

## COLORADO State Report

**By Ellen Laurence, VOR Colorado State Coordinator**

Colorado has 3 state-owned and operated Regional Centers (RC's): in Grand Junction, Pueblo and Wheat Ridge. At this time, there are 5 privately owned ICF's. The state currently has 350 licensed beds. The current census of each RC (as of 5-22-18) is: GJRC – 22 ICF & 61 HCBS; PRC -45 HCBS; & WRRRC -126 ICF- for a total of 254 residents. There has been a moratorium (from HCPF) on admissions to the Pueblo Regional Center for the last several years. The Regional Centers 'serve' residents within 3 treatment models:

- Short-term treatment and stabilization – admission ONLY for short-term services and individuals must have acute needs that can't be met in the community. Individuals admitted to this program are presumed to be stabilized within 120 days of admission and transitioned out to the community.
- Intensive treatment program (ITP) – this program provides treatment for individuals with “problematic sexual behaviors”. Individuals in this program “receive treatment and transition back to the community within 2 to 3 years.” This program is located on the only remaining “campus” in Colorado – 5 clustered homes with security measures (electronic gates, high walls, alarms) across the street from the administration building. Additionally, this program can only accommodate males, so females with “problematic sexual behaviors” are housed in the group homes with the IDD population.
- Long-term habilitation – NO ONE is any longer admitted into this program. This is only for residents who were admitted before 2013. Supposedly, as these individuals are 'stabilized' they are transitioned to a “less restrictive environment in the community.” Parents and guardians who have objected to their loved ones leaving the regional centers have in the past been labeled as “barriers to transition”. Additionally, no one is admitted to any of the 3 Regional Centers without an Imposition of Legal Disability (ILD) which is instituted and then reviewed by the court every 6 months.

Colorado has no remaining campus – save the small ITP area at Wheat Ridge (probably less than 1 acre). Residents are in (generally) 8 bed group homes scattered throughout the various communities.

Currently, one of the biggest challenges we're facing is the admission of individuals with extreme and challenging mental health concerns who are being placed in the homes of very vulnerable individuals. Staff are frustrated and concerned (as are parents and guardians) about the mixing of 2 very diverse groups. We have been told – by state administration - that this is the direction that Regional Centers are now going. There is growing concern among parents that this is a well-orchestrated effort by the Colorado Department of Human Services to impel us to move our loved ones out of the ICF's/Regional Centers –due to very real concerns about our children's safety.