

Historic Victory for Virginians with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Their Families; Court Approves Agreement for System Transformation

Richmond, Va. -- August 24, 2012 -- The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia has approved a comprehensive agreement between the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Commonwealth of Virginia that will provide a long-overdue opportunity to thousands of individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities to receive the services they need to live successfully in their homes and communities.

Under the court-enforceable [agreement](#), Virginia will, among other things, expand community services and supports--including Medicaid-funded home and community-based waivers, crisis services, housing and employment supports--and will establish a comprehensive quality management system.

Represented by the Richmond office of the law firm Williams Mullen and the Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, a diverse coalition of 72 Virginia stakeholders supported the settlement agreement, reached in January 2012. Coalition members are organizations composed of and/or representing thousands of Virginians with intellectual and other developmental disabilities and their family members, as well as community service boards, service providers, and independent living centers.

Brendan O'Toole, a lawyer from Williams Mullen, said, "This watershed agreement will mean a brighter future for thousands of Virginia's families. Providing home and community-based services for people with disabilities helps keep families together and enables people with disabilities to live full lives."

"As affirmed by the court, the Commonwealth of Virginia has charted the right course to afford true opportunity and human dignity for Virginians with intellectual and other developmental disabilities and their families," said Jennifer Mathis, deputy legal director of the Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law.

"This Consent Decree helps thousands of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have the chance to live 'A Life Like Yours'--the chance to have a home, a job and a life in the community," said Jamie Liban, Executive Director of The Arc of Virginia.

Liban said, "The settlement incorporates the mandates of the American With Disabilities Act by ensuring that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including those with the most complex needs, have access to supports and services in their own homes and communities. We look forward to working with all stakeholders to help ensure transitions to the community are safe and person-centered."

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The 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 psychiatric or developmental disabilities to exercise their life choices and access the resources they need to participate fully in their communities.

Williams Mullen (www.williamsmullen.com) provides comprehensive legal and government relations services that help grow the businesses of its clients and the economy of the firm's region across North Carolina, Virginia and Washington, D.C. As an AmLaw 200 firm, the firm's attorneys and consultants strive to deliver solutions that help clients go where they want to grow. Putting client needs first has been the foundation of Williams Mullen's approach since the firm was founded 103 years ago.

For media inquiries, please contact: Dominic Holt, Dominic @ bazelon.org or 202.467.5730, ext. 311.

[*Here you can download the agreement and the court approval in one PDF and this press release in another PDF.](#)