

JOIN VOR IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

2009 VOR Annual Meeting and Washington Initiative, June 12, 2009
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YOUR FAMILY ASSOCIATION CAN HELP!

Distribute Annual Meeting/Initiative Flyers and Sponsorship Flyers
Put information about these opportunities in your newsletters.
Sponsor someone from your group to attend the meeting.

Contact Tamie at 605-399-1624; Tamie327@hotmail.com for more information

VOR Weekly E-Mail Update
March 20, 2009
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Table of Contents

WASHINGTON INITIATIVE UPDATE: Breakfast anyone?

1. NEW: Sponsor offers Initiative participants a free breakfast at the Liaison!
WORTH REPEATING: ACTION ITEMS

2. YOUR PICTURES STILL NEEDED: VOR will have a NEW website; Seeking YOUR pictures

3. HIGH IMPORTANCE / ONGOING: THE QUEST FOR EVEN MORE H.R. 1255 COSPONSORS CONTINUES!

STATE NEWS

4. NORTH DAKOTA: N.D. bill would promote alternate uses of state institutions

5. NEBRASKA: Interim CEO, doctor question BSDC decisions

6. A Survey of 50 States: National Accreditation of Community Service Providers to Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
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WASHINGTON INITIATIVE UPDATE: Breakfast anyone?

1. NEW: Sponsor offers Initiative participants a free breakfast at the Liaison!

Thanks to the generosity of **Mary McTernan**, VOR's Immediate Past President, every VOR Washington Initiative participant who stays at the Liaison Capitol Hill will be treated to a free breakfast at the hotel's renowned *Art & Soul* restaurant.

Breakfast vouchers will be provided to Initiative participants upon their arrival and can be redeemed for qualifying menu items, ranging from hot and cold breakfast selections. 17. Qualifying breakfasts are still being worked out

by the hotel and will be published well in advance of the meeting. Vouchers are good any morning from Sunday, June 14 through Wednesday, June 17.

VOR extends its sincere gratitude to Mary McTernan for her generosity. In past years when VOR has been able to provide this benefit, Initiative Participants cited meaningful cost savings to their overall trip budget.

Participants attending the VOR Annual Meeting on Saturday, June 13, will also be treated to a Continental Breakfast during the registration hour for 8-9 am.

PLEASE PLAN TO JOIN VOR IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

NUMBERS COUNT!

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WORTH REPEATING: ACTION ITEMS

2. YOUR PICTURES STILL NEEDED: VOR will have a NEW website; Seeking YOUR pictures

VOR has enlisted the help of NeigerDesign, Inc. to completely renovate VOR's website. To help personalize VOR's Mission, we would very much like to have digital pictures of you and your loved one with developmental disabilities.

Please email your photos to Tamie Hopp at Tamie327@hotmail.com. By emailing your photos you are consenting to have your image and/or that of your family member on VOR's website and in other VOR marketing material. Photos will only be used for VOR's purposes and will not be sold.

3. HIGH IMPORTANCE / ONGOING: THE QUEST FOR EVEN MORE H.R. 1255 COSPONSORS CONTINUES!

Cosponsors don't just "happen" - YOU need to ASK!

HIGH PRIORITY: We need your ongoing help to enlist cosponsors to H.R. 1255!

TEMPLATES: See, <http://www.vor.net/HR1255Alert.htm> for an alert, including template messages, on this important bill.

VISITS: Remember, YOUR U.S. Representative will be working from his/her District office near your home April 6 - 17. This is an ideal time for you to schedule a personal meeting to share information about H.R. 1255 and to request that your U.S. Representative cosponsor H.R. 1255.

H.R. 1255 already has 17 cosponsors!

- Moran (D-VA)*
- Paul (R-TX)*
- Cohen (D-TN)*
- Lungren (R-CA)*
- Poe (R-TX)*
- Goodlatte (R-VA)*
- Dreier (R-CA)*
- Wasserman Schultz (D-FL)*
- Kanjorski (D-PA)*
- Culberson (R-TX)
- Olver (D-MA)

Gutierrez (D-IL)
Capuano (D-MA)
Wolf (R-VA)
McGovern (D-MA)
Barrow (D-GA)
Larson (D-CT)

[* = Original Cosponsors: These Members of Congress joined Rep. Frank as cosponsors upon introduction of H.R. 1255 on March 3].

CALL TODAY!!

It is up to VOR members and advocates who support residential choice to get this bill passed. We need to line up as many cosponsors as possible as quickly as we can.

Congress: Congress.org (enter your zip)

Capitol Switchboard: 202-224-3121

STATE NEWS

4. NORTH DAKOTA: N.D. bill would promote alternate uses of state institutions

**Dale Wetzel, AP
Grand Forks Herald
02/01/2009**

BISMARCK - North Dakota's long-simmering debate about the number of its state institutions is percolating again in the Legislature, where two House members have proposed incentives for overhauling how state facilities are used.

