



**THE MASSACHUSETTS COALITION OF FAMILIES  
AND ADVOCATES, Inc. ("COFAR")**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Advocates for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities March  
on State House to Protest Facility Closings, Budget Cuts**

(MASS.)—State lawmakers are joining family members of individuals with intellectual disabilities at the State House, **March 22, 2010, at 12:00pm in Nurses Hall** to oppose Governor Patrick's plan to close four of the six remaining state Intermediate Care facilities where these individuals currently reside, as well as to contest budget cuts to other line items.

The *Stroll at the State House* is an annual event lead by the Massachusetts Coalition of Families and Advocates, Inc. (COFAR) whose members advocate on behalf of individuals with intellectual disabilities in Massachusetts and their families and guardians. Along with COFAR members, union members, families and friends of loved ones with intellectual disabilities will be meeting with state legislators that morning to discuss the need to keep the facilities open, the need for a truly independent study of these services, the need to fully fund state operated group homes, and the need to adequately fund the DDS system in all areas. COFAR will also advocate for increased funding for the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC), which investigates neglect and abuse of disabled individuals, as well as restoration of funds for Tufts Dental Clinics, which provide crucial dental services for intellectually disabled individuals statewide.

"Closing the facilities is a bad idea all around," says Thomas Frain, Esq., president of COFAR and brother of Paul, who is intellectually disabled and a resident of a state operated group home. "They are the safety net for the entire DDS system, providing respite care, training, medical, dental and clinical services, and assistive technology services not only to facility residents, but to thousands of residents living at home and in the community system."

Along with Frain, State Senator Richard T. Moore, Representative Anne B. Gobi, and Representative Karyn E. Polito will address the impact to both the residents and workers if these facilities close. Bonnie Valade, vice president of COFAR and mother of Tony, a resident of Templeton Developmental Center, will also provide a personal authentication as to how this will affect her son.

According to Valade, if Templeton closes, her son will lose his long time home. He will also not receive the vital on-site clinical care services ranging from administering medication to emergency response, and will truly miss his outstanding day program. In fact, just this past Friday, it was announced that Tufts Dental, a pioneer in providing specialized dental care to people with developmental disabilities and providing preventative care and treatment for 2,100 community living and campus living residents, will be closing at Fernald as a result of Patrick Administration cuts.

“These critical services do not exist on the community settings,” says Valade. “Equal or better care is not available in community homes. In fact, the community services are drastically underfunded and inadequately staffed.”

If the facilities are closed, hundreds of residents will be evicted and transferred to community group homes, leaving behind long time friends and familiar staff who are like family. These evictions will also occur at a time when many elderly parents who have adult children with disabilities living at home are unable to find much needed residential care.

“Not only do facility residents suffer with these evictions,” explains Frain, “But individuals living with their elderly parents who could benefit from moving into community group homes will not have those placements made available to them because facility residents will be forced to take those spots.”

“Facility closures also cause tremendous hardship to local economies, with well trained direct care and clinical staff losing their jobs,” says COFAR’s Executive Director Colleen Lutkevich. The Patrick Administration has stated that the state will save around \$80 million by closing these facilities. Lutkevich disagrees, citing a recent study by former facility director Dr. Alfred Bacotti, who states that the per resident cost, after receiving federal Medicaid dollars, is only \$35,000 per person. “This cost includes all services,” she says. “Community services are broken into many subsets, and are extremely difficult to track.” Advocates also worry about safety for elderly facility residents in the widespread and largely unmonitored community system. The Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC) is unable to keep up with the demand investigating instances of neglect and abuse, and routinely has its budget cut as well.

The four state facilities planned to close are the Fernald Developmental Center in Waltham, the Glavin Regional Center in Shrewsbury, the Monson Developmental Center in Palmer and the Templeton Developmental Center in Baldwinville. The Wrentham Developmental Center and the Hogan Regional Center in Hawthorne (Danvers) will remain open at this time.

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*Established in 1983, COFAR is a statewide, non-profit organization that advocates for choice in and access to comprehensives and high quality care for persons with mental retardation/developmental disabilities. Visit us at [www.COFAR.org](http://www.COFAR.org)*