

Arkansas' 2017 Report to VOR
June, 2017

Arkansas' statewide parent-guardian association – Families & Friends of Care Facility Residents (FF/CFR) advocates for all 5 of our state's Human Development Centers (HDCs), and for all HDC residents. FF/CFR members make a conscious effort to attend monthly meetings of the Legislative Public Health Committee, and for over a year have attended the Legislative Health Care Reform Task Force meetings. We review documents and submit comments, objections and requests on issues which affect our HDCs.

The following is a list of things that happened in our state in 2016:

- 1) *The final Health Care Task Force recommendations regarding Medicaid and the HDCs;*
- 2) *The newly developed DHS/DDS Strategic Planning Committees (one of the recommendations of The Stephens Group);*
- 3) *Our new DDS Director has been proactive regarding our HDCs;*
- 4) *The DDS Board has gotten more involved with issues/concerns at our HDCs (due to FF/CFR keeping them informed);*
- 5) *We have had many meetings with the new DDS Director which helped with the following issues: 1) hiring and retention; 2) wage increases for nurses and direct care workers; 3) training and morale, 4) new capital improvements, 5) demolition of old (unused) buildings, 6) improvements to existing buildings, 7) new multi-purpose buildings at HDCs, 8) H/AC upgrades in residences, many new sidewalks, and new windows in the residences, etc;*
- 6) *Steady capital improvement funds provided by the State to the centers is a major policy decision/achievement of our group's work;*
- 7) *1st Annual DDS "Developmental Disabilities Craft Fair" – this will become an annual event in downtown Little Rock for individuals with DD to sell their crafts, and this includes items made by our HDC residents;*
- 8) *Plans are underway for a new Public Service Announcement (PSA) showing the good work and happy lives at our HDCs;*
- 9) *Newly renovated train (on national historic register) at one of our HDCs, where they host a public Polar Express Event every year (began 2 years ago);*
- 10) *Because of FF/CFR's Action Alerts sent via email to parents/guardians – several bills that would have negatively affected our HDCs were thwarted;*
- 11) *Dignitaries toured our HDCs: Governor, Congressmen, State Legislators, State DHS Director, and other leaders of our State;*
- 12) *We added 5 new members to our statewide FF/CFR Board of Directors;*
- 13) *One of our HDCs is working with a local college on a program opportunity for HDC residents and/or staff to take a class to acquire their GED, and other course work;*
- 14) *One HDC has opened a new Work Center Facility where recycling and many other projects are performed;*
- 15) *Currently one HDC offers residential and educational services for children between the ages of 6 and 18 years of age. With this service they have developed a new Pilot Project to address the needs of children with ID/DD in crises. Individuals would have short-term*

placement for approximately three to twelve months, requiring discharge planning upon admission, and intense positive behavior support training. This service allows individuals to stabilize and be returned to their previous living and learning environments.

16) Through the revamping of AR Medicaid there have been changes, one is DDS Transformation efforts which include-

- a) Plans to address the DD Waiver Wait List of approximately 3,000 people.*
- b) Plans to introduce a new Assessment Tool to begin July 1, 2017. This will be administered by a 3rd party Independent Assessment vendor. The Assessment will evaluate level of need and recommend a service tier, and the services to be provided in the Person Centered Service Plan. We still have not confirmed “which” Assessment Tool will be used.*
- c) Cost savings measures across the board with all DDS Services.*

Working together we make a difference.

Respectfully submitted,
Rita Hoover