

MISSOURI STATE REPORT

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Missouri continues to deny any new admissions to state run ICFs/IID (called habilitation centers in Missouri). This policy has been in effect since 2008.

There are families across the state waiting for residential placement but are not allowed to have the choice of a state run ICF/IID.

Since 2010 the Nevada and Northwest habilitation centers have been closed. The Marshall center is in the process of merging with the Higginsville center. The 5 remaining habilitation centers are Bellefontaine, South County, St. Charles, Higginsville, and Southeast Missouri Residential Services/Poplar Bluff/Sikeston.

The Bellefontaine Habilitation Center has been extensively remodeled in the last few years. Four new state of the art homes of 8 bedrooms each opened in 2012. Residents have their own private bedrooms. These homes are for the most severely disabled. All other homes on the campus have been renovated. Many older buildings have been demolished.

Information available from the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) emphasizes “self-determination” and “natural supports”. The DMH policies support the thinking that everyone can live in the community, no matter the severity of disability. Information about habilitation centers has become minimal and hard to find on the DMH website.

DMH is compiling the required report to Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) concerning the final rule about community environments that will qualify for Medicaid reimbursement. This CMS ruling on community living has some private providers considering all options. Emmaus Homes may close campus homes and only provide homes in the community. Families are working to keep the campus homes open.

The 2015 Missouri legislature passed Senate Bill 174 which establishes the ABLE Act in Missouri. Each state must put regulations in place to participate in the new federal ABLE law that will allow a person who acquired a disability before the age of 26 to open special accounts to save up to \$100,000 without risking eligibility for Social Security and other government programs.

There are proposed changes to Missouri's guardianship law compiled by the Missouri Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders, or MO-WINGS. MO-WINGS started meeting in 2012 to review and recommend changes to the 100-page guardianship law. The law last underwent a major revision in 1983.

At this point, the draft changes to the statute are only recommendations. A formal proposal is expected to be presented to the 2016 Legislature. Public input will be sought until November.

St. Louis County Public Administrator Tom Arras said the whole idea is to protect a person who is not capable of making his or her own decisions. He's concerned that proposals to update the guardianship law could pit the ward and guardian against each other.

“Reforms are going to make it harder for guardians to perform their function,” he said.