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My younger brother is a resident of Youngstown Developmental Center and has been for 28 years. He's 44 years old. He was diagnosed with autism at the age of two and is very medically fragile. Paul has a lot of grand mal seizures, where his head drops and hits the ground first. In October he broke his jaw this way and has required one-on-one staffing ever since. He needs a gate belt and two staff in order just to take a shower.

When his head hits the ground he has suffered multiple injuries, several broken noses, a broken jaw, a broken femur. He has a rod in his femur from a fall. We are trying to work on the seizure aspect and come up with solutions. We're looking into the possibility of seizure dogs, possibly medical marijuana.

There are so many things we've been trying to solve, especially with his seizures and now this closure announcement. We sure didn't need that. We also have an aging mother and of course my siblings and I have our own children. We don't like any of the options being proposed by DODD. We don't believe those options work for my brother. A nurse has to be on duty 24-7 to deal with Paul's medical issues. My mother is 83 and lives just 20 minutes from YDC. Other DCs are more than 50 miles and that's too far for her to drive.

The YDC staff have become our family. Whenever there's a hospital stay, they stay with Paul. They have become family to us. When my Dad passed away it was the staff who came and talked about my Dad's relationship with my brother.

Routine is very important to people with severe autism. You take that away and you have a precarious situation and closing the center would be devastating to them.

For all these reasons and more, I ask that you support keeping Youngstown Developmental Center open for individuals like my brother. Thank you and I'm happy to answer any questions.