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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**A Pillar of Texas Disability Advocacy, Dennis Borel Announces Retirement**

February 12, 2024 (Austin, Texas)—After 24 years of leading the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (CTD), Executive Director Dennis Borel will retire March 29.

“The CTD Board of Directors extends gratitude and congratulations to Dennis Borel for his superb leadership, guidance and decades of initiating advocacy strategies that are second to none,” says CTD Board President Kenneth Semien Sr.

In his years at the helm of CTD, Dennis has had a profound impact on Texas public policy that affects Texans with disabilities. The right and ability to make choices about one’s own life based on individual wants and needs is central to living a self-determined life, and it is a core value that has guided Dennis’ work in his sometimes decades-long advocacy on issues like attendant wages, dental benefits for adults with disabilities, access to health care and medications, and so much more.

In addition to a long list of accomplishments at the Texas Legislature, Dennis has advocated to Congressional representatives on access to healthcare and services and served on national coalitions, like the Better Medicare Alliance.

He helped to establish and played a critical role in CTD’s annual Cinema Touching Disability Film Festival, going into its 21<sup>st</sup> season this year.

In 2003, Dennis led Team Everest 03, from its conception onward, which made history twice: first, as the largest cross-disability team to reach Mt. Everest Base Camp at 17,500 ft., then again when Expedition Leader Gary Guller became the first person with one arm to summit Mt. Everest at over 29,000 ft. Still one of Dennis’ crown achievements, Team Everest 03 proved to the world his conviction that people with disabilities are only limited by the constraints society imposes on them, not by their disability.

Dennis has not only become a respected leader in the disability advocacy community, but also a mentor and teacher for the next generation, including to his successor: CTD Deputy Executive Director Chase Bearden will move into the role as Executive Director on April 1.

Chase holds a degree in Business Administration from Concordia University and has become an accomplished advocate and leader in his 15 years at CTD. He has led successful advocacy efforts in access to medications, the life sciences industries, employment, transportation, voting, education, health care, and architectural barriers, among other policy areas.

Chase’s recent accolades include American Council of the Blind of Texas’ Advocate of the Year Award and the Texas Healthcare and Bioscience Institute Luminary Award.

"Chase's dedication and years of experience position him to be well equipped to lead us into a new era of creative advocacy for Texans with disabilities," said Semien. "CTD's phenomenal staff is prepared to continue demonstrating teamwork and expand their culture of supportive management."

A celebration for Dennis will take place March 22 in Austin. Contact [info@txdisabilities.org](mailto:info@txdisabilities.org) for more details.

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#### About CTD

Founded in 1978, CTD is the largest and oldest member-driven cross disability organization in the state. We focus on state-level governmental advocacy, professional disability consulting, consumer direction, and public awareness activities (primarily in the arts) to make Texas a leader in public policy and culture related to people with disabilities of all ages. Learn more about CTD's work at: [www.TXDisabilities.org](http://www.TXDisabilities.org).