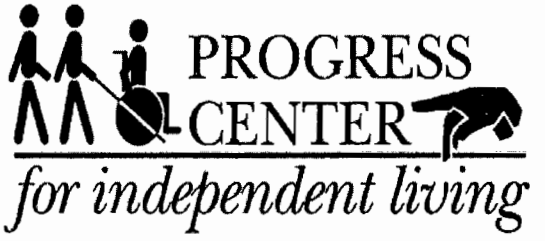

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OCT 17 2013
HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

13-058

October 14, 2013

Mike Constantino
Supervisor, Project Review Section
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 West Jefferson Street (2nd Floor)
Springfield, Illinois 62761

Dear Mr. Constantino,

Progress Center for Independent Living is a non-profit, non-residential, service and advocacy organization that assists people with disabilities to live more independently in their own community. Progress Center is located in Forest Park and serves all of suburban Cook County. Over half of our staff and Board of Directors are people with disabilities.

I am writing in support of closure of the Murray Developmental Center in Centralia, Illinois. The closure is important not just for the residents of the Murray Developmental Center, but for people with developmental disabilities around Illinois. The closure will support Illinois' commitment to expand home and community based services for people with developmental disabilities, and will help ensure that Medicaid long term care services are provided in the most integrated setting possible in the community.

I understand that many people now call the Murray Developmental Center their home. For those residents, for their family members, and for their guardians, the institution closure would understandably be a difficult process. Yet, it is a process that will strengthen Illinois and the entire disability community in the long term. Fourteen states have already closed all of their state run institutions for people with disabilities. By doing so, the states were able to provide more community based, integrated living opportunities for people with disabilities. When states integrate their communities, people with and without disabilities benefit. This includes people with severe disabilities. All services that are provided in an institution can also be provided in the community. Murray residents, no matter the type or severity of disability, should have the opportunity to live in integrated community-based settings.

Now is the time to close the Murray Developmental Center. I urge the Illinois Health Facilities Review Board to support closure. Closure will benefit current residents and will enable Illinois to better fund services for the 30,000 people with developmental disabilities who are on the waiting list for support services.
I urge you to vote in support of closure.

Sincerely,

Larry Biondi
Advocacy Coordinator

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