



WASHINGTON

State Independent Living Council

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Position on Long-Term Care

Washington State Independent Living Council
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Position

It is the position of the Washington State Independent Living Council (SILC) that current federal statutes mandating nursing home coverage under Medicare and Medicaid be modified to include benefits for alternate forms of long-term care that promote self-determination, deinstitutionalization, and integration to community living. Further, it is the position of the SILC to encourage the State and parents to explore community alternatives so that children with disabilities will not enter institutions.

Background/ Supporting Evidence

- Currently, thousands of citizens with disabilities who would choose to live in community settings are forced to live in nursing facilities because of institutional bias of long-term funding that has been historically slanted towards institutions. In Washington state, the amount of Medicaid expenditures for institutional care versus community care is quite good compared to other states. According to Fiscal Year 2006 figures, for each dollar Washington spends towards community care (through various waivers, state plans, etc.) for MR/DD population (now called intellectual disability), it spends 33 cents on Institutional Care (nursing homes, ICFMRs, etc). For individuals with physical disabilities and aged, Washington spends 87 cents on institutional care versus one dollar on community services. Even with the favorable ratio of community spending versus institutional spending (Medicaid only), this state can do better.

- Institutionalization is expensive, inefficient, and an undue drain on public resources.
- Unnecessary institutionalization is dehumanizing and violates the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.
- Deinstitutionalization and community living promotes personal responsibility and human rights.
- Long-term care as currently implemented, focuses on institutionalization. This should be changed to include home care, personal services, personal attendant care, cognitive assistance and home health.
- Roads to Community Living (RTCL), the Money Follows the Person grant from Centers for Medicaid and Medicare, is a wonderful tool that will allow individuals to transition back into the community.

Conclusion

The SILC strongly supports the implementation of programs and funding that allow individuals to live in the community of their choice. The SILC also encourages advocates to work with state appropriations to continue funding for RTCL or other long-term care programs after the five-year grant RTCL cycle is complete (end of 2011).

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