

## Frequently Asked Questions by Legislators

▣ **What does LaCAN hope to accomplish this year?**

To consolidate and close developmental centers to provide a better quality of life for current residents and use the cost savings to serve people on the waiver waiting list.

▣ **If developmental centers close where are residents going to live who have elderly parents? They aren't able to take care of their sons/daughters.**

There are several different options for people moving out of developmental centers. They can live in their own apartment with a roommate – perhaps someone they are friends with who is also moving out of the developmental center. They can live with a host family – similar to a foster family but for adults. Or they can live in a community home – not the option we recommend but it is the one that many families choose.

▣ **Developmental center residents have lived there for many years, some, for most of their lives. It's not right to make them leave the only home they've ever known.**

It might not seem “right” but research has demonstrated over and over again that regardless of how long a person has lived in an institution, or how much the staff of that institution or even their family think the person won't be happy if they leave, they almost always are. People who move into the community are not only happier but healthier and increase their skill level. And - by providing services to people in developmental centers the state is spending more money than is necessary to meet their needs – taking up resources that could be used to serve others on the waiting list. That is not right. Right now the state is assessing the needs of waiver recipients and reducing their services if they are getting more than what they need. There are people living in developmental centers and community homes who do not need 24 hour supports. It is not right that they are getting more than what they need taking up resources that could be used to serve others.

▣ **Suddenly closing a developmental center and telling people (many of whom have profound disabilities) they have to be removed from the only environment they know is not the most dignified way to handle this.**

No one is suggesting “suddenly” closing a developmental center. A closure plan would be developed and implemented whereby residents would have months of individualized planning and transition. And simply because someone has lived in one environment for a long period of time does not mean they must remain there for life. If it's an environment that is not in their best interest or the best interest of others, it should be changed. Each day a person remains in a developmental center is a day of missed opportunities to be happier, healthier and connected to their community. It's also a misuse of public funds because the people in the developmental centers could be served in other settings and the cost savings could be used for people on the waiting list.

▣ **People need to have choice. If you close developmental centers, aren't you taking away that choice?**

No, the State allowing one person to choose a high cost developmental center infringes on the rights of others to access services. Services should be available to support all

individuals in their own homes and communities and not require placement in congregate settings that someone would not typically choose.

▣ **Would a bill be required to close a developmental center?**

Not necessarily. Developmental centers can be closed through the appropriations process simply by not providing funding for the operations of the center. If this strategy is not successful, a bill would be necessary to direct the administration to develop a plan to close specific centers.

▣ **What about the employees at the Developmental Centers losing their jobs?**

Medicaid funds are not here to provide a job for someone but to provide services to those who need it. It is particularly not Medicaid's role to provide jobs that are no longer necessary. Those employees can get jobs with private agencies and provide the same type of service to individuals in the community rather than in an institution. There is already a high demand in the private sector for employees with skills and experience working with people with developmental disabilities.

▣ **By closing developmental centers wouldn't we be 'throwing residents' onto the street.**

Not at all. We want all people with developmental disabilities to receive the supports and services they need – in their own homes and communities. The same type and level of services and supports residents receive in the institutions are already available in the community. In fact, years of research show that people have better quality of life when living in the community with supports rather than in institutions. People currently residing in developmental centers should have transition plans to coordinate their move from the institution to the community and ensure they receive the services they need.