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June 17, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Providers address the need to standardize care across all settings serving people with disabilities at national convention

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On June 9, Terry Kopansky, Executive Director of Mur-Ci Homes, Inc., a care provider for people with developmental disabilities in Antioch, Tennessee, moderated a panel of experts who discuss proven strategies for delivering high quality care to this vulnerable population.

The panel discussion, featuring Ralph Kennedy of Tennessee Family Solutions (Nashville), Renee Naylor of Westcare Management (Oregon), and Brad Whitehead of Lanterman Developmental Center (California), was part of the national convention of VOR, a nonprofit advocacy organization.

“It was an exceptional panel of experts discussing their life work,” remarked Kopansky. “As providers, we value quality care above all else. Sadly, not all providers operate with the same values. This panel discussion was a first step toward considering how we can ensure consistent quality across all settings for the people we represent.”

Kopansky, who was recently elected to the VOR Board of Directors, expressed hope that this conversation was only the beginning.

“The prevailing philosophy in Tennessee and across the country is that smaller settings will always serve people with developmental disabilities better,” he said. “This has resulted in some fine larger facilities closing, leaving many very fragile individuals without access to specialized services. This is not true integration – it’s dumping.”

VOR is the only national organization that opposes these closings, while also pushing for community-based standards to address current deficiencies.

Joining Kopansky in Washington, D.C. were families and other advocates from across the country who attended VOR’s Conference and visited Members of Congress and their staff on Capitol Hill.

“We had a very productive week in Washington, D.C. and left committed to the challenges that impact people with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the country,” said Julie Huso, VOR’s Executive Director. “Our dedicated volunteers visited every Congressional office and received very positive responses to the concerns we brought to their attention.”

~End~

VOR is a national organization advocating for high quality care and human rights for all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.