

**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 information

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**VOR Weekly E-Mail Update**  
**April 17, 2009**

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**"If Not Us, Who" Action Item Reminders**

- 1. **SUPPORT H.R. 1255:** This legislation will only pass with VOR grassroots advocacy efforts
- 2. **CHOICE PETITION TOPS 1,000 SIGNATURES IN ONE WEEK!!** Keep up the effort!

**ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE**

- 3. **Networking Dinner** added to VOR's Schedule of Events

**STATE NEWS**

- 4. **IOWA** Center meets DOJ goals
- 5. **NEBRASKA:** Lawmakers voice concerns over BSDC "medically fragile" transfers
- 6. **NEBRASKA:** Gov. Heineman Outlines Vision for Stronger Beatrice State Developmental Center

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**1. SUPPORT H.R. 1255: This legislation will only pass with VOR grassroots advocacy efforts.**

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If you have not contacted your U.S. Representative, please, please, please do so TODAY. Ask him/her to COSPONSOR H.R. 1255.

If you have already contacted your U.S. Representatives, but he/she has not yet responded, call again. In fact, it's OK and recommended that you follow-up with your Congressman's staff WEEKLY. There are already nearly 2,000 bills that have been introduced in the House of Representatives. Congressional staffers are very, very busy. To ensure that your request re: H.R. 1255 stays at the top of the "to do" pile, you need to make repeated contact with your staff contacts.

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**2. CHOICE PETITION TOPS 1,000 SIGNATURES IN ONE WEEK!! KEEP UP THE EFFORT!**

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Great job everyone! Thanks to your support we topped 1,000 signatures in support of choice in just one week! If you have not already signed do it right now! Go to <http://www.petitiononline.com/DDchoice/petition.html> (or there is a link on VOR's home page: <http://www.vor.net>).

If you have already signed the Petition, here are some strategies that others are using to collect additional signatures:

- A. Distributing the PetitionOnline link to everyone in their email address book.
- B. Distributing a flyer at their family/guardian and other group gatherings.
- C. Setting up a laptop at group gatherings to get people signed on.

Note: With the individual's permission, you can sign on a non-internet user using your email address.

**Questions:** Contact Tamie Hopp at 605-399-1624; 877-399-4867 (toll free); or Tamie327@hotmail.com.

## **ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE**

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### **3. Networking Dinner added to VOR's Schedule of Events**

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On Saturday evening, June 13, 2009, following the VOR Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., VOR will host a dinner to allow VOR members to continue networking with like-minded advocates from across the country.

Participation is optional; there will be an additional cost of about \$40, to include transportation to the restaurant and back and a robust Italian feast served family style! The menu includes garlic bread, salad, chicken with lemon, cheese manicotti, lasagna, and tiramisu for dessert. Yum! Non alcoholic beverages also come with the meal, and there will also be a cash bar.

Reservation details will be provided to Annual Meeting and Initiative participants in advance of the event.

**Have you registered for VOR's Annual Meeting and Washington Initiative?** See, <http://vor.net/AnnualMeeting2009.htm>, for complete registration details. Remember, the deadline for hotel reservations is May 12, 2009. Please plan to join VOR in Washington, D.C.!

## **STATE NEWS**

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### **4. IOWA Center meets DOJ goals**

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**Iowa center for mentally disabled meets fed goals**

**By Amy Lorentzen, Associated Press Writer**

**Chicago Tribune**

**April 13, 2009**

More than four years after agreeing to comply with federal guidelines at a central Iowa center for mentally disabled people, the Iowa Department of Human Services has achieved its goal.

Human Services Director Gene Gessow said the Woodward Resource Center, home to more than 200 mentally disabled Iowans, has come into full compliance with a November 2004 civil rights consent agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice.

"Reaching compliance with DOJ standards is far more than a minimal threshold of service, and it's not something on which you can declare victory today and forget about tomorrow," Gessow said Monday in a statement. "These standards evolve and become ever more demanding, and I am committed to keeping pace."

According to a federal court filing this month, the Iowa State Resource Plan had called for Woodward to comply with federal guidelines within three years, or by October 2007. Human services officials said the state-run home reached compliance on most issues that year, followed by an 18-month monitoring period to show sustained compliance.

