



COMMUNITY NOW!

Independence from waiting. Freedom from institutions.

## Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 1, 2013

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**July 3rd: Texans from around the state gather at the Texas State Capitol to demand an end to the abuse, neglect and exploitation of individuals with disabilities in Texas institutions and that appropriate supports be made available to all Texans with disabilities who want to live in their communities.**

**WHAT:** Press Conference

**WHO:** Community NOW! & ADAPT of Texas

**WHEN:** Wednesday, July 3, 2013. From 11:00am to 12:00pm

**WHERE:** North Steps of the Texas Capitol.

**WHY:** To demand that the Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS), the Texas Legislature, and the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) take a proactive role in the restructuring of the Long Terms Supports and Services system for Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

On Wednesday, July 3rd concerned Texans from around the State gather on the north steps of the Capitol demand independence for the thousands of Texans with disabilities institutionalized in substandard conditions. "The Austin State Supported Living Center is in DADS' backyard and the conditions at the facility are repeatedly designated as potentially deadly for the people that call those buildings home. If DADS can't get this facility right, how can they expect to operate 12 others scattered around the state?" asked Michelle Dooley, Board President of Community NOW!. Since the 2009 DOJ settlement agreement the publicly funded congregate care facilities, known as SSLCs, have been placed under Immediate Jeopardy over fifty times by CMS. Advocates are asking that the Texas Legislature and DADS work to develop a long range plan to downsize institutional settings and redirect the general revenue saved into less expensive home and community based options for people with IDD. "We can fix this problem on our own or the Feds can force the issue by revoking federal funds. That would be the worst possible outcome because it would mean that a facility would have to close overnight. That's when people end up getting hurt, and that's not fair for the people being warehoused in SSLCs," said Heiwa Salovitz with ADAPT of Texas. Ultimately the Texas Legislature has the authority to fix this incredibly broken system of care for the most vulnerable Texas citizens. If Governor Perry has truly called this special session to deal with issues of "civil rights" and "human rights" then there are few issues that can be so monumentally affected for the better as the issue of segregation in deadly facilities based on a disability label.

[www.communitynowfreedom.org](http://www.communitynowfreedom.org)

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