

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING

February 20, 2009

TOPIC: Opposing the Proposed Closure of Cedarcrest Hospital

Presenters: Terrance and Dorothy Boyle, parents of Charles I. Boyle, a patient at Cedarcrest since May 2004.

Good afternoon, Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, and other members of the Appropriations Committee.

Four years ago our son, Charlie, poured a cup of water over a nursing supervisor at Cedarcrest Hospital. This was shortly before a scheduled after afternoon pass. If you're thinking, as we did, "that cancels the outing," wrong! Punishment is not in that nurse's vocabulary. Since the only "injury" from the impulsive behavior was to her hairdo, she did not think discipline was necessary. This exemplifies the compassionate caring the patients at Cedarcrest receive from staff.

Charlie's excellent hospital psychiatrist has prescribed appropriate medications to treat the variety of symptoms our son presents. This, coupled with practical techniques used by his social worker, nurses and aides are helping him control impulsive and other problem behaviors.

During the past 20 years, Charlie has been a patient in four different psychiatric hospitals in the state. Cedarcrest is the shining star among them, one reason being the small size. When our son would return from a pass to the largest hospital, he would appear noticeably depressed. Now he hurries in to his extended family. Staff and patients from various units, as well as security guards, greet him by name.

Last summer Cedarcrest made arrangements for Charlie and several other patients who have all had long-term hospitalizations to be in an innovative program. A life skills specialist has taken them on a wide variety of outings once or twice a week. Work, recreational and cultural activities have been included. This is to promote living in the community with appropriate behavior. No more poured water!

Now at age 40, Charlie no longer needs to live in a locked hospital unit. He's ready to move out to a suitable group home or supervised apartment and is looking forward to it. Funds are needed for him and a number of other patients to have community placements. Their discharges permit persons on the ever-present waiting list to experience the same benefits our son has enjoyed at this wonderful hospital.

Please keep Cedarcrest open!