



Speaking out for people with intellectual & developmental disabilities



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## VOR Weekly News Update

News and views for VOR Advocates

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#### VOR in the News

1. Federal agencies ignore realities of care of the developmentally disabled

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July 30, 2014 \* Massachusetts Coalition of Families and Advocates, Inc. ([COFAR](#)) Blog

Some agencies within the Obama administration have an ideological bias against congregate care for the developmentally

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disabled that has apparently blinded them to the damage done to countless lives in the name of deinstitutionalization.

That bias, which is held as well by the Patrick administration in Massachusetts, is on display in an article written by a key former Obama administration official about the deinstitutionalization movement from the 1960's to the present.

The article is by Samuel Bagenstos, former principal deputy assistant attorney general in the Obama Justice Department's Civil Rights Division and a key litigator in deinstitutionalization cases.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

[Read VOR's Rebuttal to Mr. Bagenstos](#)

## **2. Improve care for disabled? We all have a role**

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***Minnesota Star Tribune* \* July 25, 2014 \***  
**Opinion Editorial by Sandra Gerdes, Director,  
executive director of Laura Baker Services  
Association in Northfield, MN**

An organization just outside the Twin Cities has served people with disabilities for 117 years. I've been its director for 17. So when a federal court monitor upbraided Minnesota's Department of Human Services (DHS) for poor progress on improving services for people with disabilities ("[State not meeting needs of disabled](#)," July 13), I sighed.

I have a stake in the process at DHS. And by the way, so do you.

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We've been undergoing reform for decades now, and accelerated reform for the last two years. The pendulum swung away from atrocious institutions in the 1970s and '80s — a much-needed correction at a time when people with developmental disabilities were shut away, and had no say in their own lives. It continues to swing toward community-based care.

Like any pendulum, it can take us too far.

[\*\*The Nonprofit Quarterly's "People as Pendulums" \(by Tamie Hopp, VOR\)\*\*](#) is an excellent analysis of what's gone wrong across the United States as we closed government-run institutions and released people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (called "I/DD") into the community. It says, in part, that this resulted in "the elimination of specialized housing, employment and education options for people with I/DD, leaving some to question the price of 'progress.'"

[\*\*Read more, comment and share\*\*](#)

### **LEGAL BRIEFS**

#### **3. Illinois: Murray closure on indefinite hold**

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**WILY/WRXX Radio (Centralia, IL) \* July 28, 2014**

Despite a positive ruling from a federal judge, Gov. Pat Quinn's administration's push to close the Warren G. Murray Developmental Center in Centralia is on indefinite hold.

According to the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), there is no timetable for closing the facility, but the agency, which operates the Murray Center, anticipates having more information in the coming weeks.

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IDHS spokeswoman Januari Smith says it will be a long process and the focus right now is on re-starting discussions with parents about all the living options that are available.

In a 55-page ruling issued last week, Judge Marvin Aspen said parents of residents did not prove they would suffer irreparable harm if Murray closes as part of Gov. Pat Quinn's push to move residents out of state institutions and into smaller care facilities.

Rita Winkeler, president of the Murray Parents Association, said Aspen also ruled the state must work with the parents to find an appropriate living arrangement for the residents.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

**Related editorial by Rita Winkeler, President, Murray Family Association: "[Murray residents given the choice they deserve](#)"**

**Related Press Release by the Illinois Association ICF/DD Providers (July 23, 2014): "[Murray Decision Validates ICF/DD Choice!](#)"**

#### **4. Supreme Court Asked To Clarify Schools' IDEA Obligations**

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***Disability Scoop* \* July 30, 2014**

The nation's school district leaders are asking the U.S. Supreme Court to weigh in on who should pay for a child's private school tuition while special education disputes are litigated.

Currently, school districts are responsible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's "stay-put" provision for paying for a student to remain in their existing educational placement while parents and schools sort out disputes

related to the child's special education services.

Now, however, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, the National School Boards Association and the Pennsylvania School Boards Association say that schools should be relieved of the responsibility to foot the bill for private school placements once a court finds in a district's favor.

The case is *M.R. v. Ridley School District*.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

### **AUTISM IN THE NEWS**

#### **5. Maryland: Video - Tragedy in Rockville: JaLynn Prince Speaks Out for Adults with Autism on "Montgomery Week in Review"**

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***Montgomery Week in Review* \* July 28, 2014**

This is a youtube video of JaLynn Prince from Madison Foundation responding to an incident covered in a Washington Post article, "[Coping with adult children's autism, parents may face 'least bad' decisions.](#)"

[Watch the video here](#)

#### **6. Advice for parents of children just diagnosed with autism, from those who've been there**

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***The Washington Post* \* July 30, 2014 \* by Mari-Jane Williams**

Your child was recently diagnosed with autism and you don't know where to turn? Here's some advice to get started.

[Read more. comment and share](#)

## 7. Five Autism Films on Netflix

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**National Autism Network \* July 30, 2014**

Click [here](#) to see synopses for these five autism documentaries and films that can currently be viewed on Netflix: *Sounding the Alarm*, *Fly Away*, *Dad's in Heaven with Nixon*, *A Mother's Courage: Talking Back to Autism*; and *The Story of Luke*.

## FEDERAL NEWS

## 8. State Transition Plans for New Medicaid HCBS Regulations: Four Tips for Consumer Advocates

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**National Senior Citizens Law Center and National Disability Rights Network [P&A] \* July 2014**

*[Disclaimer: This article is provided for informational and advocacy purposes only. For VOR's background paper on the new Medicaid HCBS Regulation visit our website [here](#). VOR is also part of the Community Choice Coalition, which published [this policy brief](#) about the new rule. To find out when your State's transition plan is due, visit [HCBSAdvocacy.org](http://HCBSAdvocacy.org)].*

States now are beginning to release their transition plans to bring their Medicaid HCBS systems into compliance with the new federal regulations on community-based settings. It is essential that consumers and their representatives be prepared to evaluate those plans and advocate for improvements.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

### Quotable

*“Treat a man as he is and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he can and should be and he will become as he can and should be.” ~ Stephen R. Covey. The 7 Habits of Highly*

## Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change

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### **Calendar Reminders:**

#### **Sunday, October 5, 2014**

American Health Care Association's 2014 ID/DD Residential Services Day during AHCA/NCAL's 65th Annual Convention & Expo at the Gaylord National Harbor just outside of Washington, DC. Registration information and the schedule can be found [here](#).

### **Archives**

#### **\* Thursday, March 20, 2014**

[VOR's "Regional Meetings: The Need for Advocates to Act Global and Local" Webinar.](#)

**\*Social Media Strengths: Using Facebook and Twitter to Advance Your Cause (VOR, July 2013).** [Visit VOR's website for a copy of the powerpoint presentation and an audio of the event.](#)

**\* How Congress Works Webinar: Recorded - Listen Here.** Tuesday, April 23, 2013 - 12:00 pm central / 1:00 pm eastern. How Congress Works: The Basics. Hosted by Peter Kinzler and Larry Innis.

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