

To: Sunset Commission
From: Judy Scott, DARS Council Member
Date: October 17, 2014
Subject: Sunset Report Comments

I am a member of the DARS Council and have worked in the field of vision rehabilitation in Texas and nationally, in both state and private agencies for over 45 years. My comments are based on my personal and professional experience.

I appreciate your reaching out to DARS Council members for comments on the Sunset Report. I must begin by stating that I have concerns about the entire report but am vehemently opposed to issue/recommendation 1.

“Issue 1: The Vision for Achieving Better, More Efficiently Run Services Through Consolidation of Health and Human Services Agencies Is Not Yet Complete. Consolidate the five HHS system agencies into one agency called the Health & Human Services Commission, with divisions established along functional lines. ”

I cannot even begin to imagine how such a “mega” sized agency will create better, more efficiently run services benefitting the state of Texas or its consumers. In my opinion the larger the agency, the more difficult it is to identify or connect with services needed.

With respect to creating divisions according to functional lines, rehabilitation services does not fit under any of the suggested functions. The philosophy and concept of rehabilitation is to teach people with disabilities how to live independently and maintain or return to work enabling them to contribute to our state rather than being dependent on our state for support. Rehabilitation is neither medical nor social services.

It is imperative that a division providing independent living and Vocational Rehabilitation services with its own identity, specifically trained staff, budget and management be maintained for Texans with disabilities.

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