

3160

RECEIVED

**Kathy Cooper**

**From:** rejdal6@verizon.net  
**Sent:** Friday, December 30, 2016 7:02 PM  
**To:** IRRRC; joanmhickman@gmail.com; rhondalhickman@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Comments on Department of Human Services 14-540 Regulations on Home and Community Based Supports and Licensing

2017 JAN -3 AM 8:31

I am writing on behalf of my family living in Pennsylvania. This letter is in regard to a proposed mandate from the Department of Human Services 14-540 Regulations on Home and Community Based Supports and Licensing that will in effect put my sister out of a job that she has held for over 37 years. My family is opposed to the proposal that would mandate a community based integrated model for developmentally disabled adults. The community integration model would jeopardize the already successful and thriving model of sheltered workshops. In addition, the mandate for 75% community inclusion by January 2019 is unrealistic and arbitrary.

Without knowing the capabilities and needs of many developmentally disabled adults, the state is making a determination that somehow there is a social need to thrust them into the free market as a commodity for commercial employers. How callous! What makes the state think that its plan is a sound policy for these adults? They do not need the stress and complication of being forced into the "rat race." For those adults who are employed and successful in a sheltered work setting, what is the real impetus for removing them from a thriving environment to deal with the stresses and headaches of the community integration model? Is it financial? Is it a social experiment?

I can tell you from first-hand knowledge that the families of these adults are certainly better and more responsible parties to determine the lives of their family members without the state government stepping in. My sister has been employed for over 37 years at a sheltered workshop (Associated Production Services (APS)) where she takes pride and joy in her work and her accomplishments, as well as her long tenure at that job. She would not thrive in an environment integrated into the community, nor by being shuffled around from one employer to the next. Her choice and our family's choice would be to continue her work at the sheltered workshop. We do not view this as an isolation from the community, but rather as an integration into the workforce that does not treat them as different or less capable adults compared to their peers.

My other concern is the speed with which the state intends to implement the plan. Not only does it not give proper allowance for public dialogue, but it is simply unrealistic to think that, within 6 months, 50% of the entire population of the targeted adults could be placed into the workforce, and that 1 year later 75% could be replaced. In reality, most will end up unemployed, sad, and dejected because the state has taken away other venues such as the sheltered workshops, and completely disrupted their lives. Many of these adults are not emotionally capable of handling this kind of trauma. Many adults, in general, would be upset if their jobs were terminated and they were "placed" in another job chosen by the state.

In summary, my family is adamantly opposed to any plan which would not allow for the concept of work training centers and sheltered workshops such as Associated Production Services (APS) to continue, and which would mandate an arbitrary percentage of integrating disabled adults into the general workforce. There is

simply nothing in the proposed plan that would benefit the adults and their families, and we do not wish to be part of the State's social experiment. We request your support in ensuring that this plan does not move forward unless it provides for the continued operation of sheltered workshops such as APS, and that the arbitrary mandates of 50% and 75% integration be removed from the proposed regulation.

Sincerely, John R. Hickman