Coalition of Texans with Disabilities 2019 Annual Report

Disability Advocacy, Organizing, Arts & Film, Consulting, and Consumer Direction

2019 was a legislative year, and much of our energy was trained on policy change. But the outcomes of our work were not limited to the Capitol (or to Texas!). **How did CTD work to bring down barriers for you in 2019? Read on!**

# CTD in the 2019 Legislature

Every session has its wins and its losses, and 2019 was no different. While we suffered some crushing moments, it only takes a small step back to recognize that we helped to move the needle a little—or a lot—on all of our priority issues.

How will our policy work affect you in the interim and beyond? If you...

… are an adult in Medicaid, **CTD again advanced a dental benefit**. For the first time, there is language in Texas statute calling for a pilot dental program.

… receive attendant care through Medicaid, CTD achieved three accomplishments to **better support the attendant care workforce** in Texas. As you know, low pay to attendants is a serious barrier to reliable care.

* Working closely with our partners, CTD secured **$87 million to add to attendants' paychecks in 2020-2021**.
* We pushed for a budget rider to **direct the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to further study attendant care**.
* We advocated to the Speaker to **add legislative work on the issue during the interim**—and he did.

… have a child in special education, CTD and partners advocated for a **$204 million increase in state special education funding and set up planning directives**.

… or your child has autism, multiple sclerosis, any kind of seizure disorder, spasticity, terminal cancer, or an incurable neurodegenerative disease like ALS or Parkinson’s, CTD was the lead consumer advocate to include all of those diagnoses in **expanded access to medical cannabis** in Texas.

… aspire to a post-secondary education, CTD had a foundational role in legislation to create, for the first time, a **legally-mandated advisory council for post-secondary education for young people with disabilities**.

… or a family member is a person with a guardian, CTD was a principal advocate to **expand monitoring of guardianship for compliance with laws and regulations**, an area that had very minimal oversight.

… are a voter with a disability, CTD was in the middle of the **battle against legislation that would have set new hurdles for voters with disabilities** and those who assist them. For those who choose to use mail-in ballots, CTD reminds you to be very clear and consistent with your signatures, which can be used to toss a ballot.

All that is progress, but it’s not enough. We need to complete the dental initiative, continue our work to significantly raise attendant wages, continue the move forward on special education, make access to medical cannabis more practical for those who choose this medicine, and more. Our **2019 Legislative Report** has more details about our work at the Capitol this year and what we envision for 2020. Read it at **www.TXDisabilities.org/advocacy**.

# Representing you at the political poker table

When it comes to policy and practice impacting Texans with disabilities, CTD knows that presence matters. That’s why we are regularly at the State Capitol and numerous state agencies, testifying at hearings, meeting with policymakers, and building alliances to ensure the voices of Texans with disabilities are heard.

To name just a few examples, CTD is in a strategic position to represent your interests if you...

… access prescription medications through Medicaid. CTD is the only consumer advocate on **Drug Utilization Review Board**, an important body that decides which medicines are on the Medicaid preferred drug list. Statistics show that being a preferred drug often equals access to medicines.

… or a family member is in Medicaid Managed Care. CTD has, from day one, been a vocal, active appointee on the **State Medicaid Managed Care Advisory Committee**. With over 90% of Texas Medicaid now in the managed care environment, this critical committee is in a position to raise issues and influence policy.

… or your child seeks post-secondary educational opportunities. CTD is among the founders of the **Aggie Achieve Advisory Committee**, overseeing the launch of the Aggie Achieve post-secondary education at Texas A&M.

… rely on accessibility within built environments. CTD has been a long-time appointment to the **Texas Board of Architectural Examiners**, a regulatory body over architects, interior designers, and landscape architects. We have leveraged the state appointment into federal advocacy.

… have public or private health insurance. As a member of **United Healthcare’s National Advisory Board**, CTD addresses disability services for one of America’s largest health insurers, both in Texas and beyond.