The legislation offers state grants equal to 10 years of each institution's budget "to assist the institution and community in the transition to an alternative use," says the bill, which is sponsored by Rep. Rick Berg, R-Fargo, and Lee Kaldor, D-Mayville.

Private companies and nonprofit organizations could take part in drawing up plans for new uses with assistance from the state Office of Management and Budget, the measure says. The agency is asking for \$160,000 to help with developing plans.

The legislation is certain to draw attention at North Dakota's smaller colleges - which have had to fend off suggestions for years that they be sold or closed - as well as the state Developmental Center in Grafton and North Dakota's School for the Deaf in Devils Lake.

At a House Education Committee hearing last week, Berg mentioned the Developmental Center and the School for the Deaf as examples of state institutions with building space that could be converted to other uses. Both serve significantly fewer people than they once did.

The bill "is designed to encourage some creative thinking on how to utilize our current assets, so those assets will become economic engines in the future," Berg said.

Mayville Mayor Donald Moen said he did not believe Mayville State University supporters would warm to the idea. "I think the citizens of Mayville, for the most part, would not be interested," Moen said.

"We've got some very strong sentiment in favor of growing and building Mayville State, and I think there's some progress being made in that direction," Moen said. "I think we would probably stand our ground as a community and fight a change."

Last year, Devils Lake's City Commission approved a study and hired an architect to explore whether to convert part of the School for the Deaf into a community center, at an estimated cost of \$7 million. Among the school's attractions as a community center are its kitchen and Olympic-sized indoor swimming pool.

Mayor Fred Bott said the city does not have financing for the project, and he said he was curious whether the legislation would help to provide some.

"Not surprisingly, as often happens, we don't have the revenue source yet to go much further than the plan," Bott said. "We have the architect's plans and that is it . so I'll have to admit, this bill is interesting."

Grafton Mayor Todd Burianek said parts of the Developmental Center, which cares for developmentally disabled North Dakotans who also have physical handicaps, already have been converted to other uses, including apartments and a Veterans Administration clinic.

"In general, whatever we can do to best utilize the space out there is fine with me, and I think the citizens would embrace that," Burianek said. "However, we also recognize the ultimate need to provide those services to the current (Developmental Center) clients, and additional clients, as the case may be."

The approval of the state's voters would be needed to completely convert any institution to another use. North Dakota's Constitution specifies that the state must have a School for the Deaf in Devils Lake, a college in Mayville and an institution for the mentally retarded in Grafton.

Legislative debates about whether the constitution should specify the locations and duties of colleges and other state institutions were common in the 1980s and 1990s. An amendment to remove the constitution's references to eight colleges was finally put on the ballot in 1998, only to be defeated by voters.

Berg and Kaldor said they are aware of the issue's political sensitivity. Berg, who says he is not running for re-election, joked at the bill's House Education hearing last week that it was appropriate for him to introduce the bill when he has "no political future."

Kaldor, at the bill's House Education hearing, sounded a similar note.

"Rep. Berg talked about his political future," Kaldor said. "He asked me to sign onto this bill so that I might end mine."

The bill is HB1460.

5. NEBRASKA: Interim CEO, doctor question BSDC decisions

Friday, Mar 06, 2009
By Nancy Hicks
Lincoln Journal Star

BEATRICE - The interim CEO of the Beatrice State Developmental Center and a doctor hired to assess residents expressed their doubts about the state's decision to hastily remove 47 residents to local hospitals.

"We know our folks do not fare well in a hospital setting," said Claire Mahon, a nationally known expert hired as interim CEO.

She and Dr. Theodore Kastner, a New Jersey physician hired to evaluate clients, met with about 60 guardians and parents Thursday at the center to answer questions.

Guardians have expressed concern about the state's action in early February to move residents to hospitals with no notice and no permission from guardians.

But Mahon, who was not part of the decision, said the chief medical officer who made the decision believed residents were at medical risk.

Mahon said she was hired to get BSDC recertified as part of the Medicaid program, not to move people out of the center.

"I will stay as long as that (getting recertified) is my charge," she said.

Kastner said the decision to move medically fragile clients without any clear transition plans was not based on clinical data.

"It was not a decision I would have made," he said. "I don't know how those decision are being made."

In answer to questions from frustrated parents and guardians, Kastner said:

"There are other forces at work (beyond good clinical decisions). It is really a horrible thing. I feel badly about what happened to your loved ones."

He promised guardians would be an integral part of his assessment process.

"I believe in the principle that guardians need to participate," he said.

