

# ONE MISSOURI

## A Coalition for Community Inclusion

June 11, 2007

Personal Independence Commission  
Hearing Room 3, Mo State Capitol  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to talk with you today about a new coalition in Missouri. One Missouri (a coalition for community inclusion), has been formed to ensure Missourians with disabilities have the opportunity to live, work, play, worship, and be fully included in their communities.

As the PIC Commission was created by Executive Order to monitor Missouri's implementation of Title II of the ADA, with guidance provided by the U.S. Supreme Court in Olmstead and subsequent cases, we felt it was very important that you were informed about One Missouri.

Current members of One Missouri include; Arc of the United States Missouri Chapter; American Association for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Missouri Chapter; TASH, Missouri Chapter; People First of Missouri; Missouri Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities, Paraquad and Missouri Protection and Advocacy.

One Missouri is gravely concerned with the recent announcement that the Governor and the Department of Mental Health will be pursuing plans to build a "state-of-the-art" facility on the grounds of Bellefontaine Habilitation Center; especially in light of the recent report from the Department of Justice regarding Bellefontaine.

Regardless of how "state-of-the-art" a building can be, "state-of-the-art" cannot be about housing individuals with disabilities in this type of segregated and isolated setting. To date, ten states; Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, Indiana and the District of Columbia have NO large state institutions. Thirteen states have only one large state facility remaining. We find no data that supports the premise of building a "state-of-the-art" facility for housing individuals with disabilities.

The President's New Freedom Initiative and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Money Follows the Person Demonstration Grants focus efforts on including individuals with disabilities in their communities and providing funding to transition individuals from institutions to the community. The Money Follows the Person Grant was a major focus of your agenda today. Current plans in Missouri seem to be taking a step backward in the face of national efforts and grant funding to move people to the community.

United Cerebral Palsy Association recently released a report, The Case for Inclusion 2007, on how states are serving Americans with intellectual and developmental disabilities under Medicaid. Missouri is ranked 41st in the nation. One Missouri believes we can and must do better!

The promise of access to and support for integrated community lives and roles for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities is clearly expressed in national legislative, judicial, administrative and other sources that make four basic commitments:

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Inclusion

Member Groups

American Association  
for Intellectual and  
Developmental  
Disabilities –  
Missouri Chapter

The Arc of the US –  
Missouri Chapter

Missouri Planning  
Council for  
Developmental  
Disabilities

Missouri Protection  
and Advocacy

Paraquad Center for  
Independent Living

People First of  
Missouri

TASH – Missouri  
Chapter

1. People with disabilities will live in and participate in their communities;
2. People with disabilities will have satisfying lives and valued social roles;
3. People with disabilities will have sufficient access to needed support, and control over that support, so that the assistance they receive contributes to the lifestyles they desire, and;
4. People will be safe and healthy in the environments in which they live.

These commitments have been articulated in a number of legislative, administrative, and judicial statements describing national policy. Large congregate settings have proven to be unsuccessful in Missouri, as reported by the Department of Justice in their report released April 11, 2007.

As the Commission created by Executive Order to monitor and assess continuing development of the process to transition institutionalized individuals with disabilities eligible for community-based treatment into appropriate community settings we ask that you recommend to the Governor and the Department of Mental Health that the State of Missouri rescind its proposal to build a "state-of-the-art" large congregate facility on the grounds of Bellefontaine Habilitation Center, and instead, focus on the careful and person-centered transition of individuals housed there that desire and deserve to live in the community.

The Purpose and Principles of One Missouri are attached to this testimony. We welcome the opportunity to work with you to promote evidence-based best practice that supports the inclusion of people with disabilities in all areas of community living.

Respectfully,

One Missouri