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Joint Appropriations – Human Service Committee Hearing
Waiver Programs
September 27, 2011

Testimony Submitted by Center for Disability Rights
Marc Anthony Gallucci, Esq. Executive Director

Members of the Committee:

Center for Disability Rights is grateful that you are holding this hearing to investigate the status of Connecticut's waiver programs providing community based services to folks with disabilities. CDR's position is that community based care in our State is in crisis, and that many folks who could and should remain in the community are being forced into nursing homes or suffering serious health incidents – including death.

CDR along with other Centers for Independent Living, other disability groups, and aging groups and providers like the AAA's have advocated long and hard over the years to develop a system of community based care in our State. For a while, we succeeded at this; and slowly, but surely, people in the community who needed services could stay out of more expensive and restrictive environments. Indeed hundreds of folks have been able to use the PCA Waiver program, the Katie Beckett Waiver program, the ABI program, Home Care for the Elders, and other programs to maintain themselves in the community all while saving the State millions of dollars in Medicaid expenditures.

Sadly, in the last couple of years, all the waiver programs have seemed to stall for folks who are in the community. People are languishing on the lists, and many are being forced into nursing homes. It is not a good thing when a person has to his or her home and everything and go into a nursing home when all that person needs is a few hours of help each week.



REMOVAL OF BARRIERS, INCLUSION OF PEOPLE

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At CDR we believe that it is probably a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and a violation of the Olmstead decision of the US Supreme Court to force people into a more restrictive environment to receive Medicaid services.

Wait lists for community-based waiver services should move at a reasonable pace, and people should not be forced into nursing homes first in order to be eligible for community-based waivers.

Please open those list and put some funding there.