



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

February 12, 2009

Dear SWC Parents, Family Members, and Guardians,

I am writing to inform you that the Department of Health Services will be restructuring services at Southern Wisconsin Center (SWC) to reflect current policies and trends regarding opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities to live in community settings.

As part of this restructuring, expanded opportunities will be provided for voluntary community relocations of SWC residents. As a result of accelerating community relocations, we expect approximately 100 individuals will be relocated from SWC to community settings in the 2009-11 biennium. Relocations will take place gradually over the upcoming 24 months.

I want to assure you that we are deeply committed to ensuring that the community relocation plan for your loved one provides for the health and safety and unique needs of your loved one. To that end, the relocation effort will involve family members and guardians, as well as SWC staff who are familiar with each person's needs. No individual will be relocated until an individualized plan that ensures the health and safety and meets the individual's needs has been developed.

Over the same period, the short-term Intensive Treatment Program (ITP) at SWC will be expanded from 10 to 30 beds to provide short-term, specialized services to individuals with developmental disabilities who live in community settings.

Restructuring of the SWC mission in this way is now possible as Wisconsin's community programs have improved and expanded so that even people with very challenging medical and behavior issues can now live in community settings. We are pleased with this development since it means that in Wisconsin even more of our citizens with developmental disabilities can live their lives in less restrictive and more integrated community homes. In a 2006 survey conducted related to relocations from Northern Wisconsin Center, 94% of guardians reported that their wards feel safe and that their overall happiness/satisfaction is either better (62%) or the same (32%) in their new community living arrangement.

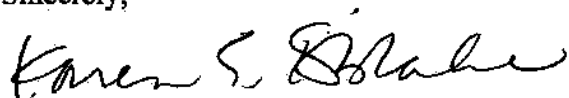
It is likely you will have many questions and we will be holding meetings to talk with you and every interested SWC family and guardian. Two parent/guardian meetings will be held at the following dates and times: **Sunday, February 15 at 2:00 PM** and **Monday, February 23 at 6:00 PM**. Both meetings are at the CRSP Gymnasium at SWC. We hope that you will be able to attend one of these meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to explain in more detail how individualized planning for community relocations will occur and to answer your questions. There will be additional meetings for family members and guardians in the future, where you will have an opportunity to learn about the community relocation planning process. Your participation and input at meetings and throughout the planning process is very important.

February 12, 2009
Page Two

The relocation process will be led by Susan Schroeder. Ms. Schroeder was previously Director of the Bureau of Quality Assurance which has regulatory oversight for community residential settings as well as institutional settings, including the State Centers for People with Developmental Disabilities. Ms. Schroeder is currently the Long Term Care Policy Advisor for the Division of Long Term Care and has overseen a significant number of complex facility downsizings and resident relocation plans. Joining her will be a comprehensive inter-disciplinary team composed of Department staff with extensive expertise and experience in developing community placements for individuals with developmental disabilities and SWC professionals and expert medical advisors.

If you have questions about the meetings on Sunday, February 15 and Monday, February 23, please contact Jim Henkes, Director of SWC at 262-878-6601.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Karen E. Timberlake".

Karen E. Timberlake
Secretary