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HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

October 4, 2013

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

13-058

Mr. Constantino and Board Members:

As you take up the closure of the Murray Development Center (MDC) later this month, I ask you to close MDC. Both state and national experts on intellectual disability systems report that Illinois needs to be re-balanced by closing state institutions and supporting community living. Illinois has a "Blueprint" to re-balance the disability system. It was developed in 2008 and updated in 2012 as a seven year guide to move to an integrated community system. We need to continue implementing the rebalancing initiative in Illinois.

First, closing institutions like MDC is better for individuals living in them. Community living offers people with disabilities a safer way of living with quality, independence and equality. In Illinois, thousands of individuals have successfully transitioned from institutions to community living.

Second, closing institutions is better for the 21,000 individuals who are on the waiting list for state services. Institutional settings like MDC are four times more costly financially than community living arrangements. Four times the number of people with disabilities can be served by closing institutions like MDC.

My son David is 20. He is developmentally disabled as a result of a prenatal brain injury. He is completely non-verbal. His mental age is between 3 and 5. David will never live independently and will need living arrangements, employment assistance and other disability services his entire life. Currently the chance of David receiving funding for services in Illinois next year is virtually non-existent, due to lack of financial resources. Closing institutions like MDC will free up funds to provide services to the thousands, like David, who are desperately in need of assistance.

Expensive institutions like MDC are *not* the place where public servants such as yourselves should be investing scarce resources for our state – resources that could better serve those in need.

I believe it is imperative that state institutions be closed in Illinois, and I strongly support the closure of the Murray Developmental Center.

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5