



Achieve with us.

"For people with intellectual, developmental and other life-affecting disabilities."

December 29, 2015

To: Commissioner Murray, DDS

From: Susan M. Desrosiers

Position: Executive Director

Organization: The Arc of Quinebaug Valley, Inc.

Re: STS Recommendations

The Arc of Quinebaug Valley, Inc. has provided services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities for the past 64 years. Our agency contracts to provide services through area school systems, DDS and other state agencies. The Arc has always strived to provide quality services despite a lack of adequate funding to cover the services. Closing Southbury Training School is the best solution to ensuring stability, economic vitality, and growth for everyone involved, most importantly the individuals we (and other non-profit agencies alike) serve.

The Arc respectfully offers the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Close Southbury Training School by December 31, 2018.

Justification: Community providers have helped individuals transition out of institutions and into community settings over the last several decades with a great deal of success. Individuals have flourished into productive members of their respective communities. Many of these individuals had spent decades in institutions and were thought to be unable to function outside of that controlled environment. The reality is that all individuals can live within a community setting with the right supports.

The cost of providing services in the private sector is a fraction of the cost of providing services in a public setting. Significant savings to the DDS budget would be realized with the closing of all public settings – not just STS. The cost savings MUST be returned to DDS, not to the State's General Fund, and used to provide services to those individuals on the DDS Waiting List. DDS has one of the largest budgets in the nation and due to the two tiered system (public and private), only a fraction of the individuals who could receive services actually do.

Recommendation 2: Increase reimbursement rates to providers.

Justification: Private providers have not had an increase in rates since 2007. In fact, providers have actually had a decrease in rates. The current system does not pay providers an adequate rate that allows for attracting, training and retaining qualified staff. Due to the current employment climate and the increase in minimum wage, it is more difficult than ever to find qualified and dedicated staff.

The rates for most of the services are inadequate and leave providers in a poor fiscal position with insufficient revenue to meet expenses. As the age of individuals with intellectual and

developmental disabilities increases, so do their needs. This puts an increasing burden on private providers without reimbursement for the extra expense. Closing STS, along with the regional centers, and moving individuals to community based settings will save enough money to adequately pay private providers to assure fiscal stability and sustainability for the future.

The Arc of Quinebaug Valley, Inc. strongly believes that the savings realized by closing Southbury Training School should be reinvested into the DDS system, which would give the thousands of families on the DDS Waiting & Planning List resources, as well as hope, that their adult children will have a safe and stable life ahead. Closing this institution and moving these individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities into a less restrictive setting will not only offer them incredible opportunities to live in the community, but will shed some light on a promise for a bright future.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Desrosiers
Executive Director