

**From:** Mickey Herbst [<mailto:mjherbst@optonline.net>]

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**To:** ddsct.co

**Subject:** Five Year Plan

It is with disappointment that the current Five Year Plan for DDS has no affirmation of the need to, in a plan-full and systematic way move the remaining individuals residing in State facilities to privately run living arrangements appropriate to their needs. We know from the STS consent decree that the majority of residents at Southbury have been determined to benefit from community placement. The reference in the Plan acknowledges that. This would be true of those living in the remaining Regional Centers as well. The Plan states:

"DDS continues to follow national trends, moving toward community-based residential supports and away from publicly-operated, institutional care. To this end, DDS has worked to close two of its five remaining Regional Centers by the end of calendar year 2016. This, along with the department's continued work under the *Messier v. Southbury Training School Settlement Agreement*, is expected to bring the census at public ICF/IIDs down to fewer than 370 individuals by June 30, 2017. **Under the Settlement Agreement, the teams supporting individuals residing at Southbury Training School (STS) exercise professional judgment in recommending the most integrated setting in which the needs of each person can be met.** The department is committed to the implementation of the Settlement Agreement, as it provides individuals and their families or guardians with the means to make informed choices regarding the most appropriate and integrated setting for each individual. "

But it is not enough to state the above. What is needed is a commitment to make it happen in a defined time frame, or the can will continue to be "kicked down the road" until the last person at the Regional Centers and STS dies.

This is particularly egregious under the recognized unmet needs of so many others in our communities living with aging parents, or in unsafe and restrictive environments. The plan states:

"As there are more individuals requesting residential supports than appropriations will allow the department to support, DDS maintains a waiting list for these services. As of September 30, 2016, there were 657 individuals living with their families or on their own who were on the waiting list for residential services with assigned statuses of "Emergency" or "Priority 1." From June 2012 to September 2016, the size of that list increased from 612 to 657. Additionally, as of September 30, 2016, 304 individual who were receiving residential funding still had unmet needs and had an Emergency or Priority 1 need for additional residential funding. Another 1,138 individuals were on the Residential Planning List with a Priority 2 or Priority 3 need for residential funding."

At a time of limited resources, and unmet needs, it is unconscionable that there is no definitive plan to shift away from expensive State run facilities. It is time to push back on the special interest groups and do the right thing for all Connecticut citizens.

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