



Australian Association of Developmental Disability Medicine Inc.

President: Dr Jacqueline Small
Vice President: Professor Julian Trollor
Secretary: Dr Jane Law
Treasurer: Dr Margaret Graham

Hon Sussan Ley
Minister for Health
Minister.Ley@health.gov.au

Hon Christian Porter
Minister for Social Services
Parliament House
Canberra 2600

Mr Bruce Bonyhady
Chair, National Disability Insurance Agency
enquiries@ndis.gov.au

18 November 2015

Dear Minister,

The Australian Association of Developmental Disability Medicine (AADDM) is an organisation of medical practitioners who specialise or have an interest in improving the health and function of the over 500,000 Australian children, adolescents and adults with intellectual disability (ID). AADDM aims to improve the health of children, adolescents and adults with intellectual and developmental disability through professional development and advocacy. AADDM fully supports the initiative of the Australian Government in improving individualised supports for people with disability through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

AADDM would like to bring to your urgent attention the imminent loss of key health and related services for people with intellectual disability, which until now have been funded or part funded by state disability budgets. We anticipate that these losses will adversely affect the health and wellbeing of people with ID and will result in escalation of costs to NDIS and Health budgets. The roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has naturally resulted in the transfer of state disability budgets to NDIS. However, funding for specialist health and related services which have hitherto come AADDM Letter to Minister 18th Nov, 2015

from disability budgets are now threatened. These services have provided complex diagnostic services, multidisciplinary/ intersectoral intervention, and leadership in research, training and policy development.

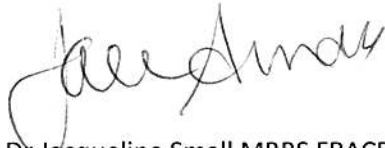
Specialised intellectual disability health services are acknowledged in a number of state and national reports or position statements to be an important component of comprehensive health services for people with ID; these include NSW CID and AADDM Position Statement of the Health of People with Intellectual Disability, the National Health and Hospital Reform Commission in its Final Report 2009 (page 82) and, in more detail, its Interim Report 2008 (page 96), the NSW Ministry for Health *Service framework to improve the health care of people with intellectual disability* 2012, the National Roundtable on the Mental Health of People with Intellectual Disability 2013.

Threatened services include but are not limited to:

1. Disability funded specialist health services for people with ID and complex health problems, eg dysphagia clinics, dieticians, nurses, mental health
2. Partnerships in services across health and disability sectors that deliver innovative models of care for people with highly complex problems, such as school clinics, multidisciplinary assessment clinics, roving clinics to support community health services. For example, Centre for Disability Health (CDH) in South Australia, Developmental Psychiatry Clinic in New South Wales, Disability Specialist Unit (DSU), Burwood.
3. Disability provided education and training for medical and other health students, professional development for doctors and community health staff delivered by and with disability professionals. It should be noted that health/health related services have provided vital training for disability professionals, eg Centre for Disability Studies, Sydney.
4. Academic positions that have made major policy, research, educational and clinical leadership contributions, eg 3DN at UNSW Australia, Centre for Developmental Disability Health (CDDH) in Victoria. QCIDD in Queensland was, until recently, also funded from the disability budget.

We seek your direct intervention to prevent losses of these critical components of health service provision. If action is not taken, the health and welfare of some of the nation's most vulnerable people will be threatened. We call on the Australian government and the National Disability Insurance Agency to urgently examine the issue of threatened health and related services and take action to preserve these vital services. We would welcome a meeting with you for further discussion of these issues.

