

Talking Points and Script

Phone or Email Script – for WVU CED staff use

Staff members whose positions are not funded by state contracts or other sources that restrict advocacy efforts may use this information to customize their own emails or phone calls, sharing perspectives from their professional experience in the field.

Subject: Urgent: Protect Funding for Disability Services in WV

Dear (legislator name),

My name is [XXX], and I am [your title] at the West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities (WVU CED). Several documents have been shared that outline the potential elimination of UCEDDs (like the WVU CED) as well as most disability network partners. As a constituent and a professional who works on (quick descriptor of your work at the WVU CED) I am deeply concerned about the immeasurable harm to people with disabilities and their families this would have on within our state and throughout the country.

These initial budget eliminations include the following services and support programs:

- University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs),
- Autism and other disorders (LENDs and Behavior Pediatric training programs),
- Primary Care and Training: Patient Care and Individuals with Disabilities,
- and Developmental Disabilities Protection and Advocacy.

Specific impacts for West Virginia:

- **96 jobs** lost across the state due to UCEDD funding elimination
- **\$11.2 million** in additional leveraged funds lost, directly affecting services for approximately **360,000 disabled West Virginians**
- Diminished access to care, placing more strain on families and communities

West Virginia faces significant disability challenges, with:

- **37% (1 in 3)** adults in the state living with a disability (according to the CDC)
- **21%** of the population aged 65 and older, many of whom are at risk of developing new or increasing care needs
- **19.5%** disability rate for the total population of the state, which leads the country (according to U.S. Census Bureau)

- The WVU CED serves individuals of all ages, including aging adults with disabilities, by providing critical programs that support their needs.

The national Developmental Disability Network is made up of three partners: University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs), State Developmental Disabilities Councils (DD Councils), and State Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&As). These three agencies have led efforts to improve the lives of West Virginians with disabilities for nearly **50 years**.

Last year alone UCEDDs served well over **1.3 million people** nationwide. Eliminating these programs would sever a vital link to the services, research, and training that families, local governments, and community providers rely on to serve individuals with disabilities.

I urge you to consider the profound impact these cuts would have on our state. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

[Your Name]

[Your Title]

West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities (WVU CED)