

**From:** [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)  
**To:** [Dawn Roberson](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)  
**Date:** Friday, June 06, 2014 11:59:47 AM

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

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]  
Sent: Friday, June 06, 2014 9:01 AM  
To: Sunset Advisory Commission  
Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Friday, June 6, 2014 - 09:00

Agency: DEPARTMENT AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DADS

First Name: Harrison

Last Name: Hiner

Title: Legislative Coordinator

Organization you are affiliated with: Texas State Employees Union

Email: hhiner@cwa-tseu.org

City: Austin

State: Texas

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

The Texas State Employees Union opposes the recommended closures of Austin State Supported Living Center and five additional state facilities. While there are needed improvements at SSLCs, closing these facilities is not the solution to delivering optimal care for the individuals. If these state facilities were to close, many of the residents would be relocated in Home and Community-based Services Group Homes (HCS). According to the Sunset report, DADS has a unreliable track record in oversight and accountability of private contractors; this raises great concern about the quality of care rendered in HCS settings.

The DADS Sunset Report also states that HCS currently lack the resources, infrastructure, and personnel needed to address complex health and behavior issues. 80% of the individuals residing in SSLCs have either high-risk behavioral challenges or intensive medical needs. That also includes 63% who have both IDD and mental diagnoses. The 24 hour health services provided at SSLCs allow for the immediate and consistent attention these "high-need" individuals require. Closing SSLCs and transitioning the residents into HCSs that are unable to provide these critical services threatens the quality of care that is desperately needed.

It is understood that some individuals are better served in communities while others are better served in state facilities. However, individuals and families need the option to choose an environment that meets their specific needs. Closing SSLCs would significantly limit the options available to families to care for their loved ones. Many residents have resided at these state facilities for the majority of their lives. Uprooting and placing the individuals in an unfamiliar environment could be traumatic and disruptive to their well-being.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency: Allow for the reduction of the client population at Austin State Support Living Center in order for the facility to be better positioned to comply with the DOJ standards. The remainder of the SSLCs should remain open to continue care for individuals who are better served in institutional settings. The state facilities already provide the intensive round-the-clock care that is needed by the majority of client population. It remains to be proven if private HCSs can provide that level of intensive care. To better serve individuals in communities; SSLCs should be funded at levels to deploy adequate services and personnel to assist those in the existing community settings.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree