

Posted on Wed, Jun. 10, 2009

## **Letters: State's budget cuts would hurt mentally ill**

Budget cuts proposed by Gov. Rendell and the Pennsylvania legislature seriously threaten the lives of people with mental illness and their families. While we understand today's very difficult economic environment, it makes no sense to pull the rug out from under the feet of our most vulnerable citizens.

Ironically, these cuts will increase costs for care. Cutting behavioral- health services does not mean people who need mental health services will go away. In fact, when they are denied these services, they use more costly services, such as emergency rooms, homeless shelters, and corrections facilities.

This legislation will shut the door on those who are using services and increasing populations who are unemployed, people who are on waiting lists, and veterans. If the proposed cuts are passed, the burden of care and costs will fall on counties, and place an additional financial and emotional burden on families.

Leadership and compassion from Rendell and the legislature are imperative to protect these Pennsylvanians.

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