

LOUISIANA CITIZENS FOR ACTION NOW

Advocating for Louisiana Citizens with Developmental Disabilities

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Abuse at State Institution

**Write Public Officials**

**June 16, 2009**  
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If there are any questions about the information in this email contact LaCAN's Coordinator by replying to this email, or calling the toll free number listed below.

There was information provided in an earlier LaCAN email about the Advocacy Center report, "Beyond Repair" that prompted outrage and some of you to contact state officials. **Below is an Action Alert that urges others to also act.**

ACTION ALERT

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1. Write to the officials listed below about the abuse of residents at the Northeast Supports and Services Center (NESSC), a DHH-run facility that is located in Ruston. See "Sample Letter" below that you should feel free to change and personalize to appropriately reflect your outrage at this hideous situation.
2. Call your state representative and state senator a few weeks after writing to them to ask if they have had an opportunity to read the report and what they will do.
3. You are also encouraged to read the Advocacy Center's report on the Advocacy Center's website (see link below). You can include the link to the report in your letter (as done in the Sample Letter below), or you can download the report from the website and include it as an attachment if you email the officials. The report describes the horrific abuse (one case of homicide) of 7 residents at NESSC over the last 14 months and the lack of response from public officials thus far to this violence perpetrated against individuals with disabilities in the care of the state.

"Beyond Repair" describes the horrific abuse (one case of homicide) of 7 residents at NESSC over the last 14 months and the lack of response from public officials thus far to this violence perpetrated against individuals with disabilities in the care of the state.

[Advocacy Center Report "Beyond Repair"](#)

**Officials to Contact**

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Contact the following officials about the horrific abuse and neglect at NESSC:

1. Your State Representative
2. Your State Senator
3. Secretary Alan Levine, Department of Health and Hospitals, P.O. Box 629, Baton Rouge, LA 70821- 0629; alan.levine@la.gov

Go to legislative website (link below) to identify your state representative and state senator and find their contact information.

[Louisiana Legislature Website](#)

Sample Letter

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Dear \_\_\_\_\_: I realize you are very busy with the final days of the legislative session. However, there is a critical matter that you need to be aware of and correct decisively. The Advocacy Center has released, "Beyond Repair" a report documenting horrific abuse and neglect of residents at the DHH-run facility in Ruston, Northeast Supports and Services Center (NESSC). I hope that you will read the report and then see that ALL of its recommendations are implemented, including the closure of NESSC. The report is at this link on the Advocacy Center's website [http://advocacyla.org/publications/NESSCFinalReport6 909.pdf](http://advocacyla.org/publications/NESSCFinalReport6%20909.pdf)

As a Louisiana citizen and the (add your personal info, such as parent of a child with a disability; or an advocate for people with disabilities;), I am horrified at the culture at abuse and neglect at NESSC that has allowed such violence to be committed against the residents of that facility. Closure of NESSC is the only way to ensure the residents of that facility are no longer subjected to abuse or living in fear. While abuse can happen anywhere, segregation and isolation of individuals in facilities like NESSC make them more vulnerable and for abuse and neglect to go unnoticed and unreported. This has been demonstrated over and over again. "Beyond Repair" also notes abuse and neglect documented at Pinecrest and Hammond Developmental Centers in the 90's. And, just last year employees at Pinecrest were arrested and charged with abusing residents.

**Sample Letter (continued)**

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Some families of residents at NESSC may want the facility to remain open. This is understandable due to a lack of information about better living options, a resistance to change, and fear of the unknown. The Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Health and Hospitals should inform residents and their families about community living options and support them through a smooth transition.

I urge you to defend the residents at NESSC and speak out on their behalf instead of defending the facility's continued operation. There is over \$14.5 million in the state budget for this facility's operation. These funds should be re-directed to support the residents with individualized community based services where they can live free of fear and abuse. Closure of NESSC is the only way to ensure residents are no longer subjected to abuse or living in fear.

Any Questions?

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If there are any questions about the information in this email contact LaCAN's Coordinator by replying to this email, or calling the toll free number listed below.

**Contact Information**

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Email: list@lacadvocate.org
Phone: 1-800-450-8108
Web: <http://www.lacadvocate.org>
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