"The Justice Department has not had to seek penalties or the court's intervention to bring Woodward into compliance with the decree," Department of Justice spokesman Alejandro Miyar said. "Iowa's implementation of the decree at Woodward has been a success."

The court filing notes that the Woodward Resource Center "has achieved substantial compliance" in a number of areas.

Among those are: protecting residents from harm; medical, clinical, psychiatric and psychological care; physical and nutritional management; and training, education and skill acquisition.

"Its efforts to place persons into the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs are robust and yet careful and respectful," the filing said.

It said the facility is in the process of developing "cutting-edge interventions" for behavioral support and services and has put in place a "remarkable" electronic record keeping system.

Because Woodward hasn't yet shown sustained compliance within physical and nutritional management, the state and federal government have agreed that federal officials will continue to monitor those areas for another year.

Another state facility, the Glenwood Resource Center in southwest Iowa, which houses more than 300 people with mental disabilities, also has come under scrutiny by the Justice Department.

Federal officials last year looked into nine deaths at the state-run home, finding in February that there were no "systemic issues" there. However, officials did note a delay in reporting one patient's deteriorating medical condition could have contributed to one of the deaths at Glenwood.

Human services officials said Glenwood is making "rapid advances" toward standards it agreed to in the 2004 civil rights settlement. It has until April 2010 to show sustained compliance.

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## **5. NEBRASKA: Lawmakers voice concerns over BSDC "medically fragile" transfers**

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Some lawmakers are concerned that medically fragile people forced to leave the Beatrice State Developmental Center and move to hospitals are not being evaluated for a possible return to the center.

The fact they are not being evaluated emerged Thursday during a meeting between lawmakers and officials with the Department of Health and Human Services. John Wyvill, who oversees Beatrice center, says the focus is putting people into community-based programs.

About half of the 47 people moved from the center after it was deemed too dangerous for them are still in hospitals.

It costs the state almost three times more to keep them in hospitals than in the center. Others having gone to nursing homes or into community-based programs.

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## **6. NEBRASKA: Gov. Heineman Outlines Vision for Stronger Beatrice State Developmental Center**

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(Lincoln Neb.) Gov. Dave Heineman today sent a letter to state senators outlining the vision for future needs and improvements at the Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC). The letter included a plan state

officials will use to strengthen BSDC and community-based services during the next two years.

The Governor highlighted several steps taken in the last two months:

An interim CEO for BSDC was named in February. Clare Mahon has experience managing a state facility that was decertified by federal agencies and eventually regained certification.

Mahon is joined by an interim management team with experience and expertise in navigating the challenges facing facilities similar to BSDC.

The medical team at BSDC has expanded to include doctors trained in neurology and osteopathic medicine, as well as two general physicians.

Two speech pathologists will begin working at BSDC this month. The extra staff is in addition to the 24 developmental technicians and 4 licensed practical nurses hired so far this year. Each of these positions is critical to supporting the needs of BSDC residents.

Ongoing efforts to match the needs of BSDC residents with appropriate services and staffing are expected to result in additional BSDC residents transitioning to community-based services over the next two years.

An assessment of all BSDC residents is underway to identify needs and determine placement options in the best interest of each individual.

Officials with the Division of Developmental Disabilities at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) are working to expand community-based services that will allow BSDC residents to be served in a more independent setting.

Two organizations that provide services and independent living options for those with developmental disabilities are working with DHHS to expand their operations in several Nebraska communities.

Mosaic is expected to create services and living arrangements for an additional 66 people with developmental disabilities in the next two years. Mosaic will open six, six-bed Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded, as well as five, six-bed Centers for Developmental Disabilities over the next 30 months in several communities.

Four of these living units will be in operation in a year, with the remaining units in operation by October 2011. Each living unit will be equipped to provide medical support services, with some units staffed to provide 24-hour nursing care.

Another provider, ENCOR, is in negotiations to provide an additional six beds in a new medical service unit in the Omaha area.

As these living units are developed, the DHHS Division of Developmental Disabilities will increase capacity in its Intensive Treatment Services and Outpatient Treatment Intensive Services programs from 8 to at least 25, to provide temporary services to individuals.

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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  
VOR (Voice of the Retarded)  
836 S. Arlington Heights Rd., #351  
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847-253-0675 fax (for referrals or credit card payments)  
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