



Speaking out for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities



www.vor.net



/VOR



@VOR_NET



info@vor.net

Reminders: Help VOR Grow!

**Challenge!
Recruit 5 New
VOR Members
Today!**

**Celebrating
Home: Holiday
Shop and
Benefit VOR**

**Make a Lasting
Impact with a
Will Bequest**

VOR Weekly News Update

News and views for VOR Advocates

Did you receive this as forwarded e-mail? If so, someone thought you would benefit from VOR's information. Please consider [joining VOR](#) and receive this E-News Update publication weekly!

VOR is a national organization that advocates for high quality care and human rights for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Table of Contents

VOR and You

- 1. Calling all celebrities!** The Kevin Bacon Effect- Who you know might surprise you, and could help VOR
- 2. Seeking media lists**
- 3. Reaching the Media:** VOR speaks out in Pennsylvania
- 4. Attention Political Junkies!** See how candidates for office fared across the United States

Legal Update

- 5. Pennsylvania:** Appellate Court issues stay; puts on hold settlement implementation

State News

- 6. When 'De-institutionalization' Goes Overboard;** Forcing the lowest functioning "into the community" is inexcusable
- 7. Oklahoma:** Legislators Decry DHS Decision to Turn Developmentally Disabled Out
- 8. North Carolina:** Lawmakers direct another mental health overhaul
- 9. Louisiana:** Sheriff responds to mental health issue

Quotable

Coming Up:

The Growing Burden on Caregivers

VOR
Awareness
Event

VOR.net:
Your one-stop
advocacy
resource

=====

VOR and You

1. Calling all celebrities! The Kevin Bacon Effect- Who you know might surprise you, and could help VOR

VOR is working hard to reach more families and others who will benefit from VOR's mission and activities.

As you have been reading, we have taken our social media outreach to new heights in a few short months; we've released more press releases and letters to the editor on issues impacting our consistency nationally and in states in recent months than ever before; and we've presented in several states this fall – all for the purpose of VOR Awareness and growth.

We are now seeking a celebrity spokesperson. One of our members advised: "Why not ask the membership." There is simple mathematical wisdom in that suggestion.

So, who do you know – or does who you know, know? As you begin to piece together this puzzle, it may not lead to Kevin Bacon, but could lead to someone whose name recognition could bring VOR awareness to new heights.

Please let us hear from you. Reach VOR at info@vor.net and either Tamie or Julie with prospective celebrity spokespersons.

2. Seeking media lists

Recently, VOR prepared a press release for a state affiliate. When that state affiliate was asked, "Do you have a list of media contacts," the result was a list of more than 500 newspapers, television stations, radio, and more in just state. Wow!

If you have or could put together a list of media contacts in your state, including where press releases can be emailed or faxed, please share your list with VOR. We recognize that a

list of 500 is highly unusual;**5-10 is more the norm**. We'll keep media lists by state so we can quickly release a press release when needed.

Send your media lists to Tamie at thopp@vor.net.

Thank you!

3. Reaching the Media: VOR speaks out in Pennsylvania

Philadelphia City Paper * November 8, 2012
([Letters to the Editor](#))

BEST PLACE SCENARIOS

Our story about a legal appeal filed to stop a settlement allowing people with intellectual disabilities to move out of state institutions into small group homes [["Segregation Anxiety,"](#) Samantha Melamed, Oct. 25, 2012] received several responses supporting each side of the debate. **Julie Huso, Executive Director of VOR**, an organization that advocates for a full range of residential options for people with disabilities — and which participated as amicus curiae in the appeal — wrote in an email:

"There simply can be no comparison between a White Haven Center resident, whose cognitive ability equals an infant, and Jean Searle, who was inappropriately institutionalized 30 years ago and has since received support and has been working as a receptionist. Would society demand that an infant has the right to live in an apartment and work in an office? Of course not. Yet that is what [institution] closure advocates and the state call for in a legal settlement that will displace hundreds of fragile people. Citizens are encouraged to trust that dedicated families — not advocates or government lawyers — know best."

