

PRESS RELEASE

Two Major Developmental Disabilities Groups to Merge Advocacy Efforts

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The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy in California to Merge Advocacy Services, Creating a Powerful Partnership to Fight for People with Developmental Disabilities and Their Families.

Sacramento, CA - The Arc of California, the state's membership advocacy association of people with developmental disabilities, families, and their service providers and UCP (United Cerebral Palsy) a leading service provider and advocate for children and adults with disabilities, today announced that they will merge advocacy efforts into a single initiative dedicated to fighting California's dramatic divestment of support for people with intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, autism and all other developmental disabilities.

The new partnership will galvanize The Arc's base of 10,000 members and twenty-one chapters in California and connect them with the 12 UCP affiliates and the thousands of individuals they support, strengthening a growing statewide movement that is committed to ensuring people with disabilities are given every opportunity to fully participate in society and live a "life without limits."

This collaboration is formed at a time when people with disabilities are facing the largest cuts in modern history. Developmental services have been targeted with a total cut of over \$750 million, a 20% reduction. The MediCal program, which supports most people with developmental disabilities is facing cuts of at least \$3 billion in total funds which include a devastating proposal to cut the small community intermediate care homes by 10%, seriously threatening their ability to support some of the most medically vulnerable people in our communities. In-Home Support Services, a critical program supporting adults in their homes, is facing a cut of over 20% in total funds.

"Given this environment we have no choice but to be determined, strong, and effective. The health and safety of my daughter and the sons and daughters of so many others is in jeopardy," said Dwight Stratton, president of The Arc of California

"By combining our efforts we will create an initiative that is stronger than the sum of its parts and better positioned to put the issues impacting the disability community front and center onto the agendas of policymakers and California taxpayers," said Ron Cohen, president/CEO UCP Los Angeles.

Tony Anderson, executive director of The Arc of California will serve as the Director of the collaborative overseeing the advocacy services and lobbying activities. Greg deGiere, lobbyist with over 30 years experience in the capitol will represent the collaborative.

This initiative will be managed by an Executive Council consisting of three members of The Arc and three members from UCP. The Arc members are Peter Bowers, treasurer and policy chair, Kevin MacDonald, executive director from Los Angeles, and Dwight Stratton, president and family member from the San Diego chapter. UCP will be represented by Ron Cohen president/ CEO of UCP Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara, Doug Bergman, president/ CEO of UCP Sacramento and Northern California, and Margaret Farman, executive director of UCP North Bay.

The Policy agenda will be managed by a steering committee made up of the Executive Council and two more members from each partner. Representing The Arc will be Betsy Katz, family member from Placer Arc, and Barbara Maizie, executive director from Contra Costa and representing UCP will be Cathleen Collins, CEO and family member from Orange County, and Ray Call CEO of San Joaquin, Calaveras, Amador.

The new partnership will be referred to as “The Arc/UCP California Collaboration” to illustrate the partnership while at the same time take advantage of the brand recognition that comes with the collective experience of over 120 years serving the developmental disabilities community.

UCP: The mission of United Cerebral Palsy is to advance the independence, productivity and full citizenship of people with disabilities through an affiliate network.

The Arc: The Arc promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.

Media Contacts: Tony Anderson, Executive Director, The Arc of California 916-770-0091, Greg deGiere, Public Policy Director, 916-223-7319.

