

# I HAVE A DREAM...

(by Joy Caldwell)

*(Testimony given at 1-14-10 Human Services Appropriations Committee Hearing re: RHC Consolidation & Proposed cuts to Medicaid Services)*

Madam Chair & Members of the Committee, my name is Joy Caldwell from Mount Vernon, the 40<sup>th</sup> District. I am a mom to 5 girls and the Coordinator for the Skagit Parent Coalition. Thank you for this opportunity. Like Martin Luther King Jr., I too have a dream.



I have a dream for my daughter Jessica who has multiple disabilities. She is 10 years old with Down syndrome & cerebral palsy, affected by all of the medical, cognitive, physical & social challenges that come along with these diagnoses.

I have a dream that you, our State Legislators, will continue to fund the essential Medicaid funded therapies that Jessica currently receives at school – speech, physical, and occupational therapies.



I have a dream that when Jessica graduates from High School that she will have equal opportunity to receive the Transition services she needs for supported employment and independent living.

I have a dream that Jessica's medical needs, personal care and health care will be taken care of and not create undue hardship on the rest of our family.

I have a dream that Jessica's future will not be hindered by discrimination and that she will be able to fully participate, live and work in our local community to provide for herself to the fullest extent possible.

I am not alone in my dreams for my child. We are in the Year of Community Living as proclaimed by President Obama earlier this year. The time for community is NOW.

Please act today to make our dreams become a reality not a nightmare of last resort. I have a dream that our individuals with developmental disabilities will continue to thrive in their local communities with appropriate supports and all RHC's will be closed.

I have a dream that you, our elected officials, will NOT delay but that you will CONTINUE your commitments to our communities. Please protect Medicaid funded ESSENTIAL services in the community for our families and individuals affected by developmental disabilities. Our families, our children, our self-advocates are depending on it!