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March 14, 2014



Speaking out for people with intellectual & developmental disabilities



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**Reminders:
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VOR Weekly News Update

News and views for VOR Advocates

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VOR and You

1. [VOR Webinar Opportunity – Register Today!](#)

VOR's "**Regional Meetings: The Need for Advocates to Act Global and Local**" Webinar, scheduled for Thursday, March 20 will discuss VOR's new vision for regional face-to-face meetings between VOR members, families, guardians and like-minded advocates. We'll discuss the advantages to state-level and national advocacy, networking, and development when advocates in a region have opportunity to connect with one another.

Date: Thu, Mar 20, 2014

Time: 10:00 am pacific / 11:00 am mountain /12:00 pm central / 1:00 pm eastern

Duration: 1 hour

Hosts: David Hart and Geoff Dubrowsky

Cost: FREE

This webinar is open to and NOT exclusive to VOR membership. You are encouraged to share this with your family members, parent/family groups and other like-minded individuals.

Please join us by [REGISTERING](#) here.

2. **VOR calls on National Council on Disability to support choice, reject forced deinstitutionalization, and include families/guardians as stakeholders**

On January 30, 2014, VOR President Ann Knighton and Vice President Jill Barker sent [letters](#) to National Council on Disability Board Members, including Chairman Jeff Rosen.

Calling on NCD to "support choice, reject forced deinstitutionalization, and include families/guardians as stakeholders," VOR pointed to the over 350 communications from families of individuals with profound intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) from around the country that NCD has received

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urging it to reject forced deinstitutionalization and embrace individual choice.

These families were writing in response to NCD's deliberations with regard to an NCD policy on deinstitutionalization, in follow up to NCD's October 2012 "[Deinstitutionalization Toolkit](#)" and companion document.

"The vast majority of these families have family members with profound I/DD who also experience medical, physical and/or behavioral challenges so extreme that highly specialized, licensed facility-based care is necessary for survival. All of these families support residential choice to accommodate the vast array of human need, from small to facility-based homes," VOR wrote.

"An 'all or nothing' approach places our most fragile individuals at great risk and compromises NCD's responsibility to advocate for all people with disabilities," VOR added.

NCD has not yet responded.

PRIVATIZATION IN THE NEWS

3. Pitfalls Seen in a Turn to Privately Run Long-Term Care

New York Times * March 6, 2014

At least 26 states are rolling out mandatory programs that put billions of Medicaid dollars into privately managed long-term care plans, in hopes of keeping people in their homes longer, and expanding alternatives to nursing homes. But a closer look reveals hidden pitfalls as the system of caring for the frail comes under the twin pressures of cost containment and profit motive. In many cases, care was denied after needs grew costlier — including care that people would have received under the old system.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

4. New Jersey: NJ Rutgers finds disabled, children and elderly at risk by inadequate oversight of its third-party contractors

Asbury Park Press * March 6, 2014

A recent study by Rutgers University criticizes state lawmakers for putting people with disabilities, children and the elderly at risk by inadequate oversight of its third-party contractors. The report, ***“Overlooking Oversight: A Lack of Oversight in the Garden State is Placing New Jersey Residents and Assets at Risk,”*** was released following a nearly three-year study and examines New Jersey’s capacity to provide oversight of third-party contractors. The Study includes a case review of the New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of Developmental Disabilities.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

Read related: [New Jersey State Legislature, Office of Legislative Services, Office of the State Auditor: Department of Human Services' Division of Developmental Disabilities Community Programs \(July 1, 2009 – July 31, 2013\)](#)

Contrast: [More group homes should be long-term goal for N.J., says New Jersey Department of Human Services' commissioner \(March 12, 2014\)](#)

5. Iowa: The “Boys” in the Bunkhouse

The New York Times * March 9, 2014

For more than 30 years, a few dozen other men with intellectual disabilities lived in a dot of a place in Iowa called Atalissa. Every morning before dawn, they were sent to eviscerate turkeys at a processing plant, in return for food, lodging, the occasional diversion and \$65 a month. For more than 30 years.

Their supervisors never received specialized training; never tapped into Iowa’s social service system; never gave the men the choices in life granted by decades of advancement in disability civil rights. Increasingly neglected and abused, the men remained in heartland servitude for most of their adult lives.

