



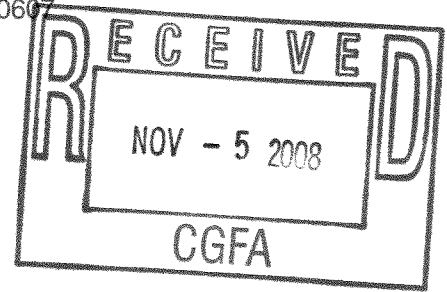
Rod R. Blagojevich, *Governor*

Illinois Department of Human Services

Carol L. Adams, Ph.D., *Secretary*

100 South Grand Avenue, East • Springfield, Illinois 62762
401 South Clinton Street • Chicago, Illinois 60607

October 31, 2008



Mr. Dan R. Long, Executive Director
Commission on Government Forecasting
and Accountability
703 Stratton Office Building
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Mr. Long:

In response to your October 9, 2008 request for information specific to AFSCME's assertion that the Department of Human Services is violating the State Facilities Closure Act with actions at the Howe Developmental Center in Tinley Park, I have provided the following responses:

- 1) Has the Department distributed packets to family members at two meetings after the initial closure announcement in which guardians were urged to complete to designate transfer of their loved one to another facility?

Informational packets were made available to guardians who attended informational sessions held on September 5 and 6, 2008. These packets contained an outline of the transition process and a sample transition plan. It was explained that the transition plan is completed in partnership with the individual, their guardian and the Individual Support Team when an individual moves to a community setting or, for individuals at Howe, when they transition to another State Operated Developmental Center (SODC). The packets were provided as a courtesy in anticipation of guardians choosing to explore their options for transfer. At no time were guardians instructed to complete these packets. Additional packets have only been distributed upon request from a guardian or family member.

It is important to point out that transitioning people to community-residential settings has been a standing and ongoing initiative at Howe and throughout the State Operated Developmental Center system. Within the last three fiscal years, a total of 449 individuals have transitioned out of SODCs, with a substantial number of those individuals coming from Howe. For Fiscal Year 2009, Howe, in addition to the eight other SODCs, will continue community placement initiatives. Currently there are approximately 70 guardians of people living at Howe who have expressed interest in seeking community placement, and the Center is accommodating the choices of these guardians.

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- 2) Has the Department contacted all Howe residents' families and guardians, either at the meetings noted above, or by phone or by mail, to discuss placement options for their loved one?

As part of our ongoing transition efforts, we continue to be in contact with parents/guardians of residents that have been involved in the transition process. The Department has not contacted anyone that was not already involved in the transition process. As anticipated, guardians and families have contacted the Center with questions about their placement options. As of this date, the Center has received 135 contacts initiated by guardians and family members.

- 3) Has the Department of Human Services developed a new document entitled "Living Arrangement Preference Form" which staff was to have completed for all persons served at Howe Developmental Center by September 30, 2008?

The Howe Center developed the "Living Arrangement Preference Form" in November of 2007, well before any decisions related to closure were made. The form is being used to document individuals' choice in fulfillment of the Federal Regulatory Standards for Intermediate Care Facilities - 483.440(c)(6)(vi). This standard requires that individuals' choices are encouraged and recognized. As part of operation and management of SODCs, it is the Department's responsibility to document individuals' and guardians' living arrangement preferences.

- 4) Has the Department of Human Services retained a consultant to expedite the resident placement process?

Howe Developmental Center has utilized the services of Robert Kifowit, contractor, for the past 14 months. He has assisted with many initiatives focused on improving the quality of care for those at the Center. Currently, Mr. Kifowit is assisting with family liaison activities due to the absence of a Howe Center Family Advocate. The Center's Family Advocate resigned suddenly in early September 2008.

- 5) Has the Department of Human Services begun preparing units at other SODCs to accept Howe residents?

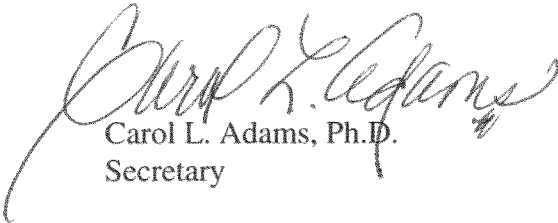
As part of our planning and management efforts, the Department of Human Services has begun to assess the resources and work required to implement the Howe closure plan. As such, other SODCs have started to identify bed capacity and life safety repairs that, if completed, could support transitions from Howe. It should also be noted that we assess bed capacity and life safety issues as part of contingency planning in order to be able to effectively respond to any and all eventualities, including physical plant issues at the facility that require moves to other areas of the center, and community evacuations caused by

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weather and/or environmental emergencies. For example, one SODC responded to an emergency call for help that occurred on Friday, October 10, 2008 in which they provided emergency shelter for 100 people who were evacuated from an area nursing home. Additionally, much of the work initiated at other SODCs is necessary to maintain the integrity of the physical plants within Life Safety Standards as required by federal ICF/MR rules and regulations.

I appreciate this opportunity to provide clarification on the issues raised, and to reassure you that the Department of Human Services has, and will continue to be, respectful of the State Facilities Closure Act and responsibilities of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability.

Sincerely,



Carol L. Adams, Ph.D.
Secretary