



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

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ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20447

Roger Webb  
TX Council for DD  
6201 East Oltorf, St 600  
Austin, TX 78741

Dear Roger,

Self-advocacy has long been a cornerstone of the Developmental Disabilities movement in the United States, starting over 35 years ago with the original People First organizing efforts. The Developmental Disabilities Act makes clear the importance of the voice, influence and power of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and expects that the network that it authorizes – the State Developmental Disabilities Councils (DDCs), the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs), and the Protection and Advocacy Agencies (P&As) – will encourage and support the involvement of self-advocates. Throughout the country, thousands of self-advocates are working at the local, state and national level to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Collectively, we have accomplished a great deal, but we still have much further to go.

To strengthen and enhance self-advocacy efforts in our states and nationally, I have asked the ADD Network to work with Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE), the National Youth Leadership Network (NYLN), the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN), State Developmental Disabilities Services Agencies and other state partners to hold a series of regional self-advocacy summits entitled, *Envisioning the Future: Allies in Self Advocacy*. I believe that the only effective way that we can move the self-advocacy agenda forward is with all of us working together at the local, state and federal levels.

Due to limited funding only five summits were able to be held in 2011 for a total of 30 states. We now have the opportunity to hold four more summits for the remaining states and territories in 2012. Your state team is invited to participate in the summit in Chicago, Illinois on April 19th-20th, 2012. This letter is to invite your DD network to join with self-advocate leaders from your state and other key state leaders in order to create a state team to participate in these summits. The purpose is four-fold:

1. to assess what is currently happening in the states in self-advocacy - the support structures, activities, accomplishments and challenges;
2. to plan steps we can take to strengthen and enhance current efforts at the state level;
3. to develop recommendations for actions that we can take at the national level; and
4. to develop policy recommendations that can lead to a stronger, more effective, and long lasting self-advocacy movement across the country.

My hope is that these summits will bring together the leadership of the developmental disabilities field to energize and guide our efforts to support the self-advocacy movement at both a state and national level.

To coordinate and plan the five summits, I have asked SABE to work closely with the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD), the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN), the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS), the National Youth Leadership Network (NYLN), the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) and the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) to work with state leaders to help us identify key stakeholders to form state teams.

Each participating state will be asked to create and support a team that includes self-advocates, DD Network members, and other partners to represent the state at the summit. Each state team will be asked to prepare a short presentation on their state's self-advocacy efforts and to participate in the two day summit. The summits will allow states the opportunity to identify their unique strengths and challenges, share information with other participating states, and begin to lay the groundwork for enhancing statewide self-advocacy initiatives. Additionally, these summits will help inform the Administration's priorities and activities related to self-advocacy.

You are receiving this invitation because you were identified as a key person in your organization to provide input in developing the core state team. The core state team should consist of youth, adult and autistic self-advocate leadership, as well as representatives from the state DD network organizations (UCEDD, DD Council, and Protection and Advocacy) who work closely with self-advocates. This core team will identify additional team members from the DD state agency, and other key partners in your state. It is my expectation that these summits will generate the energy, ideas and collaborative spirit to support and guide the future direction of self-advocacy throughout your states and our nation. Please review the attached detailed information on the summit for your region. Your state's UCEDD will then follow up and connect state team members to prepare for the summit. Please do not hesitate to contact our office, or Hillary Spears at AUCD, 301-588-8252 or HSpears@aucd.org, with any questions. If your state is unable to participate please contact Hillary with your response no later than Friday, January 20, 2012.

I want to thank you in advance for your time and effort to work with us to improve the lives of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and to help ensure that the critical perspectives of self-advocates inform all that we do. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Sharon Lewis  
Commissioner  
Administration on Developmental Disabilities

cc: Michael Brogioli  
Executive Director  
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities