

**WASHINGTON STATE REPORT  
VOR ANNUAL MEETING  
June 10, 2011**

*Sustain – To endure without giving way or yielding; to keep up or keep going*

ICFs/MR & Nursing Facilities advocates in WA state were dealt their hardest blow in 19 years during this last Legislative Session. Frances Haddon Morgan Center (FHMC), an ICF/MR and Yakima Valley School (YVS) a 87 bed NF, have been deemed dispensable by the Governor and State Legislature.

FHMC, home to 56 individuals with Autism & other Behavioral Challenges, will close by December 31, 2011. Its current residents will be transferred to another Residential Habilitation Center (RHC), to a Supported Living program or to a State Operated Living Alternative or SOLA. The SOLAs have yet to be established. They will be designed specifically for the clients of FHMC. The final decision as to where the residents will reside will be made by Parents/Guardians.

YVS' fate is slightly different. No admissions will be allowed at YVS after June 30, 2011. No clients will be forced to move from the facility. Only short term stays & crisis stabilization clients will be admitted to YVS. Moving requests will be honored. No closure date is set. However, closure will be decided when the long term client census is down to 16. At that time a date will be set and YVS will lose its status as an RHC.

The bill that accomplished all this and more was pushed through the legislature in an unorthodox manner. Notice of a Public Hearing in the Senate was an addition to the Agenda of the Hearing 15 minutes before its start. Few advocates live within a two hour drive of the state Capital. Getting through Seattle traffic on any given afternoon is a nightmare. The House gave advocates a 15 hour notice.

Advocates did their best to point out all the shortcomings of the bill. Issues included harm to clients and families, no cost savings, massive additional costs, CMS violations, loss of jobs, expertise and Professional Services. Nothing seemed to matter, other than a facility must close.

This bill is a harbinger of what is to come. The following are some of the items described within the bill:

- 1) No later than 7/1/12 no person under the age of 16 may be admitted to an RHC
- 2) No later than 7/1/12 no person under the age of 21 may be admitted to an RHC unless there are no appropriate services available in the community
- 3) 2 SOLAs are to be established on the campus of FHMC
- 4) YVS shall continue to provide crisis stabilization & respite service beds at their existing bed capacity
- 5) 8 state-staffed crisis stabilization beds & 8 state staffed respite beds shall be established in the geographic areas with the greatest need (**upon funding provided by an appropriations act**)
- 6) DDC will be contracted to provide Mentoring Services to the transferring clients & families
- 7) Transportation & other supports needed to assist family & friends in maintaining regular contact with the client will be provided
- 8) Use existing QA process currently in use by the Department\*
- 9) Convene a work group to review findings from QA to assure moving process during transition\*\*
- 10) Establish a Task Force to study the future of the RHCs\*\*\*

“Sustainability” and the “Right Footprint” have been the battle cry for the Department and the Legislature this year. Neither is obtainable with this bill in place. Costs will increase, expertise will be lost and real harm will come to real people.

Advocates have begun to strategize as to how to avoid further losses within the RHC system. Perhaps, even a way to save Yakima Valley School.

\*Currently WA state is on its 3<sup>rd</sup> temporary extension for certification because its incident reporting process does not meet the standards of CMS for Home Community Based Services Waivers

\*\*Work Group will include DDC, DRW (P&A), UW Center for Human Development & Disability, Providers and families & advocates of persons with disabilities – Balance?

\*\*\*Task Force will consist of 4 Members of Legislature, plus appointees by the governor including: 2 advocates for people with DD, 1 DDC member, 1 representative of families of RHC residents, 2 Union members, 1 representative of Dept. of Social & Health Services, 1 representative of Dept. of General Administration – A Stacked Deck of Institutional Bias

Respectfully submitted

Terri Anderson  
WA State Coordinator