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APD Launches Toll-Free Number

TALLAHASSEE, FL - In the spirit of Florida Governor Charlie Crist's Office of Open Government and Plain Language Initiative, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities has secured a toll-free phone number to better serve Florida citizens.

The agency's new phone number is **1-866-APD-CARES** or 1-866-273-2273. It will be manned Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. (EDT). The phone operators will answer questions directly. For more complex questions, however, the caller will be transferred to the best person to respond in a timely manner. The goal is to answer a citizen's question quickly and accurately while not making the citizen incur long distance phone charges.

"Toll-free telephone service will make the Agency for Persons with Disabilities more open and accessible to the people of Florida," said Governor Crist. "I am pleased with the work the agency is doing to better assist and serve the people of Florida."

Interim Agency Director Ray said, "The Agency for Persons with Disabilities is continually looking for ways to improve the relationship with our customers. Providing a toll-free phone number is long overdue. We want our services to the public to be transparent and we want to resolve questions as quickly as possible. We think having a mechanism in place to encourage dialogue and feedback is a good idea."

The agency currently serves more than 35,000 Floridians with the developmental disabilities of mental retardation, autism, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and Prader-Willi syndrome. Of those citizens, 25,360 are currently enrolled in the Developmental Disabilities Home and Community-Based Service waiver. There are 6,092 people on the Family and Supported Living waiver and over 13,000 waiting for waiver services due to state funding limits. For more information on the agency, call 1-866-APD-CARES or visit **www.apd.myflorida.com**.

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