

WASHINGTON STATE REPORT

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Washington State has four state-run facilities for people with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) called Residential Habilitation Centers or RHCs. Currently, the four are home to approximately 800 residents.

The State Legislature is now in its **First** Special Session. The legislators are unable to settle on a budget that would meet the requirements of the State Supreme Court to fully fund public education and the needs of our Mental Health Community. As a means to this funding dilemma, one course of action has been the proposed downsizing and ultimate closure of one of our RHCs - Fircrest School.

Fircrest is believed to be the most valuable campus in our system. The overall campus is approximately 88 acres north of Seattle in the City of Shoreline. It is a combined Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) and a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF). Our Nursing Facilities (NFs) were removed from the ICF umbrella back in the 1990s as a budgetary cut. Since Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) are not required in Nursing Facilities, the Department of Social & Health Services felt they could save money.

RHC Advocates and the surrounding Community have worked contacting Legislators to let them know the importance of keeping Fircrest School as part of the continuum of care **and** part of the Shoreline community.

We continue in this vein as the Legislative Leadership attempts to settle their differences and produce a budget that will satisfy Public Education, Mental Health and still protect the most vulnerable.

The Yakima Valley School (YVS) is our only Nursing Facility (no ICF). Currently, YVS is home to approximately 80 residents and is used for Crisis/Respite Care only – no long term admissions. It is scheduled for closure once its existing long term population drops to 16. We are attempting to redirect this closure and have it remain a viable part of the RHC system. Until the budget negotiations are made public all we can do is continue to drive home to the legislature that budget problems cannot be resolved on the backs of the DD community.

There have been positive moves by the legislative body to improve conditions for the DD population: a DD representative has been added to our Early Learning Advisory Council; training hours have been reduced for respite providers caring for an individual & working less than 300 hours per years (this is directed to families that have private individuals who care for their loved ones on a limited basis); increased penalties for financial exploitation and financial abuse of vulnerable people.