

Testimony from Sybil Finken - Past President of VOR, Member of the VOR Board of Directors, mother of a medically fragile child with severe intellectual disabilities.

On April 8, 2022 the state of Iowa announced its decision to close Glenwood Resource Center (GRC), Glenwood, Iowa. The Intermediate Care Facility for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (ICF/IDD) is slated to close in June, 2024.

After an investigation by the Department of Justice (DOJ), the state decided it was too expensive to fix the problems and decided to end ICF/IDD service in Glenwood, Iowa. 152 of Iowa's most vulnerable, special needs people are being evicted from their homes. 500+ employees will lose their employment.

My son Seth has made his home on the GRC campus. since 1984. My family and I have lived in the small, southwest Iowa community of Glenwood, Iowa for nearly 50 years. The news is devastating not only to families and staff, but also to several surrounding counties. GRC has been an important employer in the area for many years.

Seth was born perfectly normal in 1979. At age 7 months, Seth had two back-to-back cases of meningitis, leaving him profoundly brain damaged, deaf, blind, non-ambulatory and suffering a seizure disorder. My son requires around the clock care and will require it for the rest of his life. Seth is medically fragile and has been served at GRC for most of his life. The GRC campus is his home.

The Department of Health and Human Services has made plans to move 40 individuals to Woodward Resource Center (WRC) in Woodward, Iowa, near the Des Moines area. The remaining individuals would be placed in waiver homes throughout the state. The Director of DHS has assured parents, families, and guardians that our loved ones will receive the same level of care in the community.

There is much doubt from families and guardians that our loved ones will receive the same high level of care that they have enjoyed at GRC. There are few, if any, community facilities in southwest Iowa offering the ICF level of care that our loved ones require.

The horror stories have already begun. One individual with severe behavior issues has been arrested after an altercation in his new group home, one individual with severe needs was improperly secured, fell out of the van and broke his leg. Another individual in a wheelchair is slated to go to a community facility with bedrooms only on the second floor. Two guardians report that the group homes they visited were filthy dirty and wouldn't be placing their wards in them.

If there were private ICFs, group homes, or community placements that could serve the needs of all of the folks being evicted from GRC, I would support the move. However, the services are not in place. Closing GRC before the state is ready to provide for them is premature and idealistic.

The nationwide move to close ICF facilities has been in action for 40+ years. Until now, Iowa has escaped total closure of one of our two resource centers. I don't know what will happen. We are currently looking at a facility that is two and a half hours away, and another that is four hours away. Having Seth that far away is unacceptable to me.