

Closure of ICF/MR Group Home Facilities

Everyone needs a home. A home is where we get our sense of belonging and a sense of family. “Home” is where we can be free to be more independent; control our surroundings; choose whom we live with, if anyone; and to have privacy. “Home” is where we should feel safe.

ICF/MR “group homes” are not really homes as most people would think of them. Rather, they are highly regulated institutional facilities. They are called intermediate care facilities for persons with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities. Those 68 institutions are located in communities across the state.

For 510 West Virginians who have developmental disabilities, there is no “home.” They are the people housed in those expensive facilities because it’s convenient to the state...not because those people need or choose to be there.

ICF/MR facilities are costly, segregated places where you live only because you have mental retardation and you have not been supported to live in typical homes in typical communities. If you live in an ICF/MR facility, you qualify for the MR/DD Waiver.

ICFs/MR:

- Are not necessarily safe places that provide “special” care to people who need it. This has been shown by the state licensing review findings of those facilities;
- Are not “stepping stones” for transitioning people into the real community. The facilities do not resemble typical life in one’s own home. The very little training that occurs does not actively support people to gain skills they can use if they had their own homes;
- Are places where individuality is lost and group management is practiced;
- Are more expensive to operate (\$125,000/year per person) than the average cost for people in real homes of 1-3 people supported through the MR/DD Waiver;
- Were built to nursing home specifications even though the people in those homes do not require nursing home care;
- Provide custodial care rather than supported community living that is focused on independence and self-reliance; and
- Have more costly staffing ratios than the residents need or want. The requirements for clinical oversight can also add costs to the program, particularly for those who have no need for nursing or other therapies.

Life for people with developmental disabilities in smaller, more typical homes is better for most everyone living in them. There are no guarantees about the quality of services, just as there are none in ICFs/MR, but people have a better chance to live productive and typical lives in their communities.

The Fair Shake Network supports the closure of ICF/MR group homes with those resources being diverted to support individuals to live in their own homes and communities.

For More information, Contact Jan Lilly-Stewart, Fair Shake Network at 304-549-9062 or wvfn@mdn.com