

The list of H.R. 1255 cosponsors continues to grow and grow. We are now at 58! PLEASE HELP. Make arrangements to visit your U.S. Representative in your town this AUGUST. Request an appointment today. Contact Tamie at Tamie327@hotmail.com for help. See below for additional details. **THANK YOU.**

Have you signed the VOR Choice Petition yet? More than 2,500 individuals from across the country have. Join them, sign the online petition, and show strong and growing support for CHOICE. Visit, <http://www.vor.net> and click on the Petition link on the home page.

VOR Weekly E-Mail Update
July 17, 2009

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STATE NEWS

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- 2. CALIFORNIA SIGN ON OPPORTUNITY:** Psychiatric Technicians ask Californians and others to 'Support Our Services'

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The Champion
Agency for Persons with Disabilities
by: Timothy Garvey, DMD, Tacachale, and Wayne Jespersen, VTS II, Tachachle
April 2009

People who have developmental disabilities often find it hard to obtain health care services. One of the more difficult services to locate is good dental care. The Tacachale Developmental Disability Center in Gainesville has a dental clinic that delivers expert dental care to people who have developmental disabilities, and besides serving its own communities for several decades, it has also done so for disabled person outside Tacachale for 14 years. Now with the approval of the Florida Legislature to fund a dental pilot program, more disabled people in the communities are able to access expert dental care.

In December 2008, Tacachale began opening its dental clinic after hours to provide care for those with developmental disabilities in the surrounding areas. Tacachale has partnered with the University of Florida College of Dentistry at Shands to deliver the needed services in this pilot program.

"The idea is to provide much needed dental care to the persons with disabilities throughout our community" said Tacachale Superintendent Don Thomas. According to Thomas, the state appropriates trust funds to Tacachale for the program, then Tacachale contracts with the University of Florida for the dental services it provides for the individuals in the community. After the billing cycle is complete, Tacachale pays the money back to the State trust fund. "So far, so good," Thomas commented. "the dental pilot during the first two months earned more than expected."

Many obstacles can block effective dental care, most of it routine, for people with significant disabling conditions. The list includes medical illnesses, immobility, long distance to travel to receive care, legal issues pertaining to informed consent for invasive procedures, financial issues, and probably most importantly, behavioral issues that can prevent patients from cooperation while receiving dental care.

Dental offices carry extremely high overhead costs, and building a dental office suite for providing adequate dental care typically costs between \$300,000 and \$500,000. Additionally, staffing costs are significantly higher when providing dental care for people who have developmental disabilities. Most procedures for patients with disabilities require four members on the dental team.

The proposal approved by the Florida Legislature allows Tacachale's dental clinic to be utilized in off-hours to care for nonresidents on a fee-for-service basis. This avoids the significant start-up costs for a new dental clinic. The expectation is that, upon establishing a regular flow of patients, the dental pilot program will be self-sustaining. The majority of patients receive funding through the Medicaid waiver that is administered by APD. Some patients have personal financial resources for their services. Even though Florida's Medicaid program only provides for those over 21 years of age. The clinic can bill for these services.

Initial evaluation of the clinic's operations after three months indicates that the program will achieve the objective of being financially self-sustaining. Additionally, partnerships with the University of Florida and Shands Hospital allow for services that are difficult or impossible to obtain elsewhere, given the unique dental needs of persons with disabilities. These partnerships will provide training opportunities for dental students, so they will have the experience to serve individuals with disabilities in their own dental practices in the future.

Tachachle's newly established dental clinic model could be implemented in other locations as a cost-effective method of providing much needed dental care. This model could be expanded to include other medical services, such as occupational and physical therapy, for a much underserved population.

2. CALIFORNIA SIGN ON OPPORTUNITY: Psychiatric Technicians ask Californians and others

to 'Support Our Services'

To sign the Petition go to: <http://www.petitiononline.com/capt01/petition.html>

To: Governor Schwarzenegger and California Legislators

Psychiatric Technicians ask Californians to 'Support Our Services'

As licensed and certified level-of-care nursing staff in state hospitals, developmental centers, and prisons, Psychiatric Technicians are proud to care for Californians with mental illnesses and developmental disabilities. We believe the unique and challenging work we do makes a difference for the men and women in our care.

