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with intellectual disabilities

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Coming Soon: Course 2 * Effective Advocacy by Stephanie Vance. Free for VOR members. Not a member? Membership lapsed? [Join](#) or renew today and we'll share with you what you missed!

VOR Action Center

1. Sign VOR's Petition! (Be patient with the process!)

Thanks to all 322 people (so far!) who has signed [VOR's We the People petition](#) which asks the President to reform a system of care in crisis; people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are being harmed.

Some of you have cited with frustration the process involved with "[creating an account](#)," a prerequisite to signing the petition. **Please be patient and persistent!** The problems are likely due to a virtual "traffic jam" because many, many people are trying to access the website at the same time. **Please keep trying!** We have until December 1 to collect as many signatures as possible!

2. Ongoing H.R. 2032 advocacy. Your help needed to secure a hearing!

H.R. 2032's momentum =
*65 cosponsors and growing

*subcommittee referral

Let's work together to keep up the momentum. Check out [VOR's Action Alert](#), including a template letter, to encourage your U.S.

Representative to support a hearing and (if not already) cosponsor H.R. 2032.

Thank you!

State News

3. New York: 1,200 Deaths and Few Answers

November 6, 2011 * [New York Times](#)

In New York, it is unusually common for developmentally disabled people in state care to die for reasons other than natural causes.

One in six of all deaths in state and privately run homes, or more than 1,200 in the past decade, have been attributed to either unnatural or unknown causes, according to data obtained by The New York Times that has never been released. Read full story.

***This story is one part in a series, titled "[Used and Abused](#)."**

Read [VOR's Statement on a New York System in Crisis](#)

[Submit a Letter to Editor](#)

[Read Letters to the Editor](#)

4. Illinois: New budget plan may avert closures, layoffs, but only temporarily and with potentially greater cost: 4 closures

November 9, 2011 * The Southern

Gov. Pat Quinn has floated a retooled budget plan that could avert more than 1,900 layoffs and the closure of seven state facilities, including Jackson and Mabley Developmental Centers, but only temporarily.

As part of an 11th-hour budget agreement being brokered with lawmakers, Quinn instead would agree to close four state developmental centers and two mental health facilities within the next 2 ½ years.

It remained unclear Wednesday whether a deal could be approved before the end of the fall veto session Thursday.

Under the governor's new proposal, the Department of Human Services would reduce the number of residents served by state-operated developmental centers by at least 600. That would allow the agency to close up to four of the state's eight developmental centers by the summer of 2014. The proposal did not identify which facilities.

The new plan was circulated a day before a legislative panel is voted on Quinn's recommendation to close Logan Correctional Center in Lincoln, Jacksonville Development Center and the Tinley Park Mental Health Center. The Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability last month voted to reject Quinn's plan to close mental health centers in Chester and Rockford, a developmental center in Dixon (Mabley) and the juvenile lock-up in Murphysboro. The Commission, which is only advisory, also voted against the Jacksonville closure proposal.

Although the commission's recommendation is non-binding, the governor has never gone against the commission's recommendations. [Read more.](#)

5. Georgia is the latest state to comply with a Supreme Court ruling to move mental health patients out of hospitals and into the community

October 2011 * [Governing](#)

[**Editor's note:** This article is offered as an update and a lesson for advocates: As you will read, the concerns in Georgia were largely aimed at reforming its mental health system with 9,000 individuals potentially impacted. When details emerged from news of a DOJ settlement, the relatively small population of people with developmental disabilities - just 750 individuals served in state-operated ICFs/MR - were equally impacted. All state centers are slated to close. Families of affected DD individuals in coalition with other stakeholders continue to fight for choice].

The Justice Department sued the state to force it to improve the way it handled patients with mental disabilities. After a year of legal wrangling, Georgia and the federal government announced a settlement last fall. Now, Georgia has been given its biggest mental health-care challenge in history. Under the settlement, the state must relocate 9,000 individuals with mental illness and 750 with developmental disabilities out of hospitals and into communities. The new model will include treatment teams in the field,

government-supported housing and employment, wellness centers and peer-support programs, where people in the process of recovery can offer guidance and encouragement to one another. Those community-based facilities will be linked to a statewide system of comprehensive mental health services -- a system that's far from complete. [Read more.](#)

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