

To: The House Judiciary Committee Examining Class action lawsuits against Intermediate Care Facilities

March 13, 2018

My name is Brad Whitehead and I worked at an Intermediate care facility in Pomona California from February of 1978 to the time of its closure in December of 2014. I hold the very strong opinion that Lanterman Developmental Center in Pomona was closed for the very flawed opinion of many that the best placement for all individuals with Intellectual and developmentally disabled is in the community, without any regard given to the specific needs of the individuals.

I worked at Lanterman as a Licensed Psychiatric Technician and for the first 12 years that I worked there I was a group leader that oversaw the care plans, the day to day schedules and needs of the individuals that were assigned to my care. Always this was done by communicating with each of the individuals personally and their families to develop a plan that best suited the individuals. I was there for assist and direction where needed but did all that I could to encourage as much individuality as possible based on where that person was.

When I first worked at Lanterman we had a very large census of nearly 3,000 individuals that lived in a beautiful setting of over 300 acres and was a hub of activity that was at Lanterman and there were constant opportunities for community experiences as well. I do believe that when I first arrived I identified many of the individuals living there that I felt could benefit from placement into community homes. I also identified that there were many living there that benefitted from the types of services that were only being offered in the setting that we provided, (one size does not fit all). There was also a wide variety of functioning levels at LDC at the time that covered individuals with I/DD from mild, moderate, severe and profound levels of I/DD.

I frequently at team meetings would advocate for community placement for the individuals in my group conversely I would also advocate for continued placement at Lanterman for other individuals usually those with greater needs such as medical, behavioral, those lacking safety awareness or other issues that made them bad candidates of community placement at that and in many cases due to the lack of adequate services for the particular need being offered in the community it would be some time before community placement would be appropriate for the individual. The concerns of the individual's family I believe is also very important in this decision making process, this is a step that I feel is almost not considered at all at this time, because just as I felt as the person who usually spent the most time with the individuals I worked with, I knew that nobody loved or cared for them more than their family.

I believe that the process worked to get those who both wanted and should be moved to the community through an objective process that considers first the individual, next the family and team members that consider the true facts and not a ideology to decide what is best for the individuals.

Thank you,
Brad Whitehead
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