This Dickensian story — told here through court records, internal documents and extensive first-time interviews with several of the men — is little known beyond Iowa. But five years after their rescue, it continues to resound in halls of power. Last year the case led to the largest jury verdict in the history of the

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: \$240 million in damages — an award later drastically reduced, yet still regarded as a watershed moment for disability rights in the workplace. In both direct and subtle ways, it has also influenced government initiatives, advocates say, including President Obama's recent executive order to increase the minimum wage for certain workers.

Overall, the Atalissa case has been a catalyst for change, according to Senator Tom Harkin, Democrat of Iowa, a longtime champion of people with disabilities, who still struggles with what these vulnerable men endured in his home state.

"I hate to see what happened to them," the senator says. "But, by gosh, something might happen *from* them."

[Read more, comment and share](#)

STATE NEWS

6. Georgia: A bittersweet "I told you so" development in Georgia

[A Message from Commissioner Frank W. Berry about DD transitions](#)

Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

"DBHDD Impact" * March 13, 2014

The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities remains firm in our commitment to the development of a statewide community-based system of care.

As a result of the department's [settlement agreement](#) with the U.S. Department of Justice concerning the Americans with Disabilities Act, we are assessing the unique needs of all individuals with developmental disabilities currently residing in our hospitals.

Consequently, we have made the decision to suspend patient transitions into community-based settings.

Transitions will resume on a case-by-case basis as we confirm that community placement will meet the comprehensive needs of each individual. We are working diligently in partnership with our provider

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network to develop homes that match each individual's needs and preferences.

We are confident that active management of the timing and pace of each transition will help produce successful outcomes and contribute to building a system of care allowing us to provide high-quality supports and services in local communities.

7. California: Lawmakers join fight for Sonoma Developmental Center

The Press Democrat * March 7, 2014

A coalition of Sonoma County government agencies and environmental groups is ramping up its fight to protect the Sonoma Developmental Center from development and to maintain residential care for an unspecified number of severely disabled clients.

The group's demands include that the center's open spaces be protected and for public recreational facilities to be expanded, in addition to maintaining some level of services for the disabled.

The coalition includes the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, county regional parks, the Sonoma Ecology Center and the Sonoma Land Trust. Sonoma's Parent Hospital Association also is on board.

State Sen. Noreen Evans, D-Santa Rosa, has introduced legislation backing the local push. SB 1428 would require state officials to "confer and cooperate" with public and private entities in an improvement and redevelopment plan for the center should it be slated for major alterations.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

QUALITY IN THE COMMUNITY?

Emergency room use by vulnerable populations

8. Seniors: Emergency Rooms Are No Place for the Elderly

The New York Times * Doctor and Patient Blog, by Pauline W. Chen, M.D.

Excerpt

None of the staff members had been trained in coordinating the complex outpatient care this elderly

patient needed. It's hard to imagine a health care setting more ill-suited for the elderly than today's emergency rooms. Over the last five decades, quality emergency care has become synonymous with speed. Survival rates for patients in the throes of a stroke, heart attack or traumatic injury depend on the number of minutes needed to triage, diagnose and treat. Even the physical environment where emergency care takes place has become a paragon of medical efficiency — large echoing spaces that can be divided at a moment's notice with panels of curtains, slick linoleum floors that can be mopped up in minutes and bright fluorescent lights.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

9. Iowa: Psychiatric patients find relief in ER, stress ER capacity

KIMT.com * March 6, 2014

A recent trend in hospital visits is showing more patients with psychiatric concerns are opting for emergency rooms. Unfortunately, doctors say many emergency rooms either do not have enough beds or enough qualified professionals to meet demand. Back in the 1950's, hospitals had one psychiatric bed per 300 Americans. Today, it's more like one per 3,000.

[Watch video](#)

[Read more, comment and share](#)

Quotables

"Comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable." ~
H.L. Mencken

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Calendar Reminders:

Thursday, March 20, 2014, 12:00 pm cst / 1:00 pm est
VOR's "Regional Meetings: The Need for Advocates to Act Global and Local" Webinar. Registration open. Free. Open to members and non-members.

Tuesday, March 25, 2014

AHCA/NCAL's fifth annual "ID/DD Residential Services Providers Hill Fly-In." Questions? Dana Halvorson, dhalvorson@ahca.org.

June 8, 2014

VOR 2014 Annual Conference and Initiative:

"Making it Happen: Reforming Policy and Law in Support of Person-Centered Quality and Choice"; Hyatt Regency, Washington, D.C.

[Register today!](#)

Week of June 9, 2013

VOR 2014 Congressional Initiative: Families and advocates visit Capitol Hill.

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 will open in Spring 2014.

Archives

***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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