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St.Vincent's
Special Needs Services

St. Vincent's Special Needs Services

** Not for Profit Agency

** Providing services to children and adults with profound developmental disabilities and/or complex medical needs for over 50 years

** Member of Ascension Health – the third largest nonprofit health system in the United States

** Locally an affiliate of St. Vincent's Health Services

** Longstanding Commitment to Providing high Quality, cost effective services

**** We currently serve over 350 persons each day in one of the following programs**

Birth to Three/Early Intervention – part of the DDS statewide system
Special Education School Program – approved by the Department of Education

Group homes (8 Adult and 1 Children) for both children and adults licensed by DDS and DCF

Adult Day Programs – (Changing Images)

** We employ over 300 full and part time staff who provide direct services to consumers

** Our ancillary services and programs serve an additional 700 persons per year.

** In total St. Vincent's Special Needs supports over 1000 persons or families from 33 Connecticut communities

FEROLETO Children's Development Center
95 Merritt Boulevard, Trumbull, CT 06611
(203) 375-6400 FAX (203) 380-1190

CHANGING IMAGES Adult Program
975 Oronoque Lane, Stratford, CT 06614
(203) 380-9077 FAX (203) 380-9170

I would like to briefly explain our concerns with the DDS Attendance Based Rate System

** The attendance based rate system was first announced to private providers via a memo dated January 15, 2010.
** Two weeks later, the rate plan was implemented on February 1, 2010, essentially breaking contracts that we believed to be in place until June 30.

** Under the new rate plan persons receiving services would need to have a 90% attendance rate for providers to receive rates equal to what was originally contracted.

This 90% attendance factor was apparently established in spite of the fact that the data DDS has shared with us suggests that attendance data for both private providers and state run programs is well below 90%.
Several years worth of data for St. Vincent's Special Needs programs produce an attendance rate of approximately 83%.

This new and arbitrary payment system will result in a significant reduction in funding for Special Needs.

For example – at 83% attendance we would lose approximately $4500 per person per year from the master contract rate. With 130 persons covered by master contract, this represents an annual cut of approximately $585,000.

** It has been communicated to us by DDS that there would be a hardship plan for providers impacted in a significant way, however, we were recently told, when we requested assistance after February's results, that the plan has not yet been developed.

During February, our attendance was at 70%. Under the attendance-based system, we lost $52,000 in February alone.

Attendance during February was impacted by several days of inclement weather and on those days we did not provide transportation as we did not want to jeopardize the safety of our staff and consumers by putting wheelchair lift vehicles on the road in inclement weather. However, in an attendance-based model we are suddenly under pressure to get people to program regardless of the weather conditions. On days when weather is bad the governor and other public officials are making statements recommending that people stay off the roads unless absolutely necessary. This payment system now makes it necessary to put vulnerable people on the roads.

$ 15,000 lost revenue per day due to "snow day"

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As I said in the beginning, we service medically fragile people. What happens when they get sick? Do we pressure them to attend programs when ill, just for the sake of maintaining our revenue?

When DDS was working on plans to implement a rate-based system prior to the start of the current fiscal year we were informed that action on the plan would be put on hold until a study evaluating the plan could be completed. What happened to that study? No one seems to know the status of it.
From July 2009 thru February 2010 our attendance is averaging 80% much like the Kennedy Center and other agencies including the State of Connecticut but State run programs are NOT affected by this change.

** Disparity of Staff Compensation

State MR Worker $26.60
Special Needs DCC Worker $12.50

At a time when the State of Connecticut is facing a $500 million dollar deficit, the services provided by Private Providers are critical in assisting the State dig itself out of this financial quagmire.

In closing, I believe DDS and State legislators should be pursuing ways to support and strengthen private providers instead of imposing practices such as the attendance based system that will only serve to bring the private system closer to collapse and ultimately increase the cost of providing these services dramatically.

Raymond G. Baldwin, Jr., President/CEO
St. Vincent's Special Needs Services

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