



Speaking out for people
with intellectual disabilities

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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. VOR Awareness Month! Online ideas and resources

Dear {FIRST_NAME|VOR Member},

VOR advocates around the country are already considering ways they can help promote VOR awareness this Fall. Scheduled for October (or any month that is convenient for you), some advocates are preparing to encourage VOR memberships at regularly scheduled family association meetings (through statements and handouts) and others are planning a mailing to family association members and friends to share information about VOR and encourage membership. Can you help? Visit [VOR's website](#) for details. Feel free to contact me with any questions or to share your ideas. Thank you!

Sincerely,

[Julie Huso](#)

Executive Director

2. H.R. 2032: Congress @ Home - there's still time!

As you know, throughout August, Members of Congress are in their districts making themselves available to meet with constituents. This is a great opportunity for advocates to request face-to-face meetings with their offices, as well as attend any public functions, like Town Hall meetings and seek their support for H.R. 2032. Visit [VOR's website for information about H.R. 2032, Congressional contact information, and template letters.](#)

3. VOR Website Updates: Visit soon and often

Several new resources have been posted to VOR's website recently.

*[State News from VOR's 2011 State Report Forum](#)

*[The VOR Annual Conference Report](#)

*[Resource Links for Families and Advocates](#)

[*New Special Education Resources, including “The Fundamentals of Special Education”](#)

[*VOR Awareness Month Ideas and Resources](#)

Coming soon to VOR’s Website:

*Great new videos for our [“Watch Videos”](#) section and an updated version of VOR’s [Abuse and Neglect resource](#).

Did you know that by making [VOR](#) your homepage – the website that opens automatically when you first go online – helps increase VOR’s standing in popular search engines? That’s because every time you log in, a visit is logged, helping to tag VOR as a popular online resource! It’s that easy!

<http://vor.net/>. Visit soon. Visit often

Federal News

4. Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction selected

As previously reported, the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction (aka “Super Committee”) is charged with identifying \$1.5 trillion in deficit reduction over 10 years. [The members of this bipartisan committee have been announced](#). Medicaid will be a tempting target for cuts among members of the super committee and Congress. A new [issue brief](#) from Families USA can help make sense of the specifics of the deal and the timeline for coming months. . The committee must hold its first meeting by September 16, and must provide the agenda 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

State News

5. Alabama: Families Lawsuit filed over Partlow closing

Tuscaloosa News * August 17, 2011

The head of a group of friends and families of clients at Partlow Developmental Center in Tuscaloosa has filed a federal lawsuit against Gov. Robert Bentley and Mental Health Commissioner Zelia Baugh over plans to close the facility. Patrons of Partlow President David McRae filed a complaint on Friday in U.S. District Court in Birmingham. He said Tuesday he tried to get a lawyer to file the lawsuit but couldn’t immediately secure one so he filed it pro se, meaning without an attorney. Partlow is scheduled to close on or before Nov. 30, and the majority of its residents are being moved to community-based care. McRae argues that some Partlow residents are being placed in homes that may be inappropriate for their conditions. His lawsuit mentions a civil rights action and states that community-based treatment cannot be forced on the unwilling. McRae seeks to keep Partlow open, reinstatement of state employees and reinstatement of Medicaid funding. (Update: Since this article, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has restored Partlow’s funding and certification). [Read more](#). [Editor’s Note: Know an attorney who can help? Contact thopp@vor.net]

6. New York Moves to Crack Down on Abuse of Disabled

New York Times * By Danny Hakim * August 18, 2011

Moving to end the state’s lax oversight of abuse and neglect of the developmentally disabled [see, VOR Update, August 12, 2011], the Cuomo administration will announce an agreement with the State Police on Wednesday to establish guidelines for reporting possible crimes against the

disabled to law enforcement authorities. The agreement covers the 126,000 developmentally disabled people who live in state and privately run group homes and institutions or who receive a variety of other services from the state. For years, the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities, a state agency that runs more than 1,000 group homes and regulates thousands more, has almost entirely policed itself and resisted disclosure. The new agreement, which is not law, follows a March report in The New York Times that law enforcement officials were being notified of less than 5 percent of abuse allegations. Michael Carey, whose son Jonathan died in state care in 2007 in a death that was ruled a homicide, said he would prefer that the agreement had the force of law behind it. "It's definitely a positive step, but if there's nothing that mandates it, so who's to say that somebody doesn't do this?" he said. "I've never heard of anybody being charged for not reporting abuse." [Read more.](#)

7. Massachusetts: Two deaths at group homes raise care questions

The deaths of two men with developmental disabilities at state-run group homes have advocates questioning Gov. Deval Patrick's administration's plans to close four of the state's six institutions for people with developmental disabilities. Both of the men had been living in institutions before being transferred to the group homes, said David Kassel, spokesman for the Massachusetts Coalition of Families and Advocates, an advocacy group for people with developmental disabilities and their families. In one case, the man had been transferred from Templeton Developmental Center just four days before his death. [Read more.](#) To comment, visit the [COFAR Blog.](#)

8. Virginia: Emotion Fills Public Hearing

August 4, 2011 * ABC (13): WSET (Lynchburg, Danville, Roanoke)

Lynchburg residents shared their concerns at a public hearing about how the state will use funds to transition people from training centers to community health centers. The state has a \$30 million trust fund set up to manage Central Virginia Training Centers, and people have different opinions on how that money should be spent. "Closing CVTC would be a death sentence for them as there is no place in Virginia offering equivalent close to home," said Martha Bryant, mother of twin sons who receive care at CVTC. Others appealed for consideration of people on the waiting list. The Secretary of Health and Human Resources will use the information from these meetings to figure out what to do with that \$30 million trust fund. A plan will be submitted on November 1. [Read more.](#)

Tel: (605) 399-1624
Toll Free: (877) 399-4867
Fax: (605) 399-1631
Email: info@vor.net

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VOR
836 S. Arlington Heights Rd.
#351
Elk Grove Village, Illinois 60007
US

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