

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Dawn Roberson](#)
Subject: FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
Date: Tuesday, June 03, 2014 8:05:51 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]
Sent: Monday, June 02, 2014 9:06 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Monday, June 2, 2014 - 21:06

Agency: DEPARTMENT AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DADS

First Name: Forrest

Last Name: Novy

Title: Educator (retired)

Organization you are affiliated with: none

Email: fnovy@utexas.edu

City: Austin

State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or Opposed:

My name is Dr. Forrest Novy and I am opposed to the Sunset staff recommendation to close the Austin State Supported Living Center (ASSLC) and five other centers and to place certain residents in other "community based," non-SSLC settings.

My professional training includes a Masters and PhD in special education and communication disorders. I have 35 years of clinical, instructional, and administrative experience working with diverse, special needs populations.

My brother, Wayne, resides at the ASSLC. Wayne is 63 years old, has multiple disabilities, and requires observation 24/7 for his health and personal safety. Wayne lives at the ASSLC so that I can be close to him and advocate for his well-being as he grows older and more fragile. I visit Wayne regularly, and I know his service providers who keep me well-informed.

The ASSLC is home to many medically fragile and cognitively impaired adults who need constant direct observation and care. Many, like Wayne, cannot articulate their needs, desires, or concerns. To be safe, secure, and healthy, they require coordinated efforts by experienced medical personnel, behavioral support staff, occupational and physical therapists, nutritionists, speech and language pathologists, and direct-care attendants.

These professionals provide: (1) close and constant monitoring for health, safety, and basic daily needs; 2) regular access to consistent and timely medical care; 3) round-the-clock monitoring because many residents cannot clothe and feed themselves and require assistance with toileting and hygiene; and 4) regular stimulation including opportunities for the residents to walk, be outside, interact with the greater community through excursions, and engage in meaningful, personally productive activities.

In contrast, most “community-based” programs and settings I have reviewed are not prepared to offer this kind of assistance. They are predicated on the notion that the residents can complete some basic household duties. They lack adequate numbers of staff, which in turn means few excursions and outings, and thus diminished opportunities for residents to actually interact with the outside world. In addition, a residential situation without multiple staff on location at all times potentially creates the risk that these vulnerable residents could be subject to various forms of abuse.

Recommendation to the Sunset Commission: Before making a decision regarding the closure of any SSLC, I ask that the state conduct a thorough, results-driven evaluation of “community-based services” in order to ensure that these most vulnerable of our fellow citizens continue to receive the care and protection they need. Thank you.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency: Conduct a thorough, results-driven evaluation of “community-based services” in order to ensure that the most vulnerable of our fellow citizens residing at SSLCs being considered for closure will continue to receive the care and protection they need.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree