



Speaking out for people with intellectual & developmental disabilities



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**Reminders:
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VOR and YOU

1. To Tweet and Retweet

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**Reminders:
Help VOR Grow!**

Are you [following VOR on Twitter](#) yet?

If not, here is just a sampling of what you missed this week from [@VOR_NET](#):

- Opinion: Shame on @GovChristie - Little compassion for NJ Woodbridge home closing. Profits over people <http://mycj.co/100ZRAV>
- #MI Dying with Rights on: We dump & ignore, we imprison, unless, they kill themselves (40,000/yr) @DanielMorain <http://sacb.ee/1Ee1>
- The economic job impact of the Jacksonville Developmental Center closure <http://bit.ly/1vshBC8> via @WCBURadio
- New condos delight those with disabilities <http://delonline.us/1utGr0l> via @delawareonline
- Dec 2 = #GivingTuesday. A nat'l day of giving aft lots of #blackfriday #cybermonday shopping. Think <http://vor.net/donate-now> & share #unselfie

Twitter is short on characters, but big on information. [Follow VOR on twitter](#) and get your news early, often, short and sweet.

And, leading up to #GivingTuesday (Dec. 2) and beyond, share those **unselfish selfies** ("unselfies") with VOR on Twitter and Facebook too - pictures of you doing something great for VOR or another charity (volunteering or giving!)

THANK YOU!

About VOR

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About VOR

2. Maryland: State health officials: 'No plan to close Holly Center'

Delmarva Now * October 10, 2014

[VOR's Mary Reese and Mark Engberg were featured speakers; VOR helped develop the ["Facility Closures: A brief history and its impact on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities"](#) written presentation].

Despite last week's shut-down of a 25-bed housing unit, state health officials assured unnerved stakeholders that the Holly Center residential complex for the developmentally disabled would not close.

"First of all, and most importantly, I want to say that there is no plan to close the Holly Center, and it has never been a proposed part of the budget," Secretary Joshua M. Sharfstein in the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene. "I was surprised to read that there is such a plan."

Sharfstein was referring to an Oct. 7 letter to state officials and circulated among center stakeholders that DHMH "is now targeting Holly Center for closure."

The [letter](#), drafted by James Anzalone, former director at the Rosewood Center, coincided with the latest unit closure at Holly Center, one of two remaining state-run residential facilities of its kind in Maryland. Rosewood Center was among those to discontinue as a long-term residential facility. Instead, some residents were transferred to community-based homes that, according to Anzalone's letter, "was a death sentence for many of them."

Fridav's forum at the Holly Center campus

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attracted an audience of about 100 people that included residents and family members and state, county and city elected officials.

The forum was hosted by the Greater Salisbury Committee, Inc., that donated \$2 million some four decades ago to build the facility that at the time was one of 11 residential centers in Maryland.

[Read more, COMMENT and share](#)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

2. Canada: Smiths Falls removes mandatory separation distances between group homes and gets rid of “offensive” bylaw that capped total number of people in them

***The Toronto Star* * October 7, 2014**

Mental health survivors are celebrating the settlement of a human rights complaint against Smiths Falls, whose council voted late Monday to amend discriminatory bylaws that limit group homes.

A group home is defined as a place where three to 10 people, who require a group living arrangement because of emotional, mental, social or physical conditions, live together in a single household.

Council also removed a “more offensive” cap of 36 on the total number of those people who could live in all group homes in the municipality.

[Read more, COMMENT and share](#)

LEGAL NEWS

3. Mental Health Ruling in Washington State Could Reverberate through the Country

***Governing* * October 2014**

Emergency rooms have become a place of last resort for the mentally ill. About the half the states admit to doing it. With increased demand on proper mental health facilities, the practice known as psychiatric boarding -- temporarily holding mentally ill patients in hospital ERs until beds become available at certified treatment centers -- has become a serious problem nationwide.

Now, it's an unconstitutional one in Washington State.

Last year, 10 patients in Pierce County, Wash., sued to end their involuntary detention on the grounds they were not being held at appropriate treatment facilities. During a preliminary hearing before a mental health commissioner, experts testified that patients held in hospitals commonly receive little or no mental health care. It is testimony backed up by a 2008 report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that found that boarding "often creates an environment in which a psychiatric patient slowly deteriorates."

Many states have laws authorizing the involuntary detention of people who pose a risk to themselves or others. Many of these states also regularly lack the space to place individuals in certified facilities. As a result, patients are held for days -- in some cases literally strapped to beds -- in emergency departments at acute-care hospitals until a bed opens up.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

Related from Washington State: "[Escaping the mental-health abyss: Trapped in the netherworld between jails and psychiatric hospitals, a woman's sad case may force change](#)" (Seattle Times, October 13, 2014)

Read related: [The Mentally Ill Mostly Go to](#)

[Jail, Not Psych Hospitals](#) (*Kaiser Health News, April 9, 2014*)

4. Illinois: Talks about closing Murray Developmental Center at a standstill

***The Southern Illinoisan* * October 13, 2014**

It's been 15 years since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of two women with intellectual disability and mental illness who argued they were unnecessarily kept in a state-run institution in Georgia in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The lawsuit brought by those women, Lois Curtis and Elaine Wilson, has changed the conversation about the appropriateness of institutions as living settings for people with disabilities.

For years, states and advocacy groups have grappled with the best way to answer the mandate of what's known as the 1999 Supreme Court *Olmstead* decision. This has resulted in lawsuits, poorly planned facility closures, and multi-million dollar transition initiatives that have worked with varying degrees of success in reaching the overall goal of providing more community living options for people with disabilities and downsizing the use of expensive facilities.

That debate continues to play out across Illinois, and in the region at Centralia's Murray Developmental Center, an institution for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities that Gov. Pat Quinn has targeted for closure under a so-called Rebalancing Initiative.

[Read more, COMMENT and share](#)

MENTAL HEALTH IN NEWS

5. Mentally ill deserve more of our attention

The Sacramento Bee * October 5, 2014 *
Column by Dan Morain

Excerpts

We dump and ignore them. When they don't react well, we jail and imprison them, unless, that is, they take matters into their own hands and kill themselves, as happens 40,000 times a year.

Disability Rights attorney Pamela Cohen would not talk with me. But she was quoted in a publication last month as saying assisted outpatient treatment doesn't work and that Disability Rights was contemplating suing Los Angeles County to block the implementation of Laura's Law. Such a suit could have consequences, both for the expansion of assisted outpatient treatment programs and for Disability Rights.

In the mid-1970s, Congress funded legal-aid groups such as Disability Rights California to defend the civil rights of mentally ill people who were held in inhumane conditions in asylums.

"Their initial mission of stopping maltreatment has morphed into stopping treatment, and that is wrong," said Rep. Tim Murphy, R-Pa.

Murphy is carrying HR 3717 to alter antiquated laws and authorize more federal money for aid the care of people who are the sickest. It also would pare back the \$35 million that the federal government spends on legal-aid groups such as Disability Rights.

[Read more, COMMENT and share](#)

STATE NEWS

6. Illinois: Battle over state facility is personal, political

WBEZ 95.1 * October 13, 2014

Advocates say institutions are bad for residents, but some families say their loved ones won't survive the move.

[Read more, COMMENT and share](#)

7. Ohio: Managed Care Program: Trouble persists for health workers

The Columbus Dispatch * October 12, 2014

"I initially thought things were getting better because it had quieted down the past several months," said John Arnold, a program manager for Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio, a consumer-advocacy group.

But Arnold said he held a conference call of 58 managed-care enrollees throughout the state about a week ago and all but one said things had not improved. He said they complained about losing access to doctors and specialists and delays in authorizations for physical therapy and prescriptions and that their independent workers and home-health agencies still were not getting paid in a timely manner.

"It's horrible; there's nothing good about this managed-care program," said April Crawford, the client-care coordinator at Approved Home Health, a family-owned company near Toledo.

According to the state, the goal of MyCare Ohio is to better coordinate long-term care and behavioral- and physical-health services — such as doctor visits, prescription drugs and home care — and to save money.

People eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare make up only 14 percent of the total

Medicaid population in Ohio but account for about 34 percent of all costs, said Sam Rossi, spokesman for the state Department of Medicaid.

Since May, Arnold said he has received 811 complaints from senior citizens and people with disabilities who have lost services or had their care disrupted.

[Read more, COMMENT and share](#)

8. New Jersey: Christie plan to return disabled to N.J. leads one man to hospitals, jail

***NJ.com* * October 10, 2104**

Eighteen months ago, Tyler Loftus was a 20-year-old man who worked three part-time jobs despite his autism and mental illness. Supervised by a facility in Langhorne, Pa., that was his home since 2004, Loftus found friends and a stable life.

That stability ended in the spring of 2013, when Loftus was selected to be among the first wave of about 500 “Return Home New Jersey” candidates — people with disabilities who were living in out-of-state facilities the Christie administration intends to transfer to less expensive in-state group homes closer to their families. The plan has been met with anger from many families and a failed attempt at reversing it with legislation.

[Read more, COMMENT and share](#)

Quotable

"Be of good cheer. Do not think of today's failures, but of the success that may come tomorrow. You have set yourselves a difficult

task, but you will succeed if you persevere; and you will find a joy in overcoming obstacles. Remember, no effort that we make to attain something beautiful is ever lost." ~ Helen Keller

Calendar Reminders:

December 2, 2014

#GivingTuesday

<http://vor.net/donate-now>

Sunday, June 7, 2015

VOR Annual Conference

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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