

VOICES

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YOUR VIEW

Holly Center closure chilling

The Holly Center administration recently announced the closure of another of its residential cottages. After this closure, there will only be four of the original nine cottages in service. The current census is well under half of its original capacity. Holly Center is a federally regulated facility operated by the state of Maryland to serve those with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

I am the legal guardian of a 70-year-old woman with profound disabilities who requires 24-hour total care. She has lived in a facility-based setting and in a group setting. The group home — or community residential program — was inadequate to meet her complex needs. The state only allowed her admission to Holly Center after she suffered a serious injury due to the group home staff's neglect.

She has lived at Holly Center 18 months and she has blossomed. She is safe, well-cared for and loved, and she is making progress, even at her advanced age.

It is clear Maryland wants to eliminate this level of care for our most vulnerable citizens. As voting taxpayers, we need to let our legislators know Holly Center is critically important to our community. The center should be available to help reduce the state's waiting list for services and assist families in critical need of respite care for their disabled loved ones.

Mary Reese, Ocean City