

Mental Retardation Association of Missouri, Inc.

An Organization of Parents and Friends Working in Behalf of Missouri's Mentally Retarded



April 17, 2010

Bernard Simons
Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities
P.O. Box 687
Jefferson City, Mo. 65102

SUBJECT: Intermediate Care Facilities for Mentally Retarded (ICFs/MR)

Dear Mr. Simons:

In the next fiscal year, budget cuts will affect the lives of many people who have mental retardation and other developmental disabilities. The plan to close Nevada Habilitation Center would cause unnecessary suffering to the residents who now receive the treatment they require.

Also, in reference to your 3/30/10 letter to Mary Vitale, President of BHC Parents Assn., you claim that converting SLDDTC and Marshall state habilitation centers to state operated Waiver services saved the state money. Since the state habilitation center's federal earnings go directly to the state's General Revenue, and the community provider's federal earnings go directly to the providers, we would like to see evidence of how the Waiver is saving money? It would be more accurate to take into account how much federal money the state has lost due to the downsizing of state habilitation centers.

Families/guardians know that the "Waiver" means waived/reduced services with no federal oversight. And we have good reason to believe that state operated Waivers for state habilitation centers will eventually be turned over to community providers. Providers are in the business to make a profit. When the state has a shortage of funds (which is always) the only way providers will make their profit is to consider the severity of the resident's disabilities so they can reduce services. Without federal ICFMR oversight, there will be less protection for the people who are unable to help themselves.

In your recent letter, you state "We understand your position on this issue." In a prior letter 5/13/09, you state "the Department of Mental Health did not request or support the conversion of state habilitation centers to Waiver homes." It is certainly obvious we have cause for deep concern.

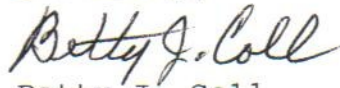
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The Division of Developmental Disabilities is expected to act responsibly to ensure the safety of the severely and profoundly mentally retarded. Their lives depend on ICFs/MR...good state habilitation centers.

Sincerely,



Betty J. Coll
President, RAM
1108 Nectar Dr.
St. Louis, Mo. 63137

CC: Governor Nixon
Keith Schafer
Sen. Tim Green
Repr. Gina Walsh
Sen. Rupp
Sen. Mayer
Repr. Bert Atkins
Repr. Allen Icet
Jerry Ford
Jim Mulvaney
Mary Vitale
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Mental Health Commission
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