

Residential Habilitation Centers (RHCs)
Efficient providers of high quality care; key player in continuum of care

Washington is a national leader in how it delivers a full continuum of care to its residents with developmental disabilities. Its RHCs have been cited as centers of excellence and provide a model for other states to replicate in the provision of care and services to people with Developmental and Intellectual disabilities.

Recognizing the significant budget shortfall the state is facing, it is understandable that tough, painful choices must be made. But **downsizing, consolidation or closure of an RHCs not only will cause real harm to real people, it also will cost more – not save – money.**

- An examination of the 2003-2005 downsizing of Fircrest shows it cost the state more than \$10 million to move 61 people.
- RHC's are the safety net for respite care and patients in crisis. Without RHC's, emergency services will fall to Police and Fire Departments, Emergency Rooms and Mental Health Centers. This not only is bad for people, but actually increases taxpayer costs.

Expanding Access to RHC Services: A Better, More Cost-Effective Solution

We should make better use of what we have. Expanding community access to RHC's high quality services is a cost-effective and efficient way to provide more and better services to those who need it. Expanding access could help resolve Washington's unmet services needs for those with developmental disabilities.

- RHC's have the space, facilities and expertise to support individuals in the community by providing outpatient services that are difficult to find (and costly to replicate) in the community's service delivery system.
- The State can achieve significant efficiencies by allowing those living within the community to access the quality services available at RHCs.

The closure issue is rooted in ideology, *not what's best for people.* We need to put an end to this destructive "community" versus RHC debate. We should focus our energy and resources on the real issue: how to provide the best possible care to all individuals with developmental disabilities within the resources available.

Not everyone can live at home or in a community-based setting. Now is not the time to abandon our *full continuum* of care for individuals with developmental disabilities in our state. RHCs are a critical part of that continuum, caring for the most fragile and vulnerable and behaviorally challenged. RHCs are a tremendous resource not just to their residents, but to their communities. **Expanding access to RHC services will help more people get the care and services they need.**