

## **AUCD Statement on Release of NCD Report**

SILVER SPRING, MD (February 17, 2011) — The National Council on Disability (NCD) released its most recent report, *Rising Expectations: The Developmental Disabilities Act Revisited*, on February 15, 2011. The report reflects the results of a year-long study of how the programs of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) are meeting the needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families.

The report highlights a number of accomplishments achieved by the network of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs) and AUCD:

- “UCEDDs have been on the forefront of interdisciplinary training and service for 35 years, moving practice from unidisciplinary to multidisciplinary to interdisciplinary approaches.
- UCEDDs were instrumental in the development of early intervention and early childhood programs, including the development of assessment and diagnosis, service delivery models, and personnel training. In many states they continue to play a major role in providing technical assistance to infant intervention and early childhood special education programs.
- For 35 years, the UCEDDs have prepared personnel for work in the national disability service system, from early childhood special education programs to job coaches, positive behavioral support specialists, and direct service workers in the residential/community living systems.
- UCEDDs traditionally have played a key role in providing public policy and service delivery resources in their states. Major areas of impact include special education, autism research and services, and Medicaid programs.
- The past two ADD Commissioners have identified AUCD as a ‘best practice’ or a ‘model technical assistance program’.

The report also notes the promising practices that UCEDDs have developed in a number of topic areas, including coordination with state agencies, technical assistance and dissemination, outreach to the general population and community participation. George Jesien, Ph.D., AUCD's Executive Director, praised the NCD report saying, "The report provides a comprehensive and thoughtful analysis of the programs authorized by the DD Act and lists a series of recommendations that should be fully explored and discussed prior to the next authorization."

The need for additional funding was the basis for many of the Council's recommendations. The report notes the low funding levels for DD Act programs overall: "The DD Act programs have a relatively low level of funding to address a relatively broad mandate for a vulnerable population." It further clarifies that, adjusted for inflation, the appropriation for DD Act programs has remained at the same level for the last 20 years. More specifically, the report recommends that Congress increase UCEDD appropriations to a level sufficient to meet the goals of the DD Act. The report also makes recommendations for reauthorization of the Title II Family Support Program and the Title III Program for Direct Support Workers. In the past, both programs have received a small amount of funding through the DD Act's Projects of National Significance; the report recommends that Congress provide separate appropriations for each title.

The full NCD report is available at:

[http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2010/rising\\_expectations\\_02-15-11.html](http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2010/rising_expectations_02-15-11.html)

The DD Act was last authorized in 2000. As the fundamental law supporting and enhancing the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families, AUCD urges Congress to make its reauthorization a priority.

The membership of AUCD includes a national network of 67 University Centers for Excellence (UCEDD); 39 Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) programs; and 15 Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers (IDDRC). Together, these programs provide a direct national impact through direct services, the development of new, well trained professionals, and the use of new knowledge generated from research.

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