

MISSOURI 2011 VOR STATE REPORT

Despite our best efforts, the Nevada Habilitation Center, is in the process of being closed to save the state budget \$3,000,000. There had been a plan to build new homes on the campus under waiver funding, but CMS denied the use of waiver funding for this type of construction, therefore the closure. We had an opportunity to meet with Mental Health Department and government officials, but were not able to stop the closing of this center. Families are devastated about losing this center as a home for their relatives.

In March, CMS held a “community conversation” meeting in St. Louis, to take comments about the denial of waiver funding. Most of those present were against using waiver funding for anything but total community inclusion.

There is a no new admissions policy in Missouri, which is part of a long term plan to eliminate more intermediate care facilities. We are continuing to try to reverse this decision.

New construction and renovation at the Bellefontaine Habilitation Center is ongoing, with first new buildings completion date in August 2011. New construction is four 8 bedroom homes for those requiring the most services. These funds were fought for over 3 years.

In the current legislative session, our concerns have been with House Bills 411 and 421, HB648 and 555, and with Senate Bill 56. **HB411 and HB421 have been defeated**, thanks to statewide efforts to inform the legislature of the needs of our family members, and the full impact these bills would have had.

If passed, each of these bills would have caused the closure of habilitation centers in the next few years. Also, each bill has a provision to override legal guardianship, through change of law if necessary, because legal guardians are seen as an obstacle to moving everyone into the community!!! We must continue to advocate for the protection of our civil rights as legal guardians, and the civil rights of our family members who are in need of 24/7 care and services.

HB648 and HB555 called for substituting the words “mental retardation” with “developmental disabilities” in Missouri statutes. This substitution of wording lags behind the current terminology to be used in all federal documents. Rosa’s Law was signed into law October 2010. At the federal level “mental retardation” and “developmental disabilities” is being replaced by “intellectual disability”. We were able to get the words “intellectual disability” in the law in some places.

Thanks to Governor Nixon for his ongoing support of habilitation centers as part of a continuum of care for those who require this level of service. While discussing a Partnership for Hope initiative, Governor Nixon told NBC Action News he will not support closing the habilitation centers. Nixon said. “Wiping that out completely is, I think, very dangerous for folks who need that 24-hour care.”

(KANSAS CITY nbcactionnews.com posted 02/15/11)

Thanks to VOR for giving national importance and support to our state level discussions.