

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Dawn Roberson](#)
Subject: FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
Date: Thursday, June 05, 2014 10:13:50 AM

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

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]
Sent: Thursday, June 05, 2014 8:43 AM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Thursday, June 5, 2014 - 08:43

Agency: DEPARTMENT AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DADS

First Name: Marjorie

Last Name: Heaton

Title: Concerned Citizen/President of local organization

Organization you are affiliated with: Family/Guardian Association - Austin State Supported Living Center

City: Austin

State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or Opposed: Volunteering and being a frequent visitor at the Austin Center for 20 years plus it is heartbreaking to find a recommendation is being submitted for closure of the Center and that DADS officials are in the process of advising some family/guardians at the Austin Center that they have until November of this year to move some 100 Residents off campus. It has long been felt that there are and continue to be State agencies who have been relentlessly working to drastically downsize the Center - or close it entirely, rather than giving wholehearted support to the Austin Center and the over 200 Residents it now serves. Many of the Residents have lived at the Center for an extended period of time (over ten plus years if not longer) and still continue to flourish under the care the Center provides, however, this is possible only through the efforts of the dedicated and loving staff employed at the Center. There will be isolated cases where unfortunate incidents will occur - but they receive undue publicity and are few and far between. The quest on a national level that shutting down State supported Centers so Residents can be moved into community homes is not the way to go. There are many fine community placements - but they tend to either be expensive or do not begin to provide the level of care provided by a State supported Center. The Centers around the State are "communities" not institutions. Care needs to be taken that all the data being provided the Commission is accurate and also that alternatives being provided for care outside the Centers does not put the current Residents in harms way. Having worked with individuals through the years who require special care it is obvious that change from familiar and safe environments can be detrimental and produce negative results. Closure of the Austin Center involves the overall wellbeing of over 200 Residents who still breath, have differing needs, consider the Center home and their special place and have family/guardians who are suffering heartbreak because they will no longer have the assurance that their loved one is able to be part of a Center which provides the care they have become accustomed to and who are close enough so they can have easy access to visits. Many family/guardians have tried different environments for their Special Resident in the past and the Austin Center is the only place where they have found the "right fit".

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency: Take politics out of the management of the Austin Center and the other Centers throughout the State. Legislation is in the works in DC to provide more and better care for the mentally disadvantaged - which may or not advocate the closing of Centers but will call for providing expanded services. The need has never been greater! Establish a committee of TEXANS which includes community leaders - to give a true and unbiased opinion on how the Centers are really operating and who have a vision of how the mentally disadvantaged can receive enhanced care. It is not necessary to hire out-of-state "professionals" - who base their findings on data that is not always correct and who never set foot on any of the campuses. The findings of the group which served at the request of the Governor were positive - why are these same findings not evident to other groups who inspect the Campus? Approach care of the mentally disadvantaged with a common sense approach - each individual is different - allow staff to treat them as such instead of following the multitude of rules set by supposed professionals who are produce countless documents merely to insure their continued employment. Look very closely at all positions held by the Agencies of the State to be sure the employees are working to benefit the overall good for the taxpayers who pay their salary - and above all wage a valiant battle to support the rights of the citizens of Texas who cannot speak for themselves and who are in need of the care they are now receiving.

The Austin site is a lovely campus which provides a haven for those who call it home and with some vision can continue to do so and which can be enhanced to provide care for even more citizens who are in need of care for mental deficiencies.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree