



Speaking out for people with
intellectual & developmental
disabilities



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**Reminders:
Help VOR Grow!**

VOR Weekly News Update

News and views for VOR Advocates

**[Registration](#) and [Sponsorship Details](#) are now
availability for VOR's Annual Conference and
Washington Initiative, June 8 - 12, 2013 in
Washington, D.C. Please join us!**

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someone thought you would benefit from VOR's
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Your one-stop
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VOR and YOU

1. \$5,000 Challenge: Help VOR send advocates to Washington, D.C!

In celebration of VOR's 30th Anniversary, VOR has received a gift of

\$1,000 to [challenge](#) all individuals who advocate to protect the rights of everyone with I/DD to help get advocates to Washington, D.C.!

Our goal is \$5,000.

Your investment, no matter what size, will be used to assist individuals from throughout country to join us in Washington, D.C. at our Annual Conference and Washington Initiative from June 8-12, 2013.

To contribute in response to this challenge, [click here](#) and make your gift today. **Your gifts make a difference!**

Spread the Word! Use Social Media!

Please share this [challenge](#) and [direct link](#) all your Facebook friends and by Twitter. Help by spreading the news of this meaningful challenge gift to reach many more people.

THANK YOU!

2. VOR State Coordinator and Member Free Webinar: All Members are welcome

Save the Date! March 13, 2013

Dear VOR Members:

On March 13, 2013 at 12:00 pm central / 1:00 pm eastern, VOR will sponsor a State Coordinator and Member Webinar, hosted by Richard Male, for the purpose of providing an overview of VOR's State Coordinator, Member advocacy, and national programs. We will showcase the importance of the Coordinator

program, while also featuring the VOR advocacy tools that are available to all members for their state advocacy. The Webinar is an opportunity for any committed VOR member to gain new advocacy and VOR awareness tools.

All VOR members are encouraged to attend. Please register today. Instructions for registration are below.

Respectfully,

Ann Knighton

President

State Coordinator and Member Webinar:
Free and open to ALL VOR Members

Date: Wed, March 13, 2013

Time: 10:00 AM Pacific; 11:00 AM Mountain; 12:00 PM Central; 1:00 PM Eastern

Dial-In Number for Audio: 866.740.1260

[Registration Link](#)

Access Code: 4562930

Quality in the Community Initiative

3. U.S. Senator Seeks Federal Probe Of Group Homes Due to Abuse, Neglect, and Death

Disability Scoop * March 8, 2013

A U.S. senator is calling for a federal investigation into abuse and deaths of individuals with developmental disabilities at group homes nationwide.

In a letter to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' inspector general this week, Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., asked for "an immediate investigation into the alarming number of deaths and cases of abuse of developmentally disabled individuals in group homes."

Specifically, Murphy urged Inspector General Daniel Levinson to focus on the "prevalence of preventable deaths at privately run group homes across this nation," citing increased privatization of residential services for those with disabilities in recent years.

Many services currently provided by privately-

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run facilities are paid for by federal dollars through Medicaid, Murphy said.

The senator's request comes in response to a [recent series of articles in the Hartford Courant](#) detailing cases of abuse and neglect of those with developmental disabilities at various residential facilities in Connecticut. The newspaper found that there were 76 deaths of those with developmental disabilities between 2004 and 2010 where officials cited abuse, neglect or medical errors.

Most of those who died lived in privately-run facilities, the newspaper reported.

Murphy indicated that similar reports have emerged in recent years from Virginia, New York, Massachusetts, Louisiana and Texas.

"Sadly, these deaths were not without some warning signs. While many private providers are providing excellent care there are too many examples of bad actors," Murphy wrote in his letter. "Clearly, these individuals deserved better from our developmental disability care system."

Related Blog (March 8, 2013) - Read and Comment: [Hartford Courant series provides evidence of the importance of Southbury Training School\(STS\)](#), highlighting the need to [open STS to new admissions](#).

Take Action: Send [news of Senator Murphy's request for an investigation](#) to your [local state legislators and to members of your state's congressional delegation](#) (see the "Join the Conversation" box).

4. New Guide on Identifying and Selecting Long-Term Services and Supports Outcome Measures

[Identifying and Selecting Long-Term Services and Supports Outcome Measures](#), published in January 2013) by the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) and the National Senior Citizens Law Center

(NSCLC), explains the importance of developing robust quality measurement and improvement mechanisms in states that implement managed long-term services and supports (LTSS). It describes principles for quality measurement; current efforts to develop better quality measures; and qualitative methods, such as site visits and critical incident reporting, that can identify problems where quantitative measures fall short.

State News

5. Connecticut: VOR supports Connecticut Families' Call for Open Admissions

VOR Written Testimony * February 26, 2013 Excerpts ([complete testimony](#))

Given its long history of providing comprehensive, highly specialized care to Connecticut citizens with profound disabilities, Southbury Training School (STS) ICF/ID is a crucial part of Connecticut's system of care for the intellectually and developmentally disabled (I/DD) which should be preserved and expanded.

In addition, to providing comprehensive services to the people who live there, STS provides dental and other services to more than 500 community-based clients of the Department of Developmental Services. This "Community Resource Center" model is offered in other states which, like Connecticut, recognize the cost-effectiveness of utilizing its state-operated ICF/ID infrastructure for individuals who, but for access to the ICF/ID as "outpatients," would be met with tragedy for lack of access to specialized supports, or would be served in perpetual "crisis-mode" in emergency rooms, hospitals, and correctional facilities, at great cost to the State.

