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Rochester, IL 62563

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September 24, 2012

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IL Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 West Jefferson Street, 2nd Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

Dear Board Members:

As the aunt of a 23 year resident of the Jacksonville Developmental Center, I am writing to urge you to vote at your October 30 meeting to keep this facility open. DHS and individual families are not finding acceptable alternative placements for my nephew and for many of the remaining residents at JDS.

These developmentally challenged individuals are needful of professional, caring, well-trained, and dedicated staff. This is what we have found at the Jacksonville Center. It is home to my nephew and he has been safe and protected in that environment. Each residence area has a limited number of people which is much like a fraternity (or sorority) and the residents bond with each other in friendship much like family.

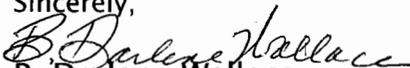
My nephew has an IQ of a preschooler, he is not verbal, and is easily manipulated to give up money or escape. Because he cannot express what has happened to him, he was physically abused more than once in another placement, but could not speak up or explain what had happened to cause his injuries. At JDC there is sufficient staff that they can be watchful and intervene when there are behavioral incidents. The staff is accountable to each other and help come together to work out procedures to benefit each resident's behavior challenges.

No place is perfect, but JDC's having professional medical staff on site has been helpful as they can use the nursing staff to determine when outside intervention is necessary. Having dental care on site works best as most of these individuals do not do well in a strange setting and their behavior in those settings causes upsets to other patients waiting to be seen by the doctors or dentists.

There was a symposium at the University of Illinois at Springfield last week (9/19/12) with police representation from all over the state. They are extremely concerned that many if not all of these residents who cannot exist in a community placement setting will end up in their custody. The police are not equipped or knowledgeable about handling the individual who will not obey their orders to cease in their behavior, quiet down, and submit to their orders. The mentally challenged do not have the capacity to understand those orders.

All we are asking is that you see that the money spent on these developmental centers for the most needed of these individuals is money well spent. All of these parents (who are now up in age themselves and wanting continuing care for their loved ones) want assurance that their adult child will be protected and well-served as they themselves come to that age where worry poses more demands on their own health. They agonized about institutional care for their loved one, but because of the need for 24/7 care, it was the only alternative. Now they are looking to your board to reject the closure permit so their family member can remain in their home at JDC and be given the care they so much deserve. These individuals need to be protected from themselves in many instances, from others, and from society in general. Please keep the residents' best interests in mind as you vote. Thank you.

Sincerely,


B. Darlene Wallace