



STATE SUPPORTED LIVING CENTERS

Consolidate state supported living centers and improve community services for Texans with IDD

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD) supports the position that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) should be included in community life, live in homes, and make contributions to their families and communities.

PEOPLE WITH COMPLEX NEEDS CAN LIVE IN THE COMMUNITY

Most people with IDD live safer, healthier, happier lives when more fully integrated into the community, living among family and friends. Texas prioritizes institutional funding for 13 state supported living centers (SSLCs), undermining access to community living. Only 0.2% of Texans with IDD live in an SSLC, yet nearly 40% of the money used to fund services for people with IDD goes to fund the system.

SSLCs are state run residential institutions for about 3,000 Texans with IDD. These expensive institutions are currently under a U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) settlement agreement as a result of systemic abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

From January to June 2016, the Office of the Independent Ombudsman for SSLCs reviewed 1,693 “unusual incidents,” defined by the Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) as an “event or situation that seriously threatens the health, safety or life of individuals.”

In 2015, the Texas Senate approved a Sunset Advisory Commission recommendation to close Austin SSLC and establish a closure commission to decide if five more SSLCs should also close. The measure failed to be passed by the Texas House of Representatives, thus no progress was made. The number of people in SSLCs continues to decline, but funding for SSLCs continues to rise by about 25% per biennium. Meanwhile, the number of Texans with IDD waiting for community-based services, which are considerably less expensive, continues to grow.

DECLINING ENROLLMENT

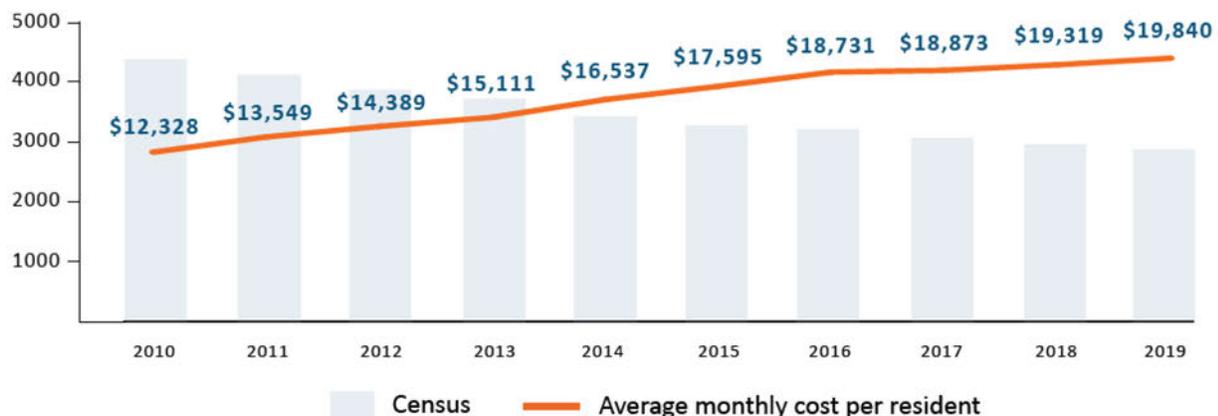
From 1977 to 2015, the average monthly census for all SSLCs decreased by 74.6%, from 12,132 to 3,083. Texas last closed an SSLC over 20 years ago, in 1996. Since then, the system census has continued to decrease from 5,724 residents to 3,083 (a decrease of 46.1%).

WAITING TO LIVE IN THE COMMUNITY

There is no wait for SSLCs, but Texans who prefer low-cost, community-based living sometimes must wait up to 12 years for services.

10,153 Texans have been waiting over 9 years or longer on the interest list for the Home and Community-based Services programs. While waiting for these necessary supports, thousands of Texans with IDD are at increased risk for negative health outcomes, crisis, and unnecessary institutionalization.

SSLCs: Census & Average Cost Per Resident



The Council continues to support a moratorium on admissions, the consolidation of SSLCs, and the diversion of funds to improve access to home and community-based settings.

REBALANCING THE SYSTEM

Texas has the highest institutionalized population of individuals with IDD of any state – 11.5% of the U.S. total. People with the most complex needs can be supported in the community. There are 10 times as many people with the highest level of need supported with waiver services in the community than there are in SSLCs. Many SSLC residents have made their preferences known, choosing community-based options over institutions. Yet, SSLC residents face unnecessary barriers to community living before being released, perpetuating the Texas system of institutional care.

Texas has an opportunity to improve the lives of thousands by rebalancing the way it prioritizes these services and more efficiently allocating taxpayer dollars.

SUPPORTED IN THE COMMUNITY



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HGH MAINTENANCE: DADS estimates it will cost \$583 million to fix overdue maintenance projects at the 13 SSLCs.

The estimated \$10 million appropriated for SSLC repairs alone in 2015 would have provided HCS waiver services for 234 Texans.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Set expectation for fewer institutions and to bring services up to accepted professional standards of care for those remaining in SSLCs.
2. Develop and implement an SSLC peer support program for individuals with IDD to foster supported decision-making and encourage self-determination.
3. Expand and improve quality home and community-based services as the primary way to address the increased demands for services in our state. Individuals should not be unnecessarily segregated in an institution because the state has not adequately funded community supports.

MORE INFORMATION

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