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IRRC

Kathy Cooper

From: Nnmcginty <nnmcginty@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 15, 2016 12:48 PM
To: IRRC
Subject: DHS Regulation 14-540.

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December 15, 2016

Via Email irrc@irrc.state.pa.us

Independent Regulatory Review Commission

Re: DHS Regulation 14-540.

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Nancy McGinty and a Bucks County resident for 55 years. I have recently learned that The Office of Developmental Programs, The State of Human Services is planning to transform pre-vocational training facilities for adults who are developmentally disabled into a 75% community based program. I understand the proposed new program/plan is taking place to meet the requirements in the Federal Home and Community-Based Settings and also the Governor's "Employment First" Executive Order which states the "competitive integrated employment is the first consideration and preferred outcome of publicly-funded education, training, ... for working-age Pennsylvanians with developmental disabilities.

As a parent, and as outlined below, I have firsthand experience with a child who is developmentally disable and realize that this "one size fits all" approach cannot and will not work for everyone. This program will benefit only a select group of individuals with developmental disabilities. It is not taking into consideration that there is a large group of individuals with developmental disabilities that are unable to work in a competitive integrated employment. As guardians and parents of developmentally disabled individuals, it is important to have a variety of choices and options to meet individual needs.

My daughter, Jenna McGinty, is 25 years old. After a complication at birth, Jenna was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy. Her limitations as the result of Cerebral Palsy include both significant physical limitations and mental disabilities. At eighteen years of age, the Bucks County Court ruled that she was developmentally disabled and incapacitated. My husband and I were appointed to be her guardians. Unfortunately, we have learned over the years that Jenna is one of many children in Bucks County who are developmentally handicapped and incapacitated from a variety of causes. Unfortunately, these limitations do not change or improved as these individuals age into adulthood.

While still in high school Jenna entered the work environment in the community with a job coach and worked at a local private college in their dining hall. With Jenna's physical disabilities there were safety issues every day despite having a one on one staff with her. Jenna became stressed and anxious every day about her "job". Unfortunately it was agreed by everyone involved that THIS OPTION DID NOT WORK FOR JENNA. It was clear that Jenna did not possess the social or people skills to work in the community.

Jenna graduated from Bucks County Technical High School in 2012 when she was 21 years old which is the latest age at which a developmentally impaired student may attend public school in Pennsylvania. As Jenna's graduation approached, we researched any and all options that were offered to developmentally disabled students after graduation. As her guardians, this was a stressful and trying time as we attempted to make a decision for Jenna who was facing the next stepping stone in her life. We, along with Jenna, visited several pre-vocational training facilities. After numerous visits, as well as significant soul searching and evaluations as to what would be best for Jenna, we concluded that Associated Production Services, Inc. ("APS") located in Trevoese, Bucks County would best suit

Jenna's future needs. As her parents, we had the opportunity to explore options and make a CHOICE on what we believed was best for Jenna.

There is not a day since Jenna started at APS in June of 2012 that we have regretted this decision. Jenna wakes up every Monday excited to go to work. She has developed a large group of work friends – friends with whom there is some after hours socialization. When Jenna is asked if she likes her job, her reply is heartfelt and always the same: "I don't like my job, I love my job". APS is safe environment for these developmentally challenged individuals. Even more important, Jenna feels safe and she deserves to feel safe and secure in a work environment.

Due to her physical difficulties, Jenna is dismissed from the work floor five minutes early so she is not in the middle of the mad rush to leave at the end of the work day. Getting a paycheck gives Jenna a great feeling of self-worth. Paying for her own snacks from the money she earned at work gives her a sense of pride. When Jenna learns and succeeds at a new task at work it gives her true satisfaction and confidence.

The personnel and staff at APS are truly amazing. Every staff member is professional and caring while recognizing the needs and limitations that exist. There is no way I can express my unending gratitude to the staff for all they do for Jenna. I have had the opportunity to observe Jenna's work environment, a place which has also become a significant part of Jenna's social world. Jenna is truly happy and we realize that we made the best CHOICE for Jenna to live with a level of peace after high school.

Jenna would truly be devastated if APS would no longer be an option, a CHOICE, for her. She is not capable of being employed in a community setting. **The new program/plan will take away Jenna's opportunity to work and will take away Jenna's sense of self worth, pride and confidence that she has gained since she began working at APS.** As a parent who is involved in Jenna's daily life, I am aware that there are many other individuals in the same situation as Jenna. APS has become a safe place for these individuals – no excuses to be made to others in society for their appearance, behavior and various ways of communicating. We were given options for Jenna, CHOICES, and we just like everyone else, deserved then, and deserve now, to choose what would best suit her future.

I am very fortunate to have an employer who for the last 25 years that has allowed me to work around Jenna's school and work schedule. If the situation changes and Jenna does not having a job to go to everyday, this will result in me losing my job. The proposed new Program will result in Jenna staying home numerous days. Unfortunately, Jenna cannot be left home alone and unsupervised alone for any period of time.

In our society, I have learned how important it is to speak up, voice an opinion and get support when you realize that some new plan or Program is not the best for those involved. It will only benefit a select group of individuals with developmentally disabled individuals. One must speak up in situations where others are adversely affected. While the Program may well have good intentions, it does not recognize how many individuals will be adversely affected.

Many of Jenna's co-workers are adult individuals who live in group homes whose families, for whatever reason, are not involved in their lives. They do not have a voice.

I have reached to ODP for answers regarding numerous concerns about the plan;

- How many people thinking this propose Program is a good choice have spoken with parents who deal with these issues daily?
- What input has been gathered from personnel at places like APS to realize it may not be the best outcome for many of those affected?

Most importantly, why they are taking away the CHOICE that these developmentally disabled adults who deserve, with input of guardians and family, to CHOSE their own future.

I am asking that you contact me to discuss this matter. Please make this a priority. There is a critical time period in which this issue must be addressed. I can be reached at 267-799-3161.

Thank you.

Nancy McGinty

139 Fairway Drive
Langhorne, PA 19047

cc: Associated Production Services, Inc.