



Speaking out for people with
intellectual and developmental
disabilities

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VOR and You

1. **Grow and Expand VOR: Member writes article for employee newsletter for VOR awareness**

Long-time VOR member, past Board Member and

past President, Marilyn Straw of Iowa took on the “Grow and Expand” VOR membership challenge by arranging to have VOR information printed in the Woodward Resource Center (WRC)(an ICF/MR) employee newsletter. Marilyn recognized, and seized, an opportunity to share VOR’s relevance with the compassionate and skilled employees serving WRC residents. We are grateful to Marilyn for her proactive support and also to WDC Superintendent Marsha Edgington-Bott for accepting Marilyn’s offer and agreeing to share VOR information with WDC employees.

A copy of her letter is here. [You are encouraged \(urged!\) to adapt it for your ICF/MR’s employee newsletter.](#)

AUGUST INITIATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

2. *Seeing is Believing*: Congressman Latham visits Woodward ICF/MR at request of member

On July 2, 2012, Congressman Tom Latham visited Woodward Resource Center (WRC), a Medicaid-licensed Intermediate Care Facility for Persons with Mental Retardation (ICFs/MR) in Woodward, Iowa. Congressman Latham visited and toured WRC at the invitation of Marilyn Straw, VOR past president and long-time VOR member, and Sybil Finken, VOR’s Immediate Past President, who were also on hand for the tour, along with Woodward Superintendent, Marsha Edgington-Bott, two other staff representatives, and a local union representative.

Seeing is believing. Arranging tours of your ICF/MR for your elected officials is a great way to educate decision-makers about the value of ICFs/MR in the full continuum of care options for the profoundly disabled people receiving ICF/MR services.

And, the timing is right. Congress will be out of session for all of August, with members of Congress working in their state (Senate) and District (House of Representative) offices. Local contact information for Congressional offices in your neighborhood can be found at Congress.org – just type in your zip code.

3. Visit your Congressman in August in your neighborhood!

As noted above the August Congressional Recess (“District Work Period” for [House](#) and [Senate](#)) provides a great opportunity for you to meet face-to-face with your Senators and U.S. Representative near you home to seek your Representative’s support for H.R. 2032 and to also seek support for a Congressional call for a moratorium on federally-funded deinstitutionalization activities. We also continue to seek a Republican Senate sponsor for a Senate introduction of H.R. 2032. Local contact information for Congressional offices in your neighborhood can be found at [Congress.org](#) – just type in your zip code.

Call immediately to request an appointment. Schedules fill up quickly.

VOR can provide you with presentation materials to use to prepare for your meeting, and leave with the Congressman.

Thank you!

LEGAL NEWS

4. Massachusetts: Caretaker Found Not Guilty

The Advocacy Network News * August 2012

The caretaker charged with assaulting the developmentally disabled brother of Sheila Paquette Advocacy Network president was found “not guilty” in Falmouth District Court on July 30. The six-member jury of four women and two men reached their unanimous verdict after less than a half hour of deliberation.

Following the trial, Paquette said, “Guardians or parents need to file charges. DPPC and DDS won’t do it, so assaults like this never show up in an individual’s CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) check. But we brought it to court “I found out that these

agencies don't talk to each other. I did most of the investigation work myself. I'm extremely frustrated."

Read More: [Advocacy Network News \(August 2012\)](#)
(click on "Current Newsletter" button)

Read Related Story: [Case Raises Many Questions, \(Advocacy Network News \(August 2012, click on "Current Newsletter" button\)\)](#)

5. Tennessee Abandonment Case: Editorial – Condemn a mother or a system?

William Choslovsky, Esq. (Guest Columnist) *
August 1, 2012 * *Chicago Tribune*

At wits' end and unable to obtain services in Illinois, Eva Cameron, of Algonquin, abandoned her 19-year-old daughter with severe developmental disabilities in a Tennessee bar last month. Cameron was much criticized, if not condemned. After all, what kind of mother would do such a thing?

