas Advocates
Texas Association on Mental Retardation
Texas Center for Disability Studies
Texas Council of Community Mental Health and Mental Retardation Centers, Inc.
Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities*

September 23, 2003

The Honorable Arlene Wohlgemuth
Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768-2910

Dear Representative Wohlgemuth:

Thank you for affording the community of stakeholders interested in mental retardation services the opportunity to offer input into the plans for the consolidation of the Texas health and human services system. On September 18, 2003, representatives of the organizations listed above met in Austin and unanimously adopted the five principles attached to this letter. This group of organizations represents a full range of the family, consumer and provider interests. The mental retardation organizations listed above subscribe to these principles regarding the future of mental retardation services within the evolving health and human services system.


These organizations are in the process of developing corresponding recommendations, consistent with HHSC reorganization goals, to address these principles. Upon completion, we would like to meet with you to discuss these goals in greater detail. These organizations, individually and collectively, plan to meet with other key decision makers for similar purposes.

We thank you for your work and advocacy on behalf of persons with mental retardation and look forward to working with you to ensure that these principles are considered foremost as you move further into the HHSC transition process.

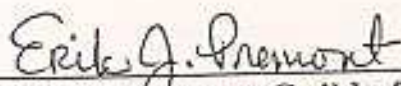
Respectfully,



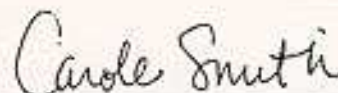
Advocacy, Inc.



The Arc of Texas



Down Syndrome Guild of
Dallas



Private Providers Association of
Texas

Texas Supporting State Schools

Texas Advocates

Texas Center for Disability Studies

Texas Council of Community
MHMR Centers, Inc.

Texas Council for Developmental
Disabilities

Texas Association on Mental Retardation

- CC:
- The Honorable John Davis, Texas House of Representatives
 - Senator Jane Nelson, Texas Senate
 - Mr. Noe Fernandez, Member, HHSC Transition Legislative Oversight Committee
 - Mrs. Chris W. Kyker, Member, HHSC Transition Legislative Oversight Committee
 - The Honorable Kenn S. George, Member, HHSC Transition Legislative Oversight Committee
 - Commissioner Albert Hawkins, Health and Human Services Commission
 - Mr. Greg Phillips, Health and Human Services Commission
 - Governor Rick Perry
 - Lt. Governor David Dewhurst
 - Chairman Teel Bivins, Texas Senate
 - Chairman Talmadge Heflin, Texas House of Representatives
 - Speaker Tom Craddick, Texas House of Representatives
 - Commissioner Karen Hale, Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
 - Commissioner Jim Hine, Texas Department of Human Services

*Advocacy, Inc.
The Arc of Texas
Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas
Private Providers Association of Texas
Texans Supporting State Schools
Texas Advocates
Texas Association on Mental Retardation
Texas Center for Disability Studies
Texas Council of Community Mental Health and Mental Retardation Centers, Inc.
Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities*

PRINCIPLES

- 1. To expand access to and improve the quality of mental retardation services.**
- 2. To design and implement a continuous feedback loop, to include solicitation of consumer and family input, to assess the impact of systemic changes on consumers and families and to correct changes or policies that have a negative impact.**
- 3. To plan and implement specific processes by which consumers, families, advocates and providers can have meaningful and timely input into mental retardation policies and into the design and delivery of services.**
- 4. To assure the maintenance of mental retardation expertise in all facets of HHSC and DADS operations, to include policy development and service delivery.**
- 5. To examine, with input from consumers, families, advocates and providers, how intake, assessment and eligibility determination functions can be effectively implemented at regional and local levels for all populations served through DADS.**