



Australian Association of Developmental Disability Medicine Inc.

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Hon. Zoe Bettison, MP

Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion
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Minister for Ageing
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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 is very concerned that loss of health services up till now funded or part funded by state disability budgets will adversely affect the health and wellbeing of people with ID and further contribute to increased support needs costs to be borne by the NDIS budget. The roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and associated transfer of state disability budgets to NDIS, is placing specialist health services around Australia for people with ID at risk. These services have been, in many cases, at least part funded from the disability services budget and have provided complex diagnostic services, multidisciplinary/ intersectoral intervention, and leadership in research, training and policy development.

The budgets for these services have not been consistently identified and quarantined within the state disability services budgets. In the transition to NDIS these services are unfunded and their future in limbo. Further, state health services have been unwilling to take on responsibility for their funding. Unless urgent action is taken, the health services, supports and capacity building initiatives which are currently funded by state disability services budgets will cease, threatening the health and welfare of some of the nation's most vulnerable people. Furthermore, loss of funding for health services currently funded in the state's disability budgets, but not provided under NDIS, would result in the loss of the specialist knowledge and expertise, and the loss of

expert support now provided to mainstream health services. In some cases, transfer of funds has either occurred or continues to be negotiated.

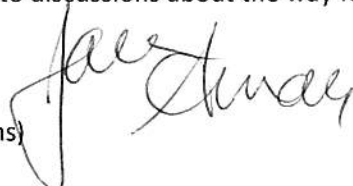
In South Australia, the Centre for Disability Health (CDH) is funded by disability services and is a partnership between the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), and Disability Services to provide consultative, clinical and therapeutic work for children and young people with the dual disabilities 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 holistic treatment for the children and young people with ID, ASD and challenging behaviour.

The CDH provides a unique service within South Australia for children and young people with developmental disability and mental health problems:

- referral by very experienced paediatricians or psychiatrists who have tried unsuccessfully to reduce challenging behaviours.
- referral by General Practitioners who lack training and expertise
- referral by the 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.
- A number of children and young people seen at CDH are already in emergency accommodation because their challenging behaviours were not able to be managed by their families. As the home situation for many of these children and young people has broken down irrevocably, they will be a life-long cost to NDIS. The cost savings to NDIS by reducing the number of people in emergency accommodation would be many times more than the cost of maintaining CDH.
- Many of the families seen at CDH are exhausted, depressed and at the end of their tether trying to care for their child or young person with behaviours so challenging that schools and respite services are unwilling to have them. The risk is more children and young people will be killed by desperate parents who have lost hope, and are unable to see any other way out for them and their child or young person.

AADDM is deeply concerned about the risks posed to the health of people with ID that will arise with loss of services as the NDIS rolls out. We call on the South Australian government and the National Disability Insurance Agency to urgently clarify the extent of this problem and to take action to preserve this vital service. AADDM members are keen to meet with you and have the capacity to contribute to discussions about the way forward. We eagerly await your response.

Yours sincerely
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