

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Cecelia Hartley](#)
Subject: FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
Date: Thursday, June 05, 2014 12:46:25 PM

-----Original Message-----

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]
Sent: Thursday, June 05, 2014 12:46 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Thursday, June 5, 2014 - 12:45

Agency: DEPARTMENT ASSISTIVE AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES DARS

First Name: Elizabeth

Last Name: Pierce

Title:

Organization you are affiliated with: none - retired from DARS

Email:

City: Austin

State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or Opposed:

Issue 1: Opposed to proposal to merge blindness services to general rehabilitation services. Blindness is a low-incidence disability compared to other disabilities, and it requires specific and intensive training (for both the blind individual and for caseworkers serving individuals who are blind).

The rehabilitation process is lengthier and more intensive (to learn braille, mobility skills, daily living skills, etc.).

The rehabilitation process is driven by successful closures: if it is more difficult to attain a successful closure for a blind individual, the caseworker, to meet the successful closure goal, will focus on services to the general rehabilitation consumer whose rehabilitation is less costly and less time-consuming.

Issue 3: Opposed to providing independent living services through Centers for Independent Living. The elderly blind population will be unable to access services through the Centers for Independent Living. The elderly blind population has limited mobility in the community: they live on fixed incomes so cannot pay for taxis; they are often physically and emotionally frail so are unlikely to use public transportation, even if it is available (which, in many small communities, it is not). The Centers for Independent Living often do not have the specific knowledge required to work with the disability of blindness. Often there is not a Center for Independent Living within a reasonable travel distance, even if the individual had access to transportation. Most of these individuals need specific skills for maintaining their independence in the home, and a small amount (2-4 hours) or even just basic information will serve their needs.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency: Increase funding for Blind Children's Program in the Division for Blind Services. Caseloads in this program are too large, and services to blind children provide the foundation for the development of job-ready young adults.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree