

Community for All Coalition

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Disability Group Applauds State for Decision to Close Howe Developmental Center

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOREST PARK, IL (September 5) – The Community for All Coalition, comprised of disability organizations from across Illinois, congratulates the State of Illinois on its decision to close Howe Developmental Center. State officials announced plans to close the facility at a noon news conference today.

Howe is an institution in Tinley Park that has been continuously struggling with serious concerns over the safety of its approximately 300 residents with developmental disabilities. Investigations into the death of over 20 residents at Howe since 2005 revealed many instances of grossly substandard care, according to the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy system for Illinois, Equip for Equality.

The Community for All Coalition called for closure of Howe at a May 30 press conference where they revealed a report detailing the institution's unsafe conditions. In July, the Coalition confronted state officials, and demanded that the state develop a transition plan to provide safe alternatives for its residents. "We want Howe residents to be able to move back to their home communities with high quality services that will allow them to live more free and independent lifestyles," said Mark Karner of Progress Center for Independent Living.

Today, the Coalition's efforts came to fruition. "We congratulate Illinois on choosing to do the right thing for people with disabilities by closing Howe," said Lester Pritchard of the Campaign for Real Choice in Illinois. "Now the state can get to work with families and individuals at Howe to formulate and implement a transition plan to meet individual needs and desires. The individuals who currently live at Howe should now be able to enjoy the freedoms that the rest of society enjoys." he added.

Community for All Coalition members include Progress Center for Independent Living, Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago, Equip for Equality, Campaign for Real Choice in Illinois, Institute on Public Policy, Illinois Voices, People First of Illinois, Chicago ADAPT, and the Institute on Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois, Chicago.

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