Perhaps one who tried for years — and waited patiently — for services to help her child. Any services. Services the law requires the state to provide. Services that never come, despite promises and waiting lists.

In Illinois there are more than 10,000, maybe close to 20,000, Eva Camerons waiting for help for their children. Some of the Eva Camerons are old, in their 80s, having cared for their profoundly mentally disabled children in their homes for more than 50 years.

With no help.

[Read More](#)

[Read VOR's Press Release, *Caregivers of people with intellectual disabilities need options, not abandonment \(July 12, 2012\)*](#)

6. Massachusetts: Department of Developmental Services (DDS) IQ score regulations ruled invalid

[Massachusetts Coalition of Friends and Advocates, Inc. \(COFAR\)](#) * August 1, 2012

Dear COFAR Members,

The news you in [Dave Kassel's COFAR blog](#) is perhaps our biggest story in a while - in that it has the potential to impact a great number of individuals who have applied for services from and have been rejected.

Since 2006, against COFAR's strenuous objections, DDS (then DMR) drew a "bright line" at an IQ of 70, and if you were an individual above that number - or even at it - you were not eligible to receive DDS adult services - even after a lifetime of special education services as a child and young adult.

COFAR president Tom Frain won this case and is to be commended for his work on this issue, as well as the family of the young woman who went through this arduous appeals process. DDS has not yet decided whether or not to appeal the ruling. This is a huge win for young people especially - and if you have a family member who has had their eligibility denied by DDS - you may soon be eligible to re-apply.

Please comment, recommend, celebrate, and share!

/s/ Colleen Lutkevich, Executive Director

[COFAR](#)

[Read more](#)

7. Connecticut - Arrested Caregiver: Gang Mentality Reigned Among Group Home Staff

The Hartford Courant * August 1, 2012

A group home caregiver who police say was caught on video abusing a mentally disabled resident admitted attacking the woman. saying "she felt like

she had to prove herself to fit in, like a gang," according to an arrest warrant.

Angelica Rivera, 33, of Manchester, told police she used a belt to hit the resident — who functions at the level of a fourth-grader — and dragged her by the ponytail from the living room down the hallway to a bedroom, the warrant says.

She also told police that eight other employees of the Options Unlimited group home in East Hartford had been fired for abuse.

Before her July 11 arrest, Rivera had been disciplined twice for failing to report neglect or abuse, according to the warrant released Wednesday after her appearance at Superior Court in Manchester.

[Read More](#)

8. Florida: Developmental Disabilities Waiver Waitlist Litigation Settled

Disability Rights Florida * July 26, 2012

In March 2011, *Disability Rights Florida* filed the Dykes v. Dudek lawsuit on behalf of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who needed care, treatment, and habilitation and who were on the Waitlist for DD Medicaid Waiver services. Some of the plaintiffs resided in private ICF/DDs or nursing homes and some of the plaintiffs resided in their families' homes. Many had been on the DD Waitlist for over five years. On July 3, 2012, the lawsuit was settled.

[Read more](#)

STATE NEWS

9. Illinois: AFSCME challenges Jacksonville Developmental Center transfers

The State Journal-Register * July 28, 2012

Another 23 residents are expected to be moved out of the Jacksonville Developmental Center [JDC] by Wednesday, including two who will be transferred to a

community-based home where employees previously were found negligent by the inspector general for the Department of Human Resources.

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) is questioning the move. Moving more residents where another former JDC resident broke her leg after employees misused a lift is a mistake, AFSCME said.

AFSCME has opposed the shuttering of JDC because of loss of members' jobs and because it says JDC residents are best served at state institutions. Many families of residents agree, already having tried placing their loved ones in community-based settings.

[Read more](#)

Tel: (605) 399-1624
Toll Free: (877) 399-4867
Fax: (605) 399-1631
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