

Connecticut State Report – John Hirschauer

Connecticut has four public intermediate care facilities. It operates one large state institution (Southbury Training School) and three "regional centers" (the Lower Fairfield, Northwest, and Hartford Centers).

Southbury Training School, opened in 1940, sits on nearly 1,400 acres in Southbury. It has an on-campus dental clinic and nursing unit, plus several professional staff (doctors, psychiatrists, and more) on-call. The dental clinic serves STS residents and 500 people with I/DD who are not residents of the school.

The school's current census is 109 residents. Southbury has not accepted new admissions since 1986; a court closed admissions in 1986 and upon the court order's expiration, the state legislature closed admissions in 1997.

Southbury's director, Kathy Hanewicz, has continued her predecessor's plan of consolidating residential services to the front of campus.

Connecticut reached a settlement agreement with the Arc of CT (*Messier v. Southbury Training School*, filed in 1996) which requires the state to expose STS guardians to community-based alternatives to institutional living. The plaintiffs are aggressive in their efforts to move residents out of the training school, and are impatient with the state's progress. They believe STS should have closed by now, but many guardians and an STS guardianship organization (which serves that role for residents without appointed guardians) have been reluctant to move their wards.

The regional centers each house fewer than 100 residents. The state has effectively closed the centers to admissions despite not having a formal policy to this effect. The same groups that oppose Southbury's continued operation also oppose the existence of the regional centers.

The state recently opened a short-term, crisis-stabilization unit at the Hartford Center.

Disability Rights CT hosted an event last year at the state legislature calling for Southbury's closure. James Conroy attended and presented. Members of the Home and School Association also attended and offered a statement in response.