



**STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION  
DIVISION OF MENTAL RETARDATION SERVICES  
ANDREW JACKSON BUILDING, 15<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR  
500 DEADERICK STREET  
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March 27, 2009

To Members of the Developmental Disabilities Task Force:

I understand that there is much concern among the members of the Task Force, as well as in the wider community, regarding funding of the Family Support program in the Governor's budget proposal for the coming fiscal year and beyond. As both Governor Bredesen and Finance Commissioner Goetz have observed in the introduction to the current budget proposal, recurring state revenues now fall well short of the state's ongoing expenses. This circumstance reflects the difficult economic environment prevailing nationwide.

Federal grants allocated to the state of Tennessee as part of the nation's overall plan for economic recovery will help us to make up for our revenue shortfall in the next two years, but we all need to understand that this funding is non-recurring. Because there is no certainty of a more robust economic environment in the near term, and, hence, no certainty of an improving base of recurring revenue for the state of Tennessee, the state and its agencies must make adjustments soon to achieve a lower recurring operational cost by the end of fiscal year 2009 – 2010.

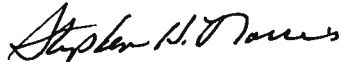
I am very aware of the effectiveness of the Family Support program in its assistance to families for the care of family members with severe disabilities at home, but the state's economic status is not good. In keeping with the reduced economic circumstances for the state of Tennessee as a whole, the Division of Mental Retardation services must implement budget reductions for its programs. Currently, for FY 2009 – 2010, the Family Support budget is \$7,381,500. Of this sum, \$200,000 will come from state revenue, and the balance is restored using funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which, as the Governor has also observed, gives us the coming year, now, to plan for operating in leaner circumstances in later years – instead of having to make sudden, drastic, and highly disruptive changes right away. The bottom line today is that,

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without additional assistance from the federal government and without an improved revenue base for the state of Tennessee in subsequent years, the budget for Family Support for FY 2010 – 2011 will have to be limited to what is now available from state funds.

Sincerely yours,



Stephen H. Norris  
Deputy Commissioner  
Division of Mental Retardation Services

cc: Debbie Payne  
Jan Coatney  
Laura Doutre  
Missy Marshall  
DMRS Regional Office Directors  
DMRS Regional Office Family Support Staff  
Family Support Agencies  
Family Support State Council