

Committee Members,

My name is Ira Madden and am writing on behalf of my brother Ian Madden. He is a 42-year-old non-verbal disabled man living in a Intermediate Care Facility for Adults with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (ICF/IID). These last several months have been trying for all Ohioans; however, for adults that suffer with developmental disabilities and their families this has been an extremely excruciating period. Many of these citizens do not have the means to communicate their wants and or needs effectively and their basic human rights have been denied. I know this was not intentional and our country was dealing with a crisis of unknown proportions

What I am asking of this committee, Governor Mike Dewine, and Dr. Amy Acton is that you give all ICF/IID's the ability to manage the health and well-being of their clients individually. The health order that lumped intermediate care facilities in with elderly care was well intentioned, but it has run its necessary course. Families must be allowed basic access to their loved ones. Please allow these facilities the latitude to make the best decisions at a local level. The current order paints with too broad a brush. Many of these homes have people that would not be considered high risk. Allowing the ICF/IID's and the families of these individuals to collaboratively meet each client's needs is the smarter way to handle COVID related decisions. For example, a home visit with family that follows the same safety protocols as the home's employees, should be allowed and even encouraged. I ask that you trust these providers the way that we, the family of developmentally delayed Ohioans, have. Local control and the implementation of best practices on an individual level would best accommodate the physical, emotional, and educational needs of our family members.

The most recent relaxation of restrictions announced last week by Governor Dewine were well-intentioned but not well thought out. For example, were my parents or my family to go see my brother outside as now allowed by the governor, my brother would immediately grab our hands and try to drag us into his home or he would lead us to the car so we could run and grab a bite to eat at a nearby restaurant. Both would be violations of this misguided order. While these two examples seem insignificant, they make all the difference for these Ohioans.

On a personal note, my parents are both in their 70's and they are crushed emotionally at thought of watching one of their son 'wasting away'. Ian resembles a prisoner of war because of how much weight he has lost in the last two months unable to have any contact with his family. Despite the staff's wonderful efforts, nothing can replace the contact and visits from friends and family. Please think of your own children and encourage Governor Dewine and Dr. Amy Acton to do what is right for those Ohioans who literally have no voice.

Thank You for your time and consideration. My brother's quality of life depends on it.

Respectfully,

Ira Madden
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