

## **Report from ILLINOIS**

**By Rita Winkeler, State of Illinois Coordinator**

The census of the State Operated Developmental Centers (SODCs) in Illinois has remained stable. The state ICF/IDs census ending May 1, 2017 was 1,660. The census as of May 1, 2018 was 1,666. The state has moved individuals from the SODCs to private ICFs or Community Integrated Living Arrangements (CILAs - group homes), but as they have moved individuals, other individuals have taken their place in the SODCs. The Chicago Tribune did an updated article regarding the oversight in the CILAs in January 2018, featuring a Murray resident and her mother's struggle to find quality care for her in a community placement. Several laws have been passed in an attempt to improve the oversight of the CILAs, but in actuality very little has been done to improve the oversight and accountability of community group homes. Community providers continue to be unwilling to accept those developmentally disabled individuals who have severe behavior or medical issues. The Department of Human Services has made it clear that they believe in the "continuum of care" with the emphasize on "choice". However, the Independent Service Agencies (ISCs) that are the beginning point of contact in the department often continue to NOT offer ICFs and SODCs. The state has sent out memorandums stating that these agencies MUST offer ICFs and SODCs, but some of the agencies unless asked will not offer these services.

Murray Center, where our son resides, has had 28 admissions since July 2016. All of these but two have come from failed CILA placements. Murray has recently reopened a cottage that had been closed eight years ago. The seven state operated developmental centers have admitted over 70 individuals in the past year.

Currently, over 20,000 are now serviced through the Division's Medicaid Waiver program. At this time, there are over 24,000 on the Prioritization for Urgency of Need for Services (PUNS) List - disabled individuals waiting for services. There is a 5-7 year wait before receiving services under the Medicaid Waiver Program.

There are over 200 private ICFs with the capacity for over 4,500 individuals. Most of these homes are not filled to capacity, and some are in the process of converting to smaller CILA homes.

Funding in Illinois for all DD/ID services continues to be a constant struggle. Several bills have been proposed to raise the minimum wage for all Direct Support Person (DSPs) in community settings to \$13.50 in 2018, and up to \$15 by 2020. At this time the bill has passed the Senate, and is headed to the House. For the past two years, the Governor has vetoed a bill raising the minimum wage for DSPs to \$15 an hour.