

Talking Points and Script

Phone or Email Script - personal use

Individuals may use this information to personalize their emails or phone calls—using personal, non-work email accounts—to share perspectives based on their own experiences as citizens of West Virginia.

Subject: Urgent: Protect Funding for Disability Services in WV

Dear [legislator name],

My name is [XXX], and I am a concerned citizen of West Virginia. Several documents have been shared that outline the elimination of UCEDDs (like the WVU CED) and other vital services, training and research that benefits individuals with disabilities in West Virginia. I am deeply concerned about the immeasurable harm to people with disabilities and their families this would have on our state and throughout our 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.

In West Virginia, the impact of these cuts would be severe:

- **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

This is especially concerning given the high rates of disability in our state:

- **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 provides vital programs that support individuals across their lifespan, including aging adults with disabilities. The national Developmental Disability Network, made up of UCEDDs, and Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&As), has been improving the lives of individuals with disabilities for nearly 50 years.

If these programs are eliminated, individuals with disabilities, their families, and community providers will lose access to essential research, services, and training.

I urge you to consider the tremendous impact these cuts would have on West Virginians. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[Your Contact Information]