

## CALIFORNIA'S BUDGET WOES - By Kirby Wohlander

Uncertainty about the future of funding for services for people with disabilities continues along with the State of California's budget woes. Estimates of the state's budget shortfall have varied from \$19 million to \$50 million, so the exact amount is as yet unknown. Certainly due to the worldwide economic downturn the state's revenues are falling, so programs will have to be cut. As of February 1, 2009 the rates that regional centers pay agencies like TMI for services were cut by 3%. Supported Employment service rates were not cut by 3%, but only because they have been reduced by 10% just a few months earlier. TMI has coped with these cuts by eliminating some positions and not filling others. Toward Maximum Independence is coping with the reductions in funding, yet continuing to provide our full range of services. We will maintain our commitment to supporting our consumers' independence with quality services and supports. If the Legislature and the governor make additional cuts we expect there to be a significant impact on people with disabilities, such as possible reductions in payment for In Home Supportive Services (IHSS), perhaps even the elimination of some services. However, at the moment we don't know exactly what decisions those running the state will make. Now is a very good time to contact your state assembly member, your state senator, and the governor, to let them know how important services to people with disabilities are, and to tell them the impact on your life if funding for services is reduced or eliminated. See the links on this website for information about how to contact the legislators for the districts you live in. Read the two page summary of CDSA's (The California Disability Services Association) position on the cuts that includes some alternative suggestions the legislature might implement to save money.