

Stacey Mather

**Sunset Advisory Commission  
Hearing on the Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) Recommendations**

**Testimony from Stacey Mather**

**June 25, 2014**

---

Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Stacey Mather and I am testifying on the Sunset Commission's DADS recommendations for the closure of the State-Supported Living Centers (SSLCs).

I am blessed to have three siblings with intellectual disabilities. My siblings currently live at home with my dad, but at some point in the future I will assume responsibility for them.

Currently the waitlist for Medicaid housing waivers is over ten years' long. While my family regularly monitors the status, many people are unaware of the process or the waitlist. For instance, I recently had lunch with a friend who also has a sibling with a developmental disability. Her mother is ill and she recently learned that her sister is not on a waitlist. This places enormous pressure on her to go through the limited options.

I could face a similar situation should a transition need to occur in my family before they have access to a waiver. We would be forced to choose between institutionalization at an SSLC or my siblings would need to live with me. While my siblings are always welcome to live with me, it would be difficult for them to maintain their current level of independence without support services since I work full-time.

Data from the 2011 Legislative Budget Board report on the SSLCs demonstrated that the average cost per resident at an SSLC is three to four times more than community-based housing. Money saved from the closure of six SSLCs and the sale of the properties could make an important reduction in the number of people on the waiver waitlist and allow the state to provide services to a larger number of people without increasing costs.

I understand the concerns raised by families of people living in the SSLCs. I think the vast majority of families of people with developmental disabilities know what it's like to imagine limited choices for our family members and the challenges of facing changes after living in one situation for so long. The Commission recommendations to only close half of the SSLCs provide more options so that residents who prefer that setting can stay within that setting, though they may have to move to another location. The closures would also give options to others so they may also have a choice.

Thank you for your time and consideration.