

**Testimony of Peter Mendoza, Chair  
California State Council on Developmental Disabilities  
To California Performance Review Commission  
On Health & Human Services Recommendations  
At University of California - San Diego  
August 20, 2004**

Thank you for inviting me to speak for the Council; and on behalf of Californians with developmental disabilities and their families.

The California State Council on Developmental Disabilities is an independent State agency established and funded by both State and Federal laws. The Governor appoints all 29 Council Members, who include consumers with developmental disabilities, family members, and the directors of key State departments and organizations. The Council's vision is that Californians with developmental disabilities are guaranteed the same full and equal opportunities for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as all Americans. The Council collaboratively advocates, promotes and implements policies and practices that achieve self-determination, independence, productivity and inclusion in all aspects of community life for Californians with developmental disabilities and their families.

- The Council supports the Administration's focus on providing outstanding services to Californians through streamlining State government and maximizing the recovery of federal funds.
- I understand the need for restructuring to also achieve cost savings where appropriate.
- The Council will take official action on the CPR proposals, in September, and submit additional detailed comments and recommendation at that time.
- The Council has long supported simplifying the current California delivery system of services and supports for consumers with developmental disabilities and their families in a manner that expands successful service models, such as self-determination, and truly enables consumers to be the primary decision-makers in their own lives.

- This restructuring has the potential of achieving that simplification and creating a more user-friendly method of delivering services and supports for consumers and their families in a manner that fully includes them in their communities.
- I urge a seamless transition to any new method of service delivery that includes no interruption in “due process” rights.
- I urge adding an “ombudsman-like” entity inside government that is responsible for “customer services” to assist individuals who experience any difficulty navigating the new system; and I suggest that entity also be responsible for recognizing, gathering data on, and reporting any special circumstances that may result from the restructured Health and Human Service Department.
- I also urge establishing a method to correct any “unintended consequences” in as timely a manner as possible.

In closing, I congratulate this Administration for including, for the first time, individuals with developmental disabilities in the discussion at this high level; and I offer the Council’s expertise in assisting the Administration in fulfilling their sincere desire for positive systemic change that will make life better for all Californians.