

October 23, 2012

To Joint Senate Committee Hearing Members,

Families and advocates of residents at Lanterman Developmental Center (LDC) write to you in desperation, requesting your intervention in the closure process of Lanterman Developmental Center (LDC). Our confidence continues to erode that the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) will deliver on commitments made nearly three years ago when they announced the closing of the Center, documented in the LDC Closure Plan which was approved by the California Legislature.

Two years of meetings between the DDS and representatives of LDC families to effectively address the health and safety concerns of movers as well as residents who continue to reside at LDC have failed. We are writing because many families have lost confidence in the often frustrating negotiations with the Department, and, as a last resort, turn to our elected officials for resolution. Just a few of the problems brought repeatedly to the DDS which have not been adequately addressed are:

- **Unrepresented LDC clients being moved into community homes which do not meet the high standards set in the LDC closure plan.** Movers have experienced declining health and hospitalization. A number have died; one merely three weeks after being transitioned.
- **The community state staff program (CSS) has not been implemented, even as 140 LDC residents were moved** to community placements, and even after DDS called the CSS program a critical part of the success of the Agnews' closure. Failed placements out of LDC are likely a result of novice community caregivers unfamiliar with the needs of this very fragile population. DDS claims they are powerless to implement the CSS program, yet it is unclear why.
- **No data has been provided by the Department on the outcomes of the initial 140 movers.** A handful of success stories offered by the regional centers are not statistically relevant. DDS and the regional centers must be tracking the transition data of every placement to date. When will they provide this information to reassure families and legislators that placements are happening successfully, and that deaths are being fully investigated?
- **The quality of services at Lanterman is declining, violating the guarantees of the Lanterman Act.** Experienced, well trained staff are departing, through attrition and layoffs. Staff morale is in decline and resident consolidations result in unfamiliar staff caring for clients. Therapeutic and recreational staff, as well as chaplains, are leaving, further reducing the quality of life for the residents who live day to day in a world of uncertainty.
- **Regional Center employees tell families the new care home models are still under development.** Some will not be available for a year or more. Meanwhile, services at LDC are being cut back or discontinued; the Rustic Camp recreation area, the church services, and the Café.
- **Hopeful families attended a meeting at LDC on Saturday, October 13, 2012, to again raise these issues with DDS Director Delgadillo.** While there were hours of discussion, no suitable solutions were offered to alleviate families' concerns.

After two years of negotiations with DDS, families have no choice but to take further action. The lives of the most fragile and behaviorally challenged clients are at stake. As conditions at LDC further deteriorate and promised community options fail to materialize, we must act. **We call for a moratorium* on placements out of LDC until:**

1. *The community state staff program is fully implemented, and providers have hired employees from LDC to provide direct care in the homes,*
2. *Data is made public demonstrating outcomes of every LDC mover to date, commencing from January 1, 2010,*
3. *Assurances are provided, in writing, that downsizing at LDC will be suspended until community services development has been completed,*
4. *Programs at LDC will not be downsized or eliminated until all clients have been transitioned.*
5. *Family rights, documented in the DDS Individual Program Plan manual, will be respected during the planning team process, and families will not be pressured to accept placements that are not equal or better than what their loved one currently receives at LDC.*

**While we call for a moratorium on placements, we support families who wish to proceed with their child's transition. Our request is for a moratorium on placements of unrepresented clients or those whose families wish to wait until a satisfactory community option is available.*

Two years of unproductive negotiations, empty promises and broken commitments are enough. **Families and advocates of Lanterman residents plead with legislators to call for a moratorium on placements out of Lanterman Developmental Center, until all health and safety concerns have been addressed.**

Respectfully,

117 Lanterman Families