



Speaking out for people
with intellectual disabilities

www.vor.net



Feedback or question? info@vor.net

VOR Weekly E-Mail Update

News and views for VOR advocates

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VOR and YOU

1. Seeking your story: How has VOR helped you!

Dear {FIRST_NAME|VOR Member},

For 27 years, VOR has been the **only** national advocacy organization representing the right of individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families to choose from among an array of quality residential options. From statewide advocacy, to facility-level advocacy, to family level advocacy, VOR has been there for countless families.

VOR would like to compile examples how families and individuals have been helped. When legislation is defeated, a legal battle is one, or a facility saved, we get the good news and often share it here, in this Update, or in *The Voice*, our print publication.

What we often do not hear - but need to hear - is how individual families have benefited. As is noted in a recent issue of a [Wrightslaw newsletter](#), "Story-Telling Letters" is the best way to persuade "strangers" (elected officials, school officials, the media) to understand and agree with your perspective.

Can you help. VOR's advocacy will be enhanced and our mission better achieved if we can more consistently put a human face on our messages. Let us know how VOR has helped you and your family. With your permission, we'll begin to feature these stories in our publications and our website.

Don't forget to check out [Wrightslaw](#) for some great tips on effective "story telling" and see also VOR's "[Great Story Submissions](#)" for some compelling stories. You can e-mail your story to me at thopp@vor.net.

With gratitude,

[Tamie Hopp](#)

Director of Government Relations & Advocacy

2. Reminder: Please participate in VOR's Awareness Month

For more details, visit [VOR Awareness Month Ideas and Resources](#).
For questions, contact [Julie Huso](#).

State News

3. New Jersey: Task force bill that would close developmentally disabled center is conditionally vetoed by Gov. Christie

Gov. Chris Christie has conditionally vetoed a bill that establishes a task force to recommend closing one or more of the state's seven developmental centers. Christie edited the bill to reduce its membership from 11 to 5, with three members appointed by him and two recommended by the Senate president and Assembly speaker. He also set a 90 to 180 day timeline for the commission to submit a plan to the governor, and changed the criteria the task force will consider to include more of how well communities are able to provide services to the developmentally disabled. Although this bill will spare Vineland Center - families across New Jersey strongly opposed closing Vineland - the Task Force bill calls for the recommendation of one closure, an outcome Christie remains committed to. [Read more.](#)

4. Kansas: DD Council Director Removed From Office

Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities Executive Director Jane Rhys has been placed on administrative leave. Rhys had held the position for 18 years. The council, which is a DD Act federally funded entity, is charged with advocating for people with developmental disabilities. Earlier this year, Rhys testified in favor of a bill that called for closing Kansas Neurological institute, selling the buildings on the state hospital's campus, and using the proceeds to fund openings in community-based programs. KNI is one of the state's two hospitals for people with severe disabilities. The Governor's Office endorsed the idea of closing KNI, but the proposal faced stiff opposition in the Legislature last session particularly from Topeka lawmakers. Rhys also has been outspoken in her opposition to the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Service's use waiting lists to control spending on community-based services. But it wasn't immediately clear if her positions on these issues had anything to do with her being put on leave. [Read more.](#)

5. More from New York

[State Seeks Data on Pay of Leaders at Nonprofits](#)

Federal/National News

6. Advocates Allege Two-Faced Approach To Community Living

A group of self-advocates is calling out federal health officials for publicly supporting community-based services for people with disabilities while quietly advising states on options to curtail such programs. The brouhaha comes after federal officials outlined ways in which states could modify their home and community-based services offerings without violating so-called maintenance of effort requirements in a [letter](#) to state Medicaid directors late last week. However, the same letter did take pains to point out that while changes may be allowed under health law, it does not mean they're necessarily advisable due to alleged Olmstead requirements.

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