



Advancing the human and civil rights of people with disabilities

SELF-ADVOCACY ASSISTANCE ★ LEGAL SERVICES ★ DISABILITY RIGHTS EDUCATION ★ PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY ★ ABUSE INVESTIGATIONS

VIA FACSIMILE and POSTAL SERVICE

March 21, 2007

Governor Rod R. Blagojevich
Office of the Governor
100 West Randolph Street, Suite 16-100
Chicago, Illinois 60601-3220

Dear Governor Blagojevich:

In light of the recent decertification of the Howe Developmental Center, and the Abuse Investigation Unit's most recent observations of staff actions and record reviews, we are again calling on the State to 1) close the facility and to take immediate action to develop a reasonable closure plan to allow for the timely and safe transition of the individuals living at Howe to other settings of their choice; and 2) enhance the level of monitoring to ensure the safety of the individuals living at Howe.

The fact that Howe was unable to meet minimum standards to pass a survey, which by the facility's own admission they prepared for over the course of several months, once again demonstrates the depth of the problems that have continued unabated. The Abuse Investigation Unit's most recent visits to Howe this month confirm the depth of those problems and the urgent need to begin the process of closing the facility. Based upon those most recent visits and information received by this office it is evident that:

- Howe staff are intentionally engaging in conduct designed to create a heightened level of anxiety in individuals living there and their families;
- Individuals continue to be at significant risk as a result of staff's failure to report incidents of abuse and neglect, staff's failure to follow individual plans developed to address specific needs and medical staff's failure to conduct examinations following injuries and incidents;
- Facility records also document that restraints are being used unlawfully and that staff may also be improperly utilizing seclusion.

We call upon the State to immediately enhance the level of monitoring to ensure the safety of the individuals living at Howe while the State takes action to address the future of that institution. We are available to assist in such monitoring activities as we were called upon to do prior to the closure of the Lincoln Developmental Center. We are also available to

THE INDEPENDENT, FEDERALLY MANDATED PROTECTION & ADVOCACY SYSTEM FOR THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

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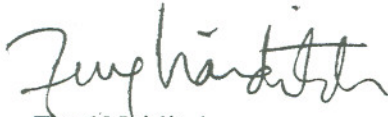
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answer any questions you or your staff may have and to assist in the development of a closure plan as outlined in our February 6, 2007 letter calling for the closure of Howe.

The closure of the Howe Developmental Center provides the State with an important opportunity to address the significant fiscal inequity in the amount of funds which the State allocates to the community based system of care for people with disabilities in Illinois, a system which is woefully under funded. We call upon the Administration to commit that the savings realized as a result of the closure will be reinvested exclusively in the community system of care.

Sincerely,



Zena Naiditch
President and CEO

cc: Louanner Peters
Deputy Governor - Office of the Governor

Secretary Carol Adams
Illinois Department of Human Services

Dr. Eric Whitaker, Director
Illinois Department of Public Health

Barry Maram, Director
Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services

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