But our ability to provide vital services to our clients and patients is being harmed as Governor Schwarzenegger continues to demand layoffs and furloughs of employees at our state facilities. These cuts don't just hurt us, but the thousands of people who depend on us to be there for them.

We are respectfully asking Californians like you to support our services...

For our clients and patients - Proposed layoffs, continuing hiring freezes and unpaid furloughs are impacting our ability to provide adequate staffing, which can affect quality of care in our 24-hour facilities.

For our staff - As with most Californians, ongoing pay cuts are hurting our families and our efforts to recruit and retain a quality workforce.

For all Californians - Increased mandatory overtime to cover staffing gaps means increased costs to taxpayers, while unpaid furloughs mean less patronage for our local businesses.

We know your time is valuable, and your signature means a lot. Thank you for supporting us in the work we do and the people we do our work for.

THE 7,000 MEMBERS OF THE CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF PSYCHIATRIC TECHNICIANS

To sign the Petition go to: <http://www.petitiononline.com/capt01/petition.html>

3. NEBRASKA: Eighth former resident of Neb. Center dies

Summary: In February, 47 residents deemed "medically fragile" were abruptly moved from Beatrice Developmental Center by order of the state's chief medical officer. Residents, families and guardians were given very little notice. Since their transfer, 8 of the 47 moved have died, an alarming 17%. Some of the families of the residents who were transferred have filed a lawsuit.

Associated Press - July 16, 2009 8:55 AM ET

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) - Another former resident of the troubled Beatrice State Developmental Center has died.

Sixty-six-year-old Robert Olmstead died Tuesday.

He was the eighth of the 47 "medically fragile" residents to die since the state's chief medical officer ordered in February that they be moved from the center.

Most recently, he had been staying at the Nebraska Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Omaha.

H.R. 1255 UPDATE: Cosponsors now number 58!

4. VOR AUGUST DISTRICT INITIATIVE:

H.R. 1255 COSPONSOR OPPORTUNITY: Meet with your U.S. Representative

Since the VOR Washington Initiative in June, VOR secured at least 25 more H.R. 1255 cosponsors. There are currently 58 cosponsors, with additional cosponsors coming on board almost daily. These amazing results point to the effectiveness of constituent contact, especially face-to-face meetings, and proactive, regular follow-up. (See below for an updated list of cosponsors).

AUGUST provides an excellent opportunity for face-to-face meetings.

From August 3 - September 4, Members of the U.S. House of Representatives will be working from their District offices near your home. This is an incredible opportunity for you to share information about H.R. 1255 with your U.S. Representative and to ask him/her directly to COSPONSOR H.R. 1255.

ACTION STEPS

1. Identify your U.S. Representative and find his/her District office locations and contact information.

Go to <http://www.congress.org>.

At the top right of the screen there is a window for you to type your zip code. Information about your elected officials will come up (note: some of you may have to enter a street address if your Congressional District spans more than one zip code).

Click on the name of your U.S. Representative, and choose "Contact" from the tabs above his/her picture.

The D.C. office location will come up and usually one District office location, with a link here to "more district offices."

2. Today, call the Washington, D.C. office number and ask to speak to the Health LA (Legislative Assistant). Share information about H.R. 1255 and ask that Rep. _____ COSPONSOR H.R. 1255

3. Today (it is NOT too early) call the District office closest to your home and ask to speak with the scheduler. Request a meeting!

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT H.R. 1255

See, <http://vor.net/HR1255positions.htm>.

Contact, Tamie327@hotmail.com for questions or position papers for your meetings or to email to the Health LA. Materials can also be sent for your meetings in August.

TEMPLATE MESSAGE

(The following can be sent "as is," however, personalizing the letter makes the message far more effective. Consider adding a paragraph about your loved one with mental retardation/developmental disabilities and his/her significant needs).

I am your constituent and am writing to ask that you cosponsor H.R. 1255. H.R. 1255 was introduced on March 3, 2009 by Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA) and as of July 17, had 58 cosponsors, with nearly equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans.

