

Arkansas' State-of-the-State Report for 2018 – to VOR June, 2019

There are five public ICFs in Arkansas serving over 900 residents from every county. There are open admissions to the centers. One center, Conway, admits children. In addition to meeting licensure requirements from the office of long term care, the five human development centers are accredited by CARF, an international accrediting association.

Arkansas' statewide parent-guardian association – Families & Friends of Care Facility Residents (FF/CFR) – is a 501c3 organization and advocates for all 5 of our state's Human Development Centers (HDCs), and for all HDC residents. Each of the centers has a family-friends association and has representation on the FF/CFR Board.

Key to the centers' viability is the support of the state legislature, the Governor and the Governor-appointed DDS Board. FF/CFR members make a conscious effort to attend monthly meetings of the Legislative Public Health Committee and other relevant committees as well. We review documents and submit comments, objections and requests on issues which affect our HDCs. FF-CFR representatives attend quarterly DDS Board meetings. We strive to maintain good contact with relevant Governor's staff members. We encourage HDC families to know their legislators and to share their family members' stories.

The following is a list of things that happened in our state in 2018:

- 1) *Our DDS Director continues to be proactive regarding our HDCs.*
- 2) *The DDS Board, responsible for HDC operations and comprised of Governor-appointed members, is very supportive as well.*
- 3) *Our Governor asked for cost savings across the board for all state agencies. DDS saved \$1.3 million, and the Director was able to ask for that money back to start building new residential buildings at our oldest facility.*
- 4) *Steady capital improvements are being done at all 5 of our centers.*
- 5) *The 3rd Annual DDS "Developmental Disabilities Craft Fair" was a huge success in downtown Little Rock. Individuals with DD sell their crafts, and this includes items made by our HDC residents.*
- 6) *Subsequently, a store front has been established on the bottom floor of the DHS Office building. It features all things made by individuals with ID/DD. It's a wonderful success, and a joy to visit and purchase items.*
- 7) *Because of FF/CFR's Action Alerts sent via email to parents/guardians – several bills that would have negatively affected our HDCs were thwarted.*
- 8) *There were several efforts to address the DD Waiver Wait List of approximately 3,000 people.*
- 9) *As in other states, Arkansas has searched for ways to reduce its Medicaid expenditures. The State created a provider-led managed care system for high cost individuals, including persons with developmental disabilities. The Division of Developmental Disabilities has oversight of the "PASSEs" (Provider-led Arkansas Shared Savings Entities). It is too soon to say how successful the system will be at providing the care needed by eligible individuals, at making a profitable business model for the providers and also at generating additional funds to reduce the waiting list. The HDCs are not part of the PASSEs.*
- 10) *As career center employees retire, hiring, training and retaining sufficient numbers of direct care staff are current challenges.*

Working together we make a difference.

Respectfully submitted, Rita Hoover, Jan Fortney and Carole Sherman