

The Fight to Expose and Destroy a Deeply Embedded Governmental Scheme - CMS

A deeply embedded governmental scheme is stifling the rights of developmentally disabled individuals and their families.

Simply put, the culprit is an entrenched government agency of unelected social reformers, called Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), which has decreed that our medical assistance tax dollars may never be provided if the settings for delivery of necessary services to our loved ones are not “community” enough.

Behind our backs through our tax, budget and appropriations allocating system these public servants are tightening the stranglehold on the right of these populations to pursue happiness – specifically denying instead of improving opportunities for them to strive to improve their lives. They are threatening to take away all of the choices except the one they want us to have. This is totally anti-family, and family values are the core underpinnings of our representative republic.

The outcome is disastrous, and can only get worse: CMS cohorts in Pennsylvania have already sent in Pennsylvania’s plan to comply! CMS new regulation called “The Final Rule” has the force of law. Its mandates and standards result in necessary services to becoming so costly in money and human suffering as to cause the ultimate collapse of our entire health care system. It makes impossible the development of a continuum of appropriate services available to those developmentally disabled individuals most in need of these services – from the most profoundly involved autistic and retarded, to the higher functioning.

Institutions were the primary target of CMS policy makers, who fail to comprehend that unless all the services are available to these populations under one roof, such as properly staffed and monitored institutions provide, very few of the profoundly involved can survive and thrive. The same applies to those in need of less intense services. Costs to all taxpayers and families become unbearable. Furthermore, unless in close proximity to one another so that services can be provided at a reasonable cost, group homes cannot fulfill this function as stepping stones for our people to incrementally higher levels of cope-ability. This mandate also applies to every conceivable treatment setting.

Further exacerbating the situation are the poor wages for those individuals providing care in this field. Today such services can be provided only by properly trained individuals paid a living wage. Appropriate services overwhelm the tax dollars available. Fewer and fewer people can be served despite burgeoning budgets. That our elected officials allow this situation to continue and have swallowed the koolaid of CMS that all developmentally disabled need the same level of service, is a disgrace. They are replacing parents' and families' rights to enable their disabled family members to strive at their own speed. They are literally using our sons and daughters with autism and/or intellectual disabilities as battering rams for social change.

Until recently all States had to submit a plan of compliance to CMS by a certain date. This was recently changed under pressure from parents and professionals, like us. Instead, CMS decided to take us on state by state, nevertheless ultimately requiring compliance. Regardless, the "community only" criteria must be followed without exception. Like several other states, we are dedicating ourselves to combatting this by awakening our elected officials to this scheme upon our very way of life. We are urging them to help us cut off the head of this snake, CMS, and restore reason and reality to appropriate care standards-- **namely ongoing evaluations and a complete continuum of appropriate service options from which parents and families can choose what they feel most appropriate throughout the lives of their autistic and intellectually disabled family members.**

Realistically, A community is not THE utopian community that the socialist reformers keep trying to shove down our throats. "Community" is a broad term, itself, meaning a combination of settings which we occupy throughout life – job site, employed and living with self, parent, or family, singly, three, etc., etc., etc.. They are all various "communities" in which we are living and in which we adapt, or are supported in adapting ourselves, to given "communities" we encounter every day. The support mechanism is invariably friends, family, and providers. **The government's role is to protect and support us in this universal right to strive.**

We are enraged that so very few elected officials perceive this danger to our disabled loved ones and our country. That's why we have undertaken a campaign—with other parents, groups and advocates—to enlighten our elected government to crush the so called "Final Rule" and it's crippling mandates. Our first step we hope will be Pennsylvania legislation stating that, our Commonwealth is withdrawing its compliance to the CMS "Final Rule", pending further study. We urge your assistance and support in this effort. One day--we pray—our country will be able to declare "No developmentally disabled person left behind!"

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