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Blog

APD's Mike Dunn Denies Discrimination in the 10% Density Rule

March 6, 2008, 7:45 pm

MIKE DUNN DENIES DISCRIMINATION IN 10% DENSITY RULE

Governor Crist's office asked Mike Dunn at the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) to respond to a parent who spoke out against the discrimination underscored in the infamous 10% Density Rule, published in the Florida Medicaid Developmental Disabilities Services and Limitations Handbook by AHCA. This rule applies to people who are in the Supported Living program.

Says Mr. Dunn in a written response, "the Handbook allows no more than 10% density in the smallest identifiable geographical area in which the homes are located, which may be a city block, subdivision, neighborhood, apartment complex or mobile home park. The recipient's homes must be scattered, noncontiguous, and dispersed throughout that area."

Mr. Dunn denies discrimination, stating that there is no intent to discriminate against anyone. He continues: "The intent of the density rule is to avoid the development of living situations which interfere with the ability to be an integrated part of the community. One of the primary goals of services for individuals with developmental disabilities is to enhance the concept of inclusion rather than exclusion."

Many long time parents and advocates don't agree!

Says Lila Klausman, President of Parents Planning Programs (PPP) for the Developmentally Disabled of Florida, Inc., "Under the banner of "community inclusion, "living situations which interfere with the ability to be an integrated part of the community," "enhance the concept of inclusion rather than exclusion," you have effectively:

1. denied CHOICE
2. prohibited self-determination
3. created a more insidious type of exclusion: no more than 10%
4. told persons with developmental disabilities that they are less equal than other citizens who are free to live in planned communities
5. effectively mandated living in a "least-restrictive environment" to the exclusion of a community of choice (a perversion of non-institutionalization)
6. imposed your philosophy to stifle innovative and creative solutions to residential alternatives
7. proliferated a quota system to deny civil rights
8. appeased real estate interests and "Not In My Backyard" mentality
9. dictated to the developmental disabilities community that the state knows what's best for them
10. marked Florida and its Agency for Persons with Disabilities as an entrenched bureaucracy with a biased agenda
11. singled out the developmental disabilities community as the only one "privileged" to be segregated by law
12. advanced the idea that people with developmental disabilities should be isolated from their friends and "scatter" like mice."

Ms. Klausman says, "You can't hide behind a plea that you are acting in the interests of people with developmental disabilities. How transparent this is! Please do not to continue to insult the intelligence of our sons and daughters who understand in their way what the 10% Density Rule has done."

This informed, well organized, and powerful advocacy group leader pledges further, "We will continue to fight the 10% Density Rule and to expose that fact that safety and socialization needs are not being met by the "scattered" arrangement of homes in the Supported Living program."

"No one can force a neighborhood to invite their disabled neighbors to a barbecue or a game of Bingo. How often we have seen people in "noncontiguous" living arrangements unable to attend social activities for lack of transportation! How many other minorities are told where they may or may not live based upon a calculator and a measuring tape?

We need viable alternatives to "one size fits all" and other forms of exclusion by denial."

Ms. Klausman has committed to follow this issue through the process and is working with other advocates to initiate legislation which with grant choice to the developmentally disabled and clarify this matter.

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