

Attachment 4



Aging with Developmental Disabilities Position Statement

The number of older adults is rapidly increasing overall and becoming a larger percentage of the general population. Included in this aging population are people with disabilities. Estimates indicate that over 640,000 Americans age 60 and older had developmental disabilities in 2000. That number has been projected to double to over 1.2 million by 2030 as the baby boom generation ages.

While the aging process brings significant changes to all individuals and their families, these changes are often intensified by the presence of a developmental disability. Many people with developmental disabilities continue to rely on their families for natural supports throughout their adult life. This support is often provided by aging parents, spouses, and other family members, and the quality of the care often becomes compromised by the caregivers' own aging process. Individuals with disabilities and their families each face challenges and transitions caused by the aging process.

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities supports the position that older adults with disabilities should have:

- the same opportunities as other older citizens to live, work, enjoy leisure time and retire in the community of their choice with the services and supports they need;
- the same rights and dignity as other older people; and
- assistance in establishing a comprehensive retirement plan to encompass any or all of the following concerns:
 - access to health care
 - advanced directives relating to health care
 - counseling services
 - financial issues
 - guardianship/alternatives to guardianship
 - housing
 - legal issues
 - leisure time activities
 - long-term services and supports plan
 - retirement or employment options
 - self advocacy training
 - transportation

Therefore the Council believes that Texas has a responsibility to ensure that the state's service delivery systems develop the capacity to meet the projected needs of older Texans with disabilities. To meet these challenges, the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities calls for:

- the current service delivery systems to increase their capacity to provide for a larger number of older Texans with disabilities who need assistance to maintain a high quality of life in the most integrated setting, including the ability to age well in their homes and communities; and
- coordinating and integrating to the maximum extent possible the delivery systems that traditionally provide services to the aging population and the delivery systems that traditionally provide services to people with developmental and other disabilities. In so doing, older individuals with developmental disabilities will be better served and more fully included in their communities.