



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Special Needs Individuals At-Risk in Federal Detention Facilities**

**(Washington, D.C., June 28, 2018) - The United Cerebral Palsy Association (UCP)**, a leading advocate for individuals with disabilities, said today that concerns are growing about the health and safety of individuals with special needs being detained at U.S. detention facilities.

Despite a public outcry about the welfare of detainees at these locations, little attention has been focused on the impact to the children and adults with physical and developmental disabilities.

“This population is at greater risk than other individuals for a multitude of reasons,” said UCP President Armando Contreras. “In addition to language difficulties, people with disabilities may have cognitive challenges which prevent them from understanding what is happening to them, along with speech impairments which make it difficult to communicate their needs to caregivers. Individuals with disabilities are also more likely to be medically fragile, with respiratory or seizure conditions, and may require medication management. Others may have problems swallowing effectively and require assistance with feeding. These are just a few of the potential dangers for fragile children and adults in unstable living situations,” Contreras explains.



“A determination of how many children with special needs are being held in border facilities needs to be made as soon as possible, and appropriate supports put in place to ensure their safety and well-being,” said UCP Board Chair Diane Wilush. “While we don’t know the number of people being impacted at the current time, we do know that individuals with disabilities displaced from their homes and daily routines are at risk for health complications and that their conditions can deteriorate rapidly in these situations. We are urgently asking the federal government to make a determination of how many special needs individuals are being held in these facilities as quickly as possible, and put the appropriate supports in place to ensure their health and well-being while they are being detained” Wilush stated. “Every day we wait to take action significantly impacts their quality of life.”

The mission of the United Cerebral Palsy Association (UCP) is to promote the independence, productivity and full citizenship of people with cerebral palsy, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and other conditions, through an affiliate network. Individuals with cerebral palsy and other disabilities deserve every opportunity to live life to the fullest. UCP strives to make that happen. For more information about United Cerebral Palsy visit [www.ucp.org](http://www.ucp.org).

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