

Disability Advocacy Alliance

Budget Update and Outline of Additional Budget Amendments Needed to Protect Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

On March 17, 2015, Disability Advocacy Alliance lodged nearly 19,000 petition signatures with the Ohio House of Representatives objecting to policies in the Executive Budget that would force the closures of Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF) and replace facility-based day services and sheltered workshops.

In response, the House of Representatives offered amendments to the budget to address our concerns. **We urge the Ohio Senate to support these changes which help to protect ICF homes, facility-based day programs and workshops.**

Ohioans who support individuals with developmental disabilities are grateful for the House's response. **However, policies have been inserted into the budget which continue the effort to eliminate ICF beds despite the Department of Developmental Disabilities' (DODD) promise "to honor the choices of individuals."** These policies undermine prudently-managed ICFs that vulnerable Ohioans depend upon by attacking their economies of scale and increasing their operating costs.

We respectfully ask the Ohio Senate to address the following concerns so that no one is forced to leave their home, workshop or day program which they depend upon for life sustaining care and productive opportunities.

Intermediate Care Facilities:

- **We oppose the benchmarks which dislocate 350 ICF residents** from their homes and force them to waiver services. These individuals will lose federal funding of room & board, licensed nursing and essential therapy services if they are converted to waivers. Guardians were told their residential and care decisions would be honored. That is not the case for these 350 individuals.
- **We oppose downsizing of large ICFs** which is driven by DODD benchmarks rather than the needs and desires of residents and guardians.
- **We object to DODD's stubborn refusal to allow ICFs to accommodate downsizing by building on their own campuses.** This reasonable compromise protects the health and safety of affected residents and maintains economies of scale.
- **We oppose a flat rate** placed on new ICF admissions rated a "6" on the Individual Assessment Form. The flat rate discriminates against these individuals and serves to push them from the ICF program even though these individuals are eligible for this care under Ohio's Medicaid State Plan.
- **We oppose the removal of the 2% ICF funding increase** for 2016 and the restrictions placed on this funding in 2017 which only serve to bankroll unwanted downsizing. These funds are urgently needed to provide a wage increase to dedicated personal care staff who work tirelessly to care for our most vulnerable citizens.

Facility-Based Day Services and Sheltered Workshops

- The House of Representatives has inserted an amendment into the budget requiring DODD to support sheltered workshop services at existing levels of participation. We urge the Medicaid Committee to maintain this language and **expand upon it to include facility-based day programs which serve individuals with the most complex needs** who cannot perform sheltered work.

The public has been told that there is a trend toward community living and working. Families of individuals who reside in ICFs, perform sheltered work or participate in facility-based day programming submit that their loved ones are in the community. Denying this dismisses the value of their choices which have proven successful in providing them with happy and safe lives. **No trend toward another's vision of community should be had at the expense of the health, safety and happiness of our most vulnerable citizens.**

Families of developmentally disabled individuals have worked half a century to put in place a DODD Service System that addresses the needs of the fragile Ohioans it serves. We respectfully ask you to honor the supremely informed decisions of loving parents and guardians who simply want a safe and happy life for their child. **We ask the Ohio Senate to stand with the 19,000 Ohioans who have stood with families and individuals with developmental disabilities in this fight.**