We believe that allowing new admissions to STS would accomplish the following:

- New admissions would result in a lowered cost of care per resident at the facility and help make it financially viable.
- New admissions would shorten or possibly eliminate a growing waiting list for residential care and services for intellectually disabled people throughout the state.

- New admissions would allow STS to continue and possibly expand its role as a resource for dental and medical care for community-based clients of DDS.

Reopening the doors at STS will both revitalize the facility and benefit many more people in the surrounding community. Please amend Senate Bill 129 with language to reopen the Southbury Training School ("STS") to new admissions. Thank you for your consideration.

[Read detailed testimony](#)

6. Oklahoma: House votes to stop closure of centers

February 25, 2013 * [KFOR-TV](#)

A measure that would stop a plan to close a few facilities across the state has passed the House Human Service Committee Monday.

[House Bill 2053](#) would stop the implementation of a plan to close the Northern Oklahoma Resource Center of Enid and the Southern Resource Center of Pauls Valley.

The legislation requires a plan for the facilities that considers the concerns of the families and the disabled.

In November, the board voted to close the centers just days before the agency's oversight board was voted out of existence. [[Read VOR's Position](#)]

"This closure plan was voted in by a board that has been abolished by a vote of the people," said House Speaker Pro Tempore Mike Jackson. "I think it is time for lawmakers to step in and address the concerns of these vulnerable citizens and their families."

The two facilities provide residential services for Oklahoma's most seriously developmentally challenged adults, some also suffer from serious chronic medical conditions.

"Closing these facilities disrupts the care of Oklahoma's most vulnerable citizens and has not been proven to save the state money," said Jackson. "I am willing to work with all parties to

ensure the best care is given to these Oklahomans.”

House Bill 2053 will now advance to the Calendar Committee for consideration.

7. New Jersey: Senate panel advances bill to stop closure of developmental centers

NJ.com * March 4, 2013

A state Senate committee today approved a bill that would rescind a controversial decision to close two of the state’s developmental centers and create a new task force to recommend changes to the institutions.

The plan to shutter the North Jersey Developmental Center in Totowa and Woodbridge Developmental Center was supposed to be set in stone. Gov. Chris Christie and Legislature had agreed an earlier task force would make a legally binding decision to select which of the seven centers would close so the state could free up more money for group homes and other forms of community housing.

But when the panel did make its wishes known, many were upset. Hundreds turned out for an emotional, hours-long hearing last month in Montclair.

Because of that, legislators said today, they were advancing a bill that would throw out that panel’s findings and create a new task force. The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens committee approved the bill (S2596) by a 7-2 vote, with one abstention.

“For the families that have moved... to be near their loved ones — whether it’s their daughter or the brother or their sister or their parents in those communities — it would be an enormous hardship for them to have to travel from Totowa or Woodbridge or areas nearby those facilities to another part of the state, perhaps a hundred miles away, just to visit them.” Sen. Joseph Vitale (D-Middlesex). a

primary sponsor and the committee chair, said during the hearing today. "To ask them to travel that distance is just wrong."

[Read more](#)

National News

8. Disability Cuts Could Be Here To Stay

***Disability Scoop* * March 5, 2013**

As sweeping federal budget cuts set in, the impact is starting to become clear for those benefiting from special education and other disability programs.

Some \$85 billion will be trimmed from this year's federal budget, touching nearly all military and domestic programs. Funding will be reduced for numerous initiatives benefiting those with disabilities including special education, housing assistance, employment supports, mental health services and research. Medicaid and Social Security benefits are some of the few areas to be spared.

Disability advocates say it will be a matter of time before the full impact of the cuts is known, but some of the fallout is beginning to surface. Officials at Easter Seals say they're hearing that the state of Georgia has already used up all of its vocational rehabilitation funds expected for this year, for example.

A fuller picture will likely emerge in the coming weeks and months, advocates say, depending on how each program is funded. In the case of special education, Obama administration projections show that about \$600 million will be cut from the program this year, putting the jobs of 7,200 teachers, aides and other staff in question. Sequestration is coming right as school districts are preparing their budgets and parents are likely to start hearing this spring at individualized education program, or IEP, meetings about changes in store for next year, according to Lindsay Jones of the Council for

Exceptional Children, which lobbies on behalf of special educators.

[Read more](#)

Quotable

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." ~ John Quincy Adams

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* **NEXT WEEK!** **The State Coordinator and Member Webinar is now scheduled for Wednesday, March 13 at 12:00 pm central / 1:00 pm mountain.** [Click here to register.](#) Registration details are above.

***Through May 1, 2013:** [Be a Sponsor. Get a Sponsor: Support VOR's Conference and Initiative. Sponsorship opportunities, in partnership with EP Magazine, are now available.](#)

* **Sunday, June 9, 2013**

VOR Annual Conference * Washington, D.C. [Registration now available. Details online.](#)

* **Begins Monday, June 10, 2013**

VOR Washington Initiative (Begins Monday, June 10, 2013) * Washington, D.C. [Details online.](#)

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