

Anne O'Brian  
3915 East Fifth St.  
Dayton, OH 45403  
937-258-2951  
tee@zoomtown.com

Thank you Chairman Smith and members of the committee for allowing me to testify. My name is Anne O'Brien. This Mission Statement is printed on the front window of the Montgomery Developmental Center door: Love, value, encourage, respect on a very personal basis. I worked for MDC from 1987 until I retired in 2012. I first worked medical records and then was promoted to a manager position in 2001. As a staff person, this mission statement is what we lived by. We never waived from that. We are a family and we are the individual's family.

With all due respect, I believe the state needs to learn from its history. A Legislative Service Commission study done in 2003 when Applecreek and Springview Developmental Centers closed, clearly indicates the negative affects of developmental center closures on the individuals. The stress caused by this movement will have ill affects on our individual's health and on their safety, no doubt about it. In addition, the stress caused by a fewer family visits if the loved one is moved far away can be devastating for this fragile population.

Many of the individuals I took care of were non-verbal and had behavioral issues. But because we have long-term staff, we know when they aren't feeling good. We know when they're sick or stressed out. We know when they're about to have a behavior or run. But if you put one of our individuals in another facility with high staff turnover due to low wages, the staff there will have no clue. They won't get to know our individuals and their care will suffer.

I have a nephew who has Down's Syndrome and for whom MDC would not be an appropriate placement. But there's a difference between my nephew and the individuals we take care of at MDC. My nephew works; he pays bills; he's in a softball league; he goes on a cruise every year. My point is my nephew doesn't need the supports the individuals at MDC do. Individuals at MDC can't talk, some are non-ambulatory, some are aggressive and others have destructive behaviors.

At MDC, we have all the supports and services they need. We have a physical therapist; a dietician; we have 24 hour nursing; we have a good rapport with emergency rooms and hospitals; we send individuals to an eye doctor; we bring in hospice services; we have a psychiatrist on grounds. Everything these high-need individuals require is right there.

We have enough staff at MDC that when emergencies arise, there's enough staff to take

care of individuals at MDC and send staff with residents to a hospital during a crisis.

In the early 80s the DCs began to address the need for reform and have done so in a responsible way. They downsized, they rehabilitated existing DCs, they also built Southwest Developmental Center, Youngstown Developmental Center and Montgomery Developmental Center to provide supports in more home-like settings and address individual needs in a more personal way. We closed multi-floor facilities in places like Mt. Vernon and Springview. We've done all those things and now the state wants to go backwards. It makes no sense that we would walk away from this investment and deny these families the choice of a DC.

Please help us keep Montgomery and Youngstown Developmental Centers open. Thank you and I'll take any questions.