

**VOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE
ARKANSAS STATE REPORT
SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2015**

Today, Arkansas still operates five public ICFs/IID facilities and they are called Human Development Centers (HDCs). In Arkansas our state-wide parent/guardian organization is Family and Friends of Care Facility Residents (FF/CFR), and is made up of family members and guardians of all five of our HDCs. We have a strong working group that has made an impression on our state legislators and even our Governor. There were many bills dealing with developmental disabilities during this past Legislative Session, and 5 of those bills directly affected our HDCs in a positive way with "general improvement funds". While these funds are not always available at the end of each fiscal year, it is a step in the right direction just to know that the legislators felt it was important enough to make provisions in case the extra funds were there so that capital improvements could be made at our HDCs. Legislators, state leaders, and even the Governor's wife have toured our largest facility this year!

FF/CFR maintains a state-wide data base with email addresses of parents and guardians, which helps in keeping family members from all five centers informed. It also gives us a mechanism to get the word out quickly for Action Alerts so that everyone can contact their legislators about timely issues.

FF/CFR Board members attend all Division of Developmental Service (DDS) Board meetings. The DDS Board is appointed by the Governor and sets policies for the five public ICFs. Recently, the Disability Rights Arkansas (DRA) made a public report about one of our HDCs which had false and misleading information in it. Our families worked with the DDS Board to make a public comment to DRA about its misrepresentation to the public.

Arkansas is still working on major changes in how they will offer and fund Medicaid services in the future. Our group is closely reviewing the overall program and continues to submit concerns and objections. Specifically, our Governor has appointed a new Health Care Reform Task Force and an Advisory Council to the Task Force. One of our parents serves on the Advisory Council.

We remain concerned about federal grants that will encourage states to close its licensed and certified public facilities like our HDCs.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alan & Jan Fortney