4. Attention Political Junkies! See how candidates for office fared across the United States

With data provided the *Associated Press*, Politico offers an [Election Result Map](#) which allows you to click on any State and view results for federal and state elections, and ballot measures.

Legal Update

5. Pennsylvania: Appellate Court issues stay; puts on hold settlement implementation

Background from VOR, October 2012

In 2011, family intervenors in Benjamin v. PA Department of Public Welfare appealed a District Court order approving a settlement between the State and P&A. The intervenors challenged class certification and the fairness of the settlement in light of significant opposition by residents of state ICFs/MR. The class includes all residents of state-operated ICFs/MR who “do not oppose” community placement, without regard to individual capacity to object to community placement.

On October 3, 2012, attorney Carl Solano argued on behalf of intervenors before the 3rd Circuit Court of appeals, seeking an order to overturn the lower court’s approval of class certification and settlement. If successful, the lower court will be directed to proceed with the lawsuit only on behalf of the five named plaintiffs who seek community placement and not a class of more than 1,000, many of whom require ICF/MR care.

Update by the White Haven Center Relatives & Friends Organization, November 2012

Although the 3rd Circuit has not yet ruled on the appeal, it did recently issue a stay on the District Court’s decision to accept that portion of the settlement that allows the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) to place those residents

who do not personally (or through a guardian or involved family member) and explicitly state a desire to be removed from White Haven Center and transitioned to a community facility. This means that those residents who could not respond to questions about whether they oppose being removed will not be removed at this time, even though they were placed on the settlement's "planning list." DPW is prohibited from enforcing the settlement against those residents until such time as the Third Circuit Court decides the merits of the appeal.

State News

6. When 'De-institutionalization' Goes Overboard; Forcing the lowest functioning "into the community" is inexcusable

**October 29, 2012 * by Louis Putterman, Ph.D
(Blog: *The Good, The Bad, The Economy*)**

My adult daughter suffered profound brain damage at birth due to a bungled delivery. Had someone been on the ball and decided to deliver her by Caesarian section three hours earlier, she'd have had the prospect of a normal life. Instead, she survived her birth trauma with cognitive abilities permanently akin to that of an infant, and with a panoply of medical complications that require her to be fed through a tube, have excess stomach fluids drained through another tube, wear devices to keep deformation of her spine and wrists in check, and receive numerous medications to control seizures and other problems.

I thought that I would never encounter anyone less worthy of respect than the obstetrician responsible for this negligence.

But after decades of seeing to it that my daughter received the best care available, I encountered, a few years ago, a far worse evil: a threat to the lives of my daughter and others like her that is premeditated and makes no

apology. I discovered that a coalition of real estate developers, professional litigators, and advocates for higher-functioning cognitively impaired individuals had judicially kidnapped my daughter into a legal class composed of individuals they claimed to represent without their guardians' consent. And I learned that they had gotten a federal judge and the state of Massachusetts to sign on to a program of moving the individuals in this class into residential group homes providing far lower levels of medical attention, staffing redundancy, and programming than the specialized nursing home that provides for my daughter's every need since she is incapable of performing even the simplest functions for herself. I learned, finally, that what's happening on institutional care in Massachusetts is part of a broad national trend.

[Read More](#)

7. Oklahoma: Legislators Decry DHS Decision to Turn Developmentally Disabled Out

Oklahoma House of Representatives (House Media Press Release) * November 1, 2012

VOR Editor's note: On Election Day (11/6/2012) Oklahoma voters supported amending the Oklahoma Constitution to do away with the Commission for Human Services. In other words, the Commission which voted to close 2 Oklahoma centers less than one week ago no longer exists, leaving its final vote to shutter the two centers less-then-certain.

House of Representatives Press Release * November 1, 2012

Four state lawmakers today said they were surprised and dismayed by the Department of Human Services commission's decision to close both the Northern Oklahoma Resource Center in Enid and the Southern Oklahoma Resource Center in Pauls Valley.

