



Speaking out for people
with intellectual disabilities

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VOR and You

1. Introducing new VOR Leadership!

VOR is pleased to introduce its two new Co-Presidents and a First Vice President.

Sybil Finken and **Ann Knighton** have been elected as VOR's co-Presidents. **Bill Ryerson** has been elected as VOR's First Vice President.

Sybil Finken had been serving as VOR's Immediate Past President and Ann Knighton was VOR's Second Vice President. They are both long-time VOR board members and officers and each serve as VOR State Coordinators. The election by VOR's Board of Directors followed the resignation of Sandra Reeves.

Bill Ryerson has also been serving as a VOR Board Member for several years. His election as VOR's First Vice President filled an existing vacancy.

Over the coming weeks, VOR's publications will introduce you these long-time VOR leaders. Together they have pledged to support the good work of VOR, lead by example, and move the organization forward in a collaborative, positive way. VOR is grateful and fortunate for their volunteer service.

VOR Action Center

2. VOR submits comments to the Congressional "Super Committee." You can too!

Editor's Note: The Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction ("Super Committee") has a website with the option for the public to submit comments / ideas. VOR submitted the following comment earlier this week raising concerns the use of DD Act program funding to

eliminate ICFs/MR. If you would like to comment, [click here](#).

VOR's Comment

In FY 2010, the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, within the U.S. Department of Health Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families, received \$187 million for its programs authorized for funding under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act).

Most DD Act programs use some portion of these federal funds to downsize and close Medicaid-certified licensed facilities for people with profound intellectual and developmental disabilities. Federal funds are used to file lawsuits, influence legislatures, and for other activities for the sole purpose of dismantling a critically-necessary program for our most vulnerable Americans. These activities violate the letter of the DD Act, the U.S. Supreme Court's Olmstead decision and Medicaid law. These activities have caused thousands of very vulnerable people to be displaced from their specialized homes, resulting in significant harm to many affected individuals.

The DD Act programs are using HHS funds to seek the closure of HHS-funded facilities. This is an absurd use of federal funding which is resulting in great harm to many of our nation's most fragile Americans.

\$187 million per year is a significant federal expenditure. Funding for DD Act program activities in support of closing specialized homes warrants a closer look. Should federal HHS funds be used to shut down another HHS program, especially when the outcome is so often human tragedy? Once the flagrant misuse of federal funds is stopped, there will be funds available for vital services.

<http://vor.net/images/DDActAbusesUS.pdf>

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

State News

3. Pennsylvania: Official: Pa. welfare program funded luxury costs

Associated Press * 09/28/2011

A program to help people with intellectual disabilities has paid for luxury cars and parking lot repaving, a Pennsylvania Public Welfare official told lawmakers Wednesday as he listed several examples of what he described as waste and excess.

Executive deputy secretary Tim Costa told a state Senate committee that the Office of Developmental Programs has also funded a patio, pool fencing, carpeting, a bowling alley and flea dipping for a cat. He said the office's financial condition is worse than officials thought - it sometimes subsidizes empty beds, and its mortgage reimbursement practices are structured so that the government can pay repeatedly for the same property.

"Without strong fiscal controls, it is not surprising that waste and excess crept into the system, arguably as a result of some providers taking advantage of the generous reimbursement policies and limitations on fiscal governance put in place by ODP and the Department of Public Welfare," Costa said.

Sen. Pat Vance, R-Cumberland, chair of the Public Health and Welfare Committee, said in an interview after the hearing it was unclear whether any crimes have occurred, but she intends to examine department audits to get a better grasp on the facts.

Vance said she was troubled by testimony that the state has 558 people in single-person community settings, at an average cost of \$213,000.

"This is kind of an oxymoron, group homes with one person in the home,

which would require 24-hour caregivers, a house, etc.," Vance said. "I don't know how that's fiscally sound."

The office's budget has increased \$664 million, or 60 percent, since 2005, but it only serves 27 percent more people than it did six years ago, he said. It also has a 16,000-person waiting list for services.

[Read more.](#)

4. Illinois: 1,000 people turn out for Jacksonville ICF/MR Hearing

State Journal-Register * October 25, 2011

Update: [COFGA votes to keep Mabley ICF/MR open](#); decision on Jacksonville is pending.

About 1,000 people, most of whom opposed the closure, attended the 3-hour plus hearing, which was conducted by the legislative Commission on Governmental Forecasting and Accountability. Under state law, COGFA must hold a public hearing in any community where a state facility that employs 25 or more people faces closure. The panel will make a non-binding recommendation to Quinn in 15 days.

Gov. Pat Quinn says he needs to close JDC and six other state institutions because lawmakers didn't allocate enough money in the budget. A total of 2,000 state workers would be laid off under Quinn's plan. Quinn was absent from the hearing. His plan is also being challenged in court.

Quinn's budget director, David Vaught, said at the hearing closing JDC would save the state \$10 million.

However, state Sen. Sam McCann, R-Carlinville, said the savings would be closer to \$2.6 million after the cost of moving patients is factored in. "People don't trust your numbers," McCann told state officials.

Jacksonville Mayor Andy Ezard said closing the facility would take \$47 million out of Morgan County. Jacksonville is "the place to care for people with disabilities," he said. [Read more.](#)

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