

## **South Carolina Report for VOR 2016 Annual Meeting & Washington Initiative - June 2016**

### **Reported by Kathleen Roberts, SC State Coordinator for VOR**

Parents of the Regional Centers (ICF/IID) are concerned about the low salaries, recruitment and retention of direct care staff at the 5 Regional Centers in the State of South Carolina.

Recent letters sent from 3 of the 5 parent/advocate groups of the regional centers to several SC legislators, the SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN) Commissioners and the director of DDSN has helped to raise awareness of the shortage of direct care staff, the extreme overtime being laid upon staff and the need for salary increases beyond what staff received this year as stated in the report below. Staff are being held over 4 to 8 hours many days of the week due to shortage in coverage. Also clients with behavioral challenges are being admitted to the regional centers because they can not be served in the community due to the lack of qualified providers. This has caused staff normally taking care of 4 to 6 clients to be pulled to a 1 on 1 position with these behaviorally challenged clients, thus causing even more of a staff shortage to our medically fragile clients.

DDSN does recognize that the 5 DDSN Regional Centers (ICF/IID) are an important part of the continuum of care and a safety net for the most medically fragile and behaviorally challenged intellectually disabled. With this in mind they are searching for ways to recruit new staff and will be researching ways to find money for pay raises. Unfortunately time is critical as staff are already leaving for better paying jobs with less overtime.

We will continue to look for ways to solve these critical issues.

On another issue, we find that the Regional Centers are not being offered as an option for residential care, unless it is an emergency. Only when parents know to call their legislators to request this option does this happen. We continue to find this disturbing that our regional centers (ICF/IID) are not an option mentioned.

Trends in South Carolina:

Expansion and Improvement of Person-Centered Services  
Utilization of In-Home Supports and Services  
Implementation of the new CMS Final Rule  
Waiting List Reduction Initiative

Key Legislation:

Removing the "R" Word  
South Carolina ABLE Savings Program

Number of SCDDSN Consumers and Where They Live:

Currently 32,169 individuals are eligible for services funded through SCDDSN  
25,891 (80.4%) live at home, independently or with family  
5119 (16%) live in SCDDSN funded residential settings  
1159 (3.6%) live in non-DDSN funded residential settings (foster home for example)

SCDDSN Funded Residential Settings (5119 people total):

3563 (70%) Community residential settings 4 people or less  
395 (7%) Community residential settings 6-15 people  
497 (10%) ICF/IID Community  
664 (13%) ICF/IID Regional Center

Unduplicated Number of Individuals on Waiver Waiting Lists:

5879 as of May 1, 2016

FY 2015-2016 Special Pay Increases at Regional Centers Initiated by SCDDSN:

Food Service Staff 7% Base Pay Increase  
Housekeeping Staff 7% Base Pay Increase  
Direct Care Staff Compression Pay Increase Ranging from 1.5% to 2.5%  
Nursing Staff Compression Pay Increase Ranging from 1.5% to 2.5%

Websites:

[ddsn.sc.gov](http://ddsn.sc.gov) SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs

[whittencenterparentsclub.com](http://whittencenterparentsclub.com) (Whitten Center is one of the 5 state run  
Department of Disabilities and Special Needs  
(DDSN) Regional Centers in SC)