

Goals FY 2009 - 2011

Objectives FY 2009

- I. **Protect and advocate for persons with disabilities who are victims of abuse, neglect, and rights violations, including:**
 - A. Respond to incidents of abuse or neglect through technical assistance, follow-up, monitoring, investigation and/or litigation.
 - B. Improve and expand systems for reporting, investigation and responding to abuse in state-licensed facilities including expanding the use of HCSIS (Pennsylvania's incident reporting system) to additional service systems.
 - C. Work to ensure protective services for persons aged 18-59 through the creation of an Adult Protective Services System in Pennsylvania.
 - D. Advocate for services for persons with disabilities who are victims of crimes, including the formation of a collaborative charter with victim services organizations.
 - E. Advocate for the decrease in the use of chemical, mechanical, and/or physical restraints.
 - F. Advocate for the passage and implementation of regulations that protect persons with disabilities living in personal care homes and assisted living facilities.
 - G. Identify and respond to systemic incidents of abuse, neglect, and rights violations in licensed facilities, including contesting any challenges to DRN's authority to access facilities, residents, or records.

- II. **Eliminate the unnecessary institutionalization of persons with disabilities, including:**
 - A. Assure that DPW fully implements its Money Follows the Person Grant and similar initiatives.
 - B. Advocate for community alternatives for persons currently institutionalized or at risk of institutionalization, including:
 - 1. persons living in state mental hospitals, including the residents of Mayview State Hospital;
 - 2. persons currently living in state mental retardation centers, including all residents of any facility that is closing;

3. adolescents or children currently living in Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities or other institutional settings;

4. persons currently living in personal care homes.

C. Promote and expand affordable, accessible housing, including:

1. increasing, over four years, the number of accessible public housing units in Pittsburgh to 7% of the total units (*Three Rivers CIL v. Housing Authority of City of Pittsburgh*);

2. expanding the availability of accessible Section 8 housing to 5% of the total units and to assist persons with disabilities in locating accessible Section 8 housing;

3. work to expand the stock of accessible, affordable housing including supportive housing.

D. Limit the growth of Medicaid funding for congregate care, including:

1. limiting the use of current Home and Community Based Waivers for congregate care, including personal care homes;

2. advocating for the closure of state-operated mental retardation centers;

3. limiting the unnecessary placement of persons in nursing homes and continue advocating for the decrease of nursing home beds across the state.

E. Ensure appropriate service planning continues at state hospitals through monitoring and assuring implementation of the Service Area Planning including the Community Service Planning process.

III. Promote an array of quality consumer-controlled and/or consumer-driven services to enable adults and children with disabilities to live and thrive in their own homes, schools, workplaces, and communities, including:

A. Advocate for consumer control and direction in the delivery of services, including the development of appropriate rate setting methodology for participant-directed services in all Department of Public Welfare and Department of Aging homes and community-based waivers.

- B. Advocate for additional home, school, and community-based options for children and adolescents who have behavioral health needs or developmental disabilities, including:
 - 1. increased availability of evidence-based practices and services to support children and their families in their homes;
 - 2. increased availability and coordination of positive behavioral supports in neighborhood schools provided through the behavioral health and education systems;
 - 3. increased availability of home-like, community-based residential options for children who cannot live with their families.

- C. End waiting lists for community services for people with intellectual disabilities who are unserved or underserved, including:
 - 1. advocating services for persons currently on the mental retardation waiting list;
 - 2. working with legislature (H.R. 159) to develop a plan to end the mental retardation waiting list;
 - 3. advocate for services for previously unserved adults with autism.

- D. Expand access to quality education, early intervention, and special education services in the most inclusive settings possible, including:
 - 1. providing information and technical assistance to families seeking a free appropriate public education for their children with disabilities in inclusive settings;
 - 2. supporting coalitions in their efforts to improve the delivery of educational services;
 - 3. advocating for legislative or statewide policy improvements;
 - 4. assuring appropriate educational services in the least restrictive environment, including additional students in inclusive settings through *Gaskin* and other advocacy.

- E. Assure access to Medicaid services, including:
 - 1. advocating for assistive technology;

2. providing outreach and/or training about assistive technology rights and issues;
3. assuring that persons with disabilities are not terminated from services, including reinstatement of persons who were removed from the Consolidated Waiver (*Dorohovech v. DPW*);
4. assuring that persons with disabilities are not inappropriately being terminated from services or having services reduced from the Office of Long Term Living home and community-based waivers;
5. providing advice and technical assistance, through intake, training, and other means, to individuals or family members who are having difficulty obtaining or are being denied medical assistance services, including EPSDT services.

F. Reach unserved and underserved communities, including:

1. training individuals in institutions on self-advocacy and individual rights;
2. identifying communities as underserved and targeting them for outreach;
3. providing training and outreach to people with disabilities and other interested persons.

G. Improve treatment for inmates with mental illness in Pennsylvania's state prisons, including focus on persons in restrictive housing units (i.e., isolation) due to disciplinary violations.

H. Advocate for improved re-entry services for persons released from incarceration.

IV. Eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability, including:

A. Assure access to government and public services and public accommodations, including:

1. assuring effective communication for mental health and mental retardation services, children and youth services, administrative hearings and/or education services for persons who are deaf;

2. assuring that state and local governments install and maintain curb ramps (*Keller v. City of Lancaster; Robertson v. City of McKeesport*);
 3. providing assistance to persons who experience discrimination by government programs and services or public accommodations.
- B. Promote and expand employment of persons with disabilities, including:
1. training attorneys on the employment rights of persons with disabilities;
 2. providing assistance for individuals with disabilities in employment discrimination matters;
 3. advocate for supports for persons with disabilities to participate fully in the workplace.
- C. Assure that persons with disabilities have equal opportunity to vote, including:
1. advocate for increased accessibility of polling places and voting procedures for people with disabilities (*Kerrigan v. City of Philadelphia*);
 2. explore best practices for accessible voting including for people with print disabilities;
 3. work to assure that the right to vote of persons with Intellectual disabilities is protected.
- D. Promote accessible transportation, including:
1. requiring transportation facilities to be accessible (*DIA v. SEPTA*);
 2. improving on-time paratransit performance (*Richman v. SEPTA*);
 3. providing assistance to persons seeking accessible transportation.