“It is very clear from the stories we have heard from parents and other people who serve as guardians for developmentally disabled individuals, that many residents will be traumatized and negatively impacted in other ways by the closure of these two centers,” said Enns, R-Enid. “Ideally, we would have liked to see both stay open. At the very least though, we thought the DHS commission would keep the Enid center. They took the time to seek input and yet they ignored that input completely.”

State Sen. Patrick Anderson attended the commission hearing but was denied the opportunity to address the commission members regarding the plan.

“The commission voted on a plan which had never been disclosed to the public, nor was ever provided to legislators,” said Anderson, R-Enid. “On top of that, the commission chairman refused to allow any public comments to be made about the plan at the hearing.”

State Reps. Mike Jackson and Lisa Billy said the commissioners erred.

“How could they vote to take these vulnerable individuals out of a care setting that has served them well?” said Billy, R-Pauls Valley. “I am shocked and angered but now my primary concern is for the clients and their families.”

“I don’t support the closure of either center. I think the overall process was flawed and I was surprised by the decision,” said Jackson, R-Enid.

[Read related press release opposing the Commission’s decision](#)

[Read the Southern Oklahoma Resource Center Parent Guardian Association Press Release](#)

[Read VOR’s Press Release](#)

8. North Carolina: Lawmakers direct another mental health overhaul

Associated Press * June 12, 2012

The North Carolina Legislature has directed another overhaul of the state's mental health system - the second in a decade - to attempt to fix chronic shortcomings in patient care and prevent financial blunders.

In 2001, the switch to fewer "local management entities" was designed to shift treatment away from state institutions to private providers in communities. But the change fell short of expectations - many say it failed - as wide coverage gaps surfaced and watchdog agencies later determined hundreds of millions of dollars were wasted on overpriced or unnecessary care.

Yet, Lawmakers this year are putting additional touches on another makeover from last year that will further regionalize the administration of services and create a form of managed care for Medicaid patients rarely used in other states.

Consumer advocates and some lawmakers are worried past mistakes are being repeated and patients are losing services, but there are no signs the process will be slowed dramatically.

[Read more.](#)

9. Louisiana: Sheriff responds to mental health issue

The Daily News (Louisiana) * October 26, 2012

Reports that a Pearl River man who allegedly killed his father after a domestic dispute early Tuesday had been released from a Bogalusa psychiatric facility weeks prior to the event moved Washington Parish Sheriff Randy Seal to comment on the state of mental health care.

It was announced earlier this month that the latest round of cuts to the LSU Health Care System would include closure of Bogalusa Medical Center's 18-bed psychiatric unit. That's on top of the closure of Southeast Louisiana Hospital in Mandeville.

Seal said the decreased availability of services would be costly, as evidenced by the death of Billie Glenn Rawson Jr.'s father.

"With diminished inpatient mental health treatment programs, the public can expect more tragic incidents such as this to occur," he said.

For decades, mental health provider advocates have urged an increase in services and facilities.

The problem of the mentally ill in connection with the criminal justice system began with the "deinstitutionalization" movement, according to Seal.

"Very simply, this was a move to close mental hospitals, which were perceived as 'warehousing' mentally ill persons, and moving to a community treatment model," he said.

"This movement was accompanied by significant federal grants, which enabled the development of community mental health centers such as the one on Willis Avenue in Bogalusa."

The model never worked as envisioned. After a few years, federal funding declined and community mental health centers were faced with funding crises that led for decreased services to the mentally ill. That exacerbated the problem.

"With the closing of mental health facilities, local jails and prisons became the keepers of mentally ill persons who acted out in the community," Seal said. "Jails were provided no funding for this mission and had little or no resources to provide services to mentally ill persons."

Local emergency rooms were also flooded with patients in need of mental health services, who had been left with nowhere else to go and who then took time and bed space from patients with physical ailments.

In Louisiana, those ERs and beds are also diminishing fast thanks to budget cuts imposed

by Gov. Bobby Jindal.

[Read More.](#)

Quotable

“Character is how you treat those who can do nothing for you.” ~ Unknown

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

JOIN VOR. DONATE TO VOR. MAKE A DIFFERENCE

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or simply click on the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)

[Click here](#) to forward this email to a friend

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

[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.

