Talking Points on the Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities
2006 HUD Budget Proposal

Unprecedented Cut Proposed for the 811 Program
The President's budget proposes an unprecedented deep cut for the Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities program. Section 811 is the only program at the Department of Housing Urban Development (HUD) that still produces accessible and affordable supportive housing for non-elderly people with disabilities with extremely low incomes.

811 Production Proposed for Complete Elimination
Historically, new units of supportive housing produced through Section 811 have been targeted to people with the most severe disabilities who rely on SSI income of $600 or less per month. For almost 30 years, this program (and its pre-cursor the Section 202 program for people with disabilities) has been a cornerstone of state and local efforts to implement community integration strategies for people with severe disabilities who currently live in nursing homes, public institutions, or at home with aging parents.

50% Funding Cut Proposed
The President's budget would cut Section 811 in half, dropping funding down to $120 million from its current level of $238 million. More importantly, the budget proposes to completely eliminate all funding for new unit production in FY 2006 by zeroing out the capital advance/project-based side of the program. Historically, 75 percent of HUD's 811 appropriation has been used to fund capital grants and project-based rental assistance for non-profit disability groups to develop new fully wheelchair-accessible units of permanent supportive housing.

More than 70% of the Remaining Funding for 811 Would Go Toward Renewing Existing Units NOT Production New Accessible Units
Instead, the President's FY 2006 budget proposes to direct the remaining $120 million in the Section 811 program to renewal of existing rent subsidies (both tenant-based and project-based), with a small amount left to fund new tenant-based subsidies. Specifically, $80 million would be directed to tenant-based renewals, $5 million for project-based renewals (also known as PRACs) and (presumably) $35++ million of new 5-year tenant-based contracts (an estimated 1,000 – 1,100 vouchers, although HUD has yet to specify if the remaining funds in the program after renewals would stay in 811). This means that more than 70% of all 811 funds would be consumed by the cost of renewing (i.e. keeping in place) housing funded under the program in previous years.

30+ Year Commitment to Production of New Supportive Housing for People With Severe Disabilities Ended in the President's FY 2006 Budget

Moreover, the elimination of the capital advance/project-based side of the program would end HUD's commitment to support the production of new housing targeted to non-elderly people with severe disabilities with the lowest incomes. Reliance solely on tenant-based assistance (portable rent subsidies that rely on voucher recipients being able to find rental housing on their own) also represents a major change in the targeting of 811 away from people with more severe impairments who need on-going housing-related supports and/or fully accessible units.

This Budget Eliminates a Successful Partnership Between HUD and Non-Profit Disability Groups – Including Faith-Based Organizations

The production side of the 811 is administered on a competitive basis through non-profit, community-based disability organizations such as the Arc, United Cerebral Palsy, Easter Seals that help ensure assistance goes to those with the most severe disabilities and that support services are effectively linked to housing opportunities. These organizations have unparalleled expertise in the support service needs of people with disabilities. Among the successful 811 sponsors in recent years have been:

- The Cleveland Christian Home of Cleveland, Ohio,
- Virginia United Methodist Church Housing,
- Lutheran Services of Nebraska,
- St. Patrick's Center of St. Louis, MO,
- The Catholic Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana,
- Catholic Charities of Chicago, and
- Lutheran Services of North Florida.

If adopted, HUD's budget for FY 2006 would end this successful public-private partnership.

HUD's Proposal to Eliminate the Section 811 Production Program Represents an Unprecedented Shift of Housing Assistance Away from People With More Severe Disabilities

Complete elimination of the capital advance/project-based side of Section 811 would mean that only a small tenant-based set aside would remain as the sole federal source of housing for non-elderly people with disabilities. However, providing a portable voucher to individuals with severe disabilities with high support needs is simply ineffective in helping them severe decent safe and affordable housing. While tenant-based assistance can work for some higher functioning people with disabilities, it is NOT an effective tool for individuals that:

- must have a fully accessible unit that is difficult to find or lease in a tight rental market,
- are living with a severe mental or developmental disabilities (including cognitive impairments), and
- must have services and supports linked to housing in order to live in the community instead of institutional settings such as nursing homes and psychiatric hospitals).

Shifting resources away from these vulnerable populations is not the answer, especially given the fact that no other federal program will be there to meet their specialized needs.

The Consortium for Citizens With Disabilities (CCD) Housing Task Force is a coalition of national disability organizations working to promote access to affordable housing opportunities and community supports for people with disabilities. Among the groups participating in the CCD Housing Task Force that are opposing the Administration's proposal to cut Section 811 are:
The Paralyzed Veterans of America
The Arc of the United States
Goodwill Industries
The Brain Injury Association of America
United Cerebral Palsy Associations
The National Easter Seals Society
The National Downs Syndrome Congress
The National Multiple Sclerosis Society
The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
The National Mental Health Association
The National Alliance to End Homelessness
The American Association on Mental Retardation
National Association of Developmental Disabilities Councils
The National Association of Protection & Advocacy Systems
NISH

For more information, please contact:
Andrew Sperling, National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (703-516-7222, andrew@nami.org)
Liz Savage, The Arc-UCP Public Policy Collaborative (202-783-2229, savage@ppcollaborative.org)
Kathy McGinley, National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems (202-408-9514, kathy@napas.org)

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