… value community over institutions. CTD works primarily in Texas, but we recognize that decisions in Washington have an impact on our lives in the states. We maintain relationships with key members of the **Texas congressional delegation** to advocate on key federal issues. One focus has been the Empower Act to reauthorize the **Money Follows the Person Act**, providing federal money to relocate people from institutions to the community.

# CDS Division

Our CDS Division gives Texans with disabilities the support they need to manage their own attendants. If you are among the nearly 400 individuals served in our Consumer Directed Services program, you know the benefits.

If you are not, our CDS Division is like having an in-house laboratory for the functional workings of Medicaid community attendant services. In addition to serving those in our program, what we learn from their experience and daily CDS operations allows us to be better informed advocates, helping us to best represent consumers at the Legislature and within stakeholder activities at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

# Arts Programs at CTD

Finally, in the media, we are seeing more and more (and better!) representations of people with disabilities. Through our arts programming, we are proud that we have contributed to this cultural shift locally, and around the world.

In 2019, if you are…

… a cinephile, our **16th annual Cinema Touching Disability Film Festival** (CTDFF) continued breaking new ground, with sellout crowds, our celebrity guest host, RJ Mitte, a focus on adaptive fashion, and a slate of the best international disability short films! Read the full wrap up at **www.CTDFilmFest.org.**

… a writer or reader, we celebrated 10 years of our international **Pen 2 Paper disability-focused creative writing contest**. We received a ton of outstanding work among nearly 400 entries and are pleased to have partnered with Oleb Books on the **Oleb Books Personal Essay Award**. Read this year’s finalists at **www.TXDisabilities.org/pen-2-paper**. Plus, we continued our monthly **Lion and Pirate Open Mic series** with Art Spark Texas at Malvern Books, featuring performers with and without disabilities of all stripes.

… interested in painting, CTD embarked on a new collaboration with Austin artist David Borden. **Accessible Portraits: Painting People as They See Themselves** “dares society to change its perceptions of disability and beauty.” We previewed Accessible Portraits at CTDFF and can’t wait to share where it’s going in 2020!

# Our vision for 2020

Looking ahead to 2020, a legislative interim year, we have big plans to continue our work mentioned above, and invite you to join us! If you...

… are a voter with a disability, CTD is a leading member of REV UP Texas coalition, promoting the disability vote. REV UP Texas has partnered with AAPD to hold **Elected for Inclusion: A Presidential Forum on Disability Issues** January 13, 2020 in Austin. Following the successes of REV UP’s Texas Disability Issues Forums in 2014 and 2018, we’re looking forward to bringing disability issues to the forefront on the national stage. Tickets and more info at **www.revupexas.org**!

… are committed to state policy change, CTD is planning a series of **Raise Your Voice! Roundtables** and training events around the state. Through our RYV! advocacy events, CTD comes to your community, to learn, listen, train and empower you! We are committed to involving you in meaningful ways in our preparations for the 2021 Legislature.

… enjoy art and performance—or are an artist yourself—our Cinema Touching Disability Short Film Competition is open now! Join us at an upcoming open mic Jan. 4 or Feb. 2 at Malvern Books. And stay tuned for announcements about CTD Film Festival dates, the Pen 2 Paper 2020 deadline, the release of our anthology with Oleb Books, open mic dates, Accessible Portraits events, and more!

Keep up with CTD in 2020 by subscribing to our e-newsletter at txdisabilities.org.

Or follow us on social media:

**CTD** @TXDisabilities on Facebook & Twitter

**Cinema Touching Disability** @CTDFilmFestival on Facebook, Twitter, & Instagram

**Pen 2 Paper** @Pen2Paper on Facebook

*CTD is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with Federal Tax ID #74-2071160. CTD is a social and economic impact organization benefitting Texans with all disabilities of all ages. CTD is a membership organization controlled by people with disabilities. Your contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.*