



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

February 12, 2009

Dear SWC Staff Member,

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 am keenly aware of the deep devotion and commitment that SWC staff have towards the people who live at SWC. I want to assure you that we are deeply committed to ensuring that the community relocation plan for each SWC resident provides for the individual's health and safety and unique needs. To that end, the relocation effort will involve family members and guardians, and 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.

A Steering Committee will be established composed of SWC staff, management, union representatives, and parent/guardians. This committee will provide advice on the restructuring initiative, particularly the quality of community placements and the support provided to staff as positions are reduced. This Steering Committee will also oversee the reports on the quality of the placements and the care received by former residents as they are placed in the community.

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.

As part of this restructuring, staff reductions will take place gradually as resident relocations occur. Every possible effort will be made to achieve the reductions through attrition.

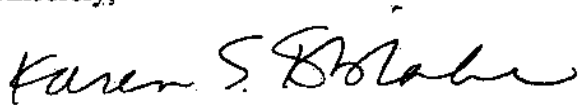
February 12, 2009
Page Two

The Department will provide support and assistance to SWC employees in identifying and pursuing employment or other options as position reductions occur. This will include working with other state agencies with operations on the SWC campus to identify and facilitate transitions for SWC staff to employment opportunities in these other state facilities and assisting staff who are interested in establishing their own community-based care businesses, as a way of utilizing their expertise and continuing to be involved with SWC residents with whom they have had relationships.

We recognize and value the skill, commitment and compassion you bring to your work at SWC and the high quality of care you provide for SWC residents. Staff will be involved in all aspects of the restructuring to help achieve individualized, sound community plans for individuals relocating from SWC, smooth transitions for staff who leave SWC, high quality of care for individuals who continue to be long-term residents at SWC, and expanded, state-of-the-art short-term intensive services.

If you have any questions, concerns, or ideas about the restructuring, please feel free to discuss them with Jim Henkes.

Sincerely,

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

Karen E. Timberlake
Secretary