



## THE LANTERMAN DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES ACT FACT SHEET

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*The State of California accepts a responsibility for persons with developmental disabilities and an obligation to them which it must discharge. Affecting hundreds of thousands of children and adults directly, and having an important impact on the lives of their families, neighbors and whole communities, developmental disabilities present social, medical, economic and legal problems of extreme importance.*

The Lanterman Act, Section 4501 of the Health & Welfare Code

### **What is the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act?**

The Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act (Lanterman Act) is the portion of California law that sets out the rights and responsibilities of persons with developmental disabilities. It also creates the agencies, including regional centers, responsible for planning and coordinating services and supports for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

The Lanterman Act establishes an entitlement to services and supports for persons with developmental disabilities, those at risk of developing a developmental disability, and their families. This entitlement ensures that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families have the right to receive services and supports which will enable them to make decisions and choices about how, and with whom, they want to live their lives; achieve the highest self-sufficiency possible; and lead productive, independent and satisfying lives as part of the communities in which they live.

In addition to the entitlement to services and supports, the Lanterman Act creates the regional centers which serve as the central coordinating agency in a community network. Regional centers have the mandate to ensure that the clients for whom it is responsible receive services and supports which will assist them in living productively in their communities. The regional center may accomplish this task by securing services and supports directly, or by assisting consumers and families to locate and access services and supports from other agencies. This model of service delivery recognizes that California's network of services and supports for persons with developmental disabilities is large and complex. Therefore, the Legislature designed the service delivery system to have one central coordinating agency that consumers and families can contact regarding all of their questions and needs.