

Broad Coalition Forms to Support Virginia-Justice Agreement to Strengthen Home- and Community-based Services for People with Disabilities

Richmond, Va. -- March 30, 2012 -- A diverse coalition of 50 Virginia stakeholders—including organizations representing people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (ID/DD) and their families, service providers, and community service boards—has formed to support a recent settlement between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the U.S. Department of Justice.

The settlement agreement is a historic moment for Virginia, creating opportunities for thousands of people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities to receive services in the community rather than having to rely upon institutions. Under the settlement, the Commonwealth commits to:

- creating at least 4,170 additional waivers over 10 years to provide services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who currently live in the community and to help transition those who live in institutions, including Training Centers, into the community;
- preventing the unnecessary institutionalization of other people with ID/DD, including those on waiting lists for services;
- creating an individual and family support program to serve at least 1,000 people with ID/DD most at risk of institutionalization;
- establishing a full range of crisis services;
- providing employment supports and other services; and
- implementing significant accountability and oversight mechanisms designed to ensure service quality and health and safety protections for individuals with ID/DD.

Represented by the Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, the coalition of stakeholders supports the following core principles:

1. We support the Settlement Agreement between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the U.S. Department of Justice. The Court should approve the Agreement.
2. Individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities, including those individuals with the most complex needs, can live successfully in the community.
3. The Settlement Agreement affords a long overdue opportunity for thousands of individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities to live in integrated community settings and to lead lives similar to those of people without disabilities.
4. The oversight, accountability and quality management mechanisms built into the Settlement Agreement will help ensure that people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities will receive safe, high quality and individualized services.
5. The Settlement Agreement will help keep families together.

Judge Gibney, a federal trial judge in Richmond, has provisionally approved the settlement between the United States and Virginia. Judge Gibney invited the public to file comments on the settlement through April 6, after which he will hold a hearing on whether to approve the settlement. The date for the hearing has not yet been set.

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The Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law (www.bazelon.org) is the leading national legal-advocacy organization representing people with mental disabilities. It promotes laws and policies that can enable people with serious mental illnesses or intellectual disabilities to exercise their life choices and access the resources they need to participate fully in their communities.

To speak to the Bazelon Center about the coalition, contact Dominic Holt at [dominic @ bazelon.org](mailto:dominic@bazelon.org) or 202.467.5730, ext. 311.