The assessments are required under an agreement the state signed with the U.S. Department of Justice after it threatened to file a civil rights suit based on problems at BSDC.

Mahon also said she will ask the state to lift the licensing restrictions that sent the 47 residents to local hospitals as soon as she gets enough medical staff hired.

Although she gave no specific timeline, Mahon said that as soon as she can make a credible argument that the restriction be lifted, she will ask her superiors to make that request. The center then could resume caring for people who are medically fragile.

This is contrary to statements made by Gov. Dave Heineman and John Wyvill, director of the state division of developmental disabilities, who have said BSDC would not seek to get the license reinstated.

When contacted Thursday, Wyvill said in a statement that it would be "inappropriate to comment because I wasn't at the meeting and don't know the context of any statements made. I'd have to talk to my CEO and the physician before making any comments."

6. A Survey of 50 States: National Accreditation of Community Service Providers to Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Full Survey: http://www.hsri.org/docs/Missouri_Accreditation%20Survey%20report.doc

HUMAN SERVICES RESEARCH INSTITUTE
June 2008
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State of Missouri is considering changes to its quality management practices that would require national accreditation for providers of community based services to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD). Because this represents a significant change in policy and practice, the Division of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (DMRDD) sought information on the extent to which states have integrated national accreditation into state level quality monitoring activities. DMRDD contracted with the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) to survey state officials regarding their quality management practices pertaining to community provider accreditation.

National accreditation is a phenomenon operating in many fields (hospital quality, educational quality, insurance agencies, child care centers, law enforcement and public safety agencies) and is largely accepted as a means to ensure that a provider has met a standard of practice. The goals of national accreditation are similar to those of state quality management systems -- service and organizational improvement, the well-being of individuals served, and the encouragement of best practice.

The place of accreditation within public I/DD systems is part of a larger conversation about the balance between public quality management and the outsourcing of some quality assurance functions to private entities. At least three states, South Carolina, Florida and Indiana, have contracted out significant pieces of their quality assurance systems to private for profit and not for profit companies. Therefore the question posed by Missouri to other states regarding the status of accreditation within the formal quality assurance system should be of interest to public managers around the country.

Synopsis of Methodology

This survey was conducted online by respondents in state quality improvement departments. Forty six of the fifty states provided information on their states' practices regarding national accreditation for providers of community based services.

Synopsis of Key Findings

The majority of states (70%) neither require nor formally encourage national accreditation for community based providers. Furthermore, a change in policy along these lines is not anticipated in the near future. In states where accreditation is required or formally encouraged (30%), this expectation is laid out most frequently in administrative rule, followed by statute and least often resulting from a court mandate. States are more likely to encourage/require accreditation of day services (e.g., sheltered workshops, rehabilitation services, supported employment) than residential services. This practice appears to be long standing as policies regarding accreditation of day services in 10 states are noted to have in place for more than 10 years.

Of interest is the extent to which state oversight requirements are waived when a provider has a current certificate of national accreditation. States that require or encourage provider accreditation are equally split between those that waive requirements and those that do not. Most frequently waived is provider certification. When we examine states that require provider accreditation for certain services (seven states), just one state waives an element of its provider oversight and monitoring (provider certification).

The majority of states that require or encourage accreditation track the accreditation status of community providers. Beyond accreditation review results however, communication between state agencies and accreditation organizations regarding issues of concern with a provider's performance are almost equally likely to occur as not. No state currently evaluates the performance of accredited providers with non-accredited providers serving individuals with similar needs.

Few states at this time readily share provider specific accreditation information with the public. But states are interested in posting provider performance information. States that HSRI has worked with over the past several years are actively contemplating ways to display provider performance data and present more transparent systems to stakeholders. Accreditation results are one source of performance information that stakeholders may find useful.

This survey concluded by querying public I/DD service system managers to share provider accreditation and quality monitoring experiences and suggestions with Missouri DMRDD officials regardless of whether a state has formal rules or policies regarding provider accreditation.

Synopsis of Recommendations

The predominant message from state quality managers that responded to this survey is that accreditation is an adjunct quality assurance process that complements, but does not replace, state quality monitoring. Very few states waive any part of the quality oversight functions for community providers with national accreditation. Accreditation, while recognized as a valuable indicator of a provider's quality of service delivery, is not recommended to stand in lieu of a state's responsibility to assure that individuals receiving services are meeting state standards. States participating in this survey recommend utilizing national accreditation as one source of information to discern community provider performance.

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Tamie Hopp

**VOR MEMBERSHIP/CONTRIBUTION FORM
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

TO JOIN OR CONTRIBUTE: \$25 per individual, \$150 per family organization, or \$200 per provider/professional organization. Extra donations are welcome!

You may pay by check or credit card

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E-Mail

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Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Cardholder's Signature: _____

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