H.R. 1255 would require that before federally-financed class action lawsuits against certified ICFs/MR can proceed, residents and their legal representatives must receive notice of the proposed class action and be given a time-limited opportunity to opt out of it, or do nothing and become part of a consenting class.

H.R. 1255 addresses the serious infringement on the civil rights of individuals displaced from their homes by federally-financed class action lawsuits filed typically for the sole purpose of "community integration." The attorneys filing these actions have never met the majority of class members, do not know their individual needs, disregard the reality that facility residents are very much involved and integrated in the happenings in and around the community in which the facility is located, and consider families/guardians as "clueless" (as written in a letter to Congress in opposition to H.R. 1255).

The injustice and resulting tragedies will be addressed by passage of H.R. 1255. Please contact Pilar Faló, Legislative Counsel to Rep. Barney Frank, to support H.R. 1255 as a COSPONSOR. Thank you very much for your prompt consideration and action.

Sincerely,

NAME, CONTACT INFO

**H.R. 1255 Cosponsors
July 17, 2009**

**Total so far: 58
Democrats (28)**

Rep. James Moran (D-VA)*
Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN)*
Rep. Paul Kanjorski (D-PA)*
Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL)*
Rep. Michael Capuano (D-MA)
Rep. John Olver (D-MA)
Rep. John Barrow (D-GA)
Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-IL)
Rep. John Larson (D-CT)
Rep. James McGovern (D-MA)
Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA)
Rep. Charles Gonzalez (D-TX)
Rep. John Lewis (D-GA)
Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-CA)
Rep. Niki Tsongas (D-MA)
Rep. Sam Farr (D-CA)
Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD)
Rep. Bobby Rush (D-IL)
Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX)
Rep. Richard Neal (D-MA)
Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL)
Rep. Richard Neal (D-MA)
Rep. Gwen Moore (D-WI)
Rep. Al Green (D-TX)
Rep. Lacy Clay (D-MO)
Rep. Russ Carnahan (D-MO)
Rep. Charles Melancon (D-LA)
Rep. Marion Berry (D-AR)
Rep. Bob Filner (D-CA)

Republicans (30)

Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX)*
Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX)*
Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA)*
Rep. David Dreier (R-CA)*
Rep. Dan Lungren (R-CA)*
Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA)
Rep. John Culberson (R-TX)
Rep. Charles Boustany (R-LA)
Rep. Peter Roskam (R-IL)
Rep. John Boozman (R-AR)
Rep. Anh "Joseph" Cao (R-LA)
Rep. Pete Olson (R-TX)
Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ)
Rep. Judy Biggert (R-IL)
Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY)
Rep. Bill Cassidy (R-LA)
Rep. Gary Miller (R-CA)

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-TX)
Rep. Devin Nunes (R-CA)
Rep. Phil Gingrey (R-GA)
Rep. Sam Johnson (R-TX)
Rep. Steve King (IA)
Rep. John Fleming (R-LA)
Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX)
Rep. Steve Scalise (R-LA)
Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-MN)
Rep. Kenny Marchant (R-TX)
Rep. Rodney Alexander (R-LA)
Rep. Randy Neugebauer (R-TX)
Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX)

VOR and YOU

5. YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND GIFTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!

VOR is the only national advocacy organization that expressly opposes efforts to eliminate the facility option while also supporting expansion of quality community programs. VOR advocates that final determination of what is appropriate depends on the unique abilities, needs and desires of each individual, with the input of family guardians where necessary and appropriate.

Editor: Tamie Hopp, VOR Director of Government Relations & Advocacy

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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Elk Grove Village, IL 60007
847-253-0675 fax (for referrals or credit card payments)
Tamie327@hotmail.com (for referrals or credit card payments)

Name

Address (if paying by credit card, use billing address). All forms must include complete address including zip code

City St Zip

Phone Fax

E-Mail

Family/Professional Organization Affiliation (if applicable)

If paying by credit card, please provide the following information:

Amount to charge to card: \$_____

Card Type: ____ Mastercard ____ Visa

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Cardholder's Signature: _____

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