Yours sincerely



Dr Jacqueline Small MBBS FRACP MPH(hons)
President, AADDM
0402220916 Jacqueline.small@health.nsw.gov.au



Professor Julian Trollor, MBBS, FRANZCP, MD
Vice President, AADDM
02 9931 9160 J.Trollor@unsw.edu.au

Cc Laureate Professor Nick Talley, President Royal Australasian College of Physicians
Cc Professor Malcolm Hopwood, President Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
Cc Dr Frank Jones, President Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
Cc Professor Brian Owler, President Australian Medical Association

Attachment A

Some specific examples of threatened state services include:

NSW

NSW is unique amongst the states in that no state disability department is to be retained. This poses particular risk regarding loss of the highest level of clinical skills, training, setting and maintaining standards and policy making in relation to the needs of people with the most complex health care needs, in particular those people with ID and mental health problems. This non-medical clinical expertise has in the main resided within the disability sector. Health care services will be expected to treat people ID who have with mental health problems, without the skills and workforce that has up to now been available.

The Department of Developmental Disability Neuropsychiatry, UNSW Australia, has received the vast majority of its core funding to date from disability services (Ageing, Disability and Home Care, Family and Community Services). It has rapidly become both a state and national leader in the mental health care of people with ID, striving towards the highest attainable standard of mental health care and wellbeing of people with a developmental disability. It is leading innovative data linkage projects that will better characterise the health of people with ID, elearning projects to better equip clinicians in a rights based framework, and provides high quality mental health care and research into ageing, autism and Fragile X Syndrome. These are at grave risk unless the funding for 3DN is identified and secured for the long term.

The Developmental Psychiatry Clinic, Children's Hospital at Westmead is an intersectoral clinic for children with the most complex and challenging behaviours. Key to its success is the partnership between health, both paediatric and psychiatry, education and disability services. Loss of disability funding for this clinic will have a direct impact on children and families who can barely cope, emergency departments which will see increased presentations, and other parts of the health system. Children who are no longer able to be supported though this clinic are likely to lose their placements both in their family as well as schools.

Numerous other health services have been provided or funded by ADHC, and these include dietetic, nursing, psychology and medical services. These have provided important consultant services to individuals with ID as well as other disability services. Disability funding has also provided for office accommodation for disability health teams and contributed to vital interagency clinics to address complex health care needs of people with disabilities.

Victoria

AADDM Letter to Minister 18th Nov, 2015

The Centre for Developmental Disability Health (CDDHV) is part funded by the Department of Health and Human Services and was formed in response to the research evidence that people with disabilities had poor health and faced barriers to accessing mainstream health services due to lack of training, complexity of presentation and financial disincentive.

The Victoria Disability Services Division of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) fund the Victorian Dual Disability Service (VDDS) to provide an Enhanced Regional Service Response (ERSR). The VDDS is a state-wide mental health service for people with an intellectual disability. The VDDS works with specialist clinical mental health services to assess treat and manage people with a dual disability. The ERSR has enabled the VDDS to expand its continuum of care to provide a mental health triage and consultation service to Disability Services within the North Division and the Western Metropolitan Region of the Western Division of DHHS. The function is to improve access to mental health services for people with dual disability and to ensure appropriate treatment. The service also provides training across the sector to improve capacity within the system.

South Australia

In South Australia, the Centre for Disability Health (CDH) Modbury is funded by disability services with secondment of a child psychiatrist (with expertise in intellectual disability) from the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

CDH provides consultative, clinical and therapeutic work for children, young people and adults with the dual disabilities of Developmental Disability and Mental Health. The majority of these patients are complex and need a multidisciplinary team, direct psychiatric support, and collaboration with their general practitioners and paediatricians. The service works in partnership with Disability Services and other services to provide unique holistic treatment for the children, young people and adults with ID, ASD and challenging behaviour.

CDH receives referrals from:

- Very experienced paediatricians (including child development units and hospitals), and psychiatrists who have tried unsuccessfully to reduce challenging behaviours.
- General Practitioners who lack training and expertise
- Behaviour Intervention Service (BIS), a collaborative service between CAMHS and the Department for Education and Children's Services, of children and young people with behaviour too severe for BIS.
- Disability Services and NGOs.
- Education services, public and private.
- Desperate parents.