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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **APD Pleased with Special Session Agreement**

**TALLAHASSEE, FL - The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)** is pleased with the outcome of the special session, particularly with the legislature's decision to adopt language recommended by APD to eliminate the current 180 hour a month limitation on Personal Care Assistance (PCA) services for individuals who have intensive needs.

APD Director **Jane Johnson** said, "We are very encouraged by the new language allowing additional hours for PCA services to those with intensive needs, which is what our agency had always supported. I would like to personally thank Representatives Bean and Galvano, Senators Peaden, Geatz and Deutsch, and the numerous other legislators who worked with our agency to maintain critical services to the citizens we serve."

The legislature also made the best of a difficult situation as it relates to the budget reduction plan scheduled for a vote on Friday. While there are some reductions that will affect APD providers, larger reductions to direct services to customers were avoided. In addition, the legislature's plan will allow the agency to hire 75 temporary workers to conduct needs assessments and develop cost plans for individuals who receive services through APD's Home and Community-Based Services waivers. This was an important requirement for the agency to lend more fiscal predictability to the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Medicaid waiver.

APD Director Johnson said, "The agency is working hard to reduce its deficit in the DD waiver. With state employees taking on the duties of conducting the needs assessment and developing cost plans, the agency will have a better idea of how much money is being obligated for services. It is critical for APD to be more involved in how the agency's funds are spent so that we can more accurately predict resource needs, quickly identify problematic spending patterns, and effectively react in the event of a projected deficit. I would urge the members of the legislature to support the plan when they vote on Friday."

Other APD items included in the pending proposal are:

- Approved transfer of money from the secure forensic services to the civil ICF/DD program. General Revenue savings are \$444,061. This will allow the state to move individuals to appropriate settings and out of county jails more promptly.
- Approved a 4 percent rate decrease to personal care assistance services. This will take effect on Jan. 1 and provide savings of \$1.7 million.
- Directed the Agency for Health Care Administration to review rates for Personal Care Assistance services in consultation with APD for the regular legislative session. The review will be to design a rate structure that will ensure continued access to these services for children once the funding responsibility is shifted from the waiver to the Medicaid State Pplan. This is expected to occur on July 1, 2008.

APD currently serves about 35,000 Floridians with developmental disabilities of mental retardation, autism, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and Prader-Willi syndrome. For more information on the agency, call **1-866-APD-CARES** or visit [www.apd.mvflorida.com](http://www.apd.mvflorida.com).

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