

3160

14-540 (389)

September 17, 2017

RECEIVED
IRRC

2017 SEP 20 A 10:46

Department of Human Services
Office of Developmental Programs,
Room 502, Health and Welfare Building,
625 Forster Street,
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: Rulemaking §6100.571 (relating to fee schedule rates)

Dear Office of Developmental Programs,

I am writing on behalf of the proposed fee schedule rates pursuant to §6100.571. In particular, I am writing regarding the effect this rate schedule will have on one provider, Gregory's Journey, Inc., that serves one person in Lycoming County.

You have stated that the primary goal of this rulemaking is to "support individuals with an intellectual disability or autism to live in and participate in their communities and to achieve greater independence".

The actual impact of this rulemaking will be to DENY a man (who has FINALLY reached a level of stability in his life) with the ability to live in and participate in his community and achieve greater independence.

For many, many years, Gregory suffered abuse and neglect by his so-called "caregivers" in the system. He was constantly moved from facility to facility, group home to group home. At one point in time, Gregory was receiving "care" at the level of 5:1 and yes, still being abused and neglected. The damage from years of abuse in the system has forever left its mark on Gregory. Gregory lives with chronic PTSD and OCD as a result of the trauma from his abuse (in addition to his autism and ID diagnosis).

However, 16 years ago, life began to change for Gregory. When Lycoming County could find no other provider willing to serve Gregory, Gregory's Journey, Inc. was formed by his family and was licensed to run his residential and habilitation program under the Consolidated Waiver.

Gregory has thrived under this program. His entire home and environment have been adapted for his needs. For the first time in his life, Greg is experiencing peace and enjoying life. He loves his home and his team of caregivers has been with him for many, many years. They have become like family to him. Gone are the days of restraints, abuse and neglect.

Gregory's success is due, in large part, to the Consolidated Waiver and the funding provided thereunder which has allowed Gregory to live in a home of his own and in an environment adapted entirely to his needs. The proposed fee schedule rates will cause a decrease in eligible

funds of roughly \$31,000 per year. This drastic decrease will jeopardize not only Gregory's health, safety and well-being, but also his entire program.

I am urging you, on behalf of Gregory's Journey, Inc. (and other small providers similarly situated) to either revise the rates so that no decrease will occur or to allow for an exception for certain providers, such as Gregory's Journey, Inc. If an exception is made available for providers like Gregory's Journey, Inc., the avenue to achieve the exception MUST be available at little or no cost to the provider. Small providers like Gregory's Journey, Inc. simply do not have any other funding or resources to use for attorneys and legal fees to obtain an exception.

Over the last 16 years, Gregory's Journey, Inc., has proven itself to be a successful provider of home and community-based services. It has proven itself to also be a fiscally-responsible entity that is run with integrity and with Gregory's needs always paramount in all that is done. Please do not take away from Gregory what he has suffered so much to finally obtain. Please allow him to continue to live in his home that he loves, to be treated with dignity and respect and to participate in life the way HE enjoys and chooses.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nancy L. Speicher
Concerned Citizen and Advocate
27 Shawnee Road
Bloomsburg, PA 17815

Cc: Gregory's Journey, Inc.