

Report to the DD Council
January, 2011

Advocacy Center

1. Mid year budget cuts by the Department of Health and Hospitals have been taking up a lot of our time, as a steady stream of people call our office, having been told their services would be cut. We are finding that sometimes mistakes have been made and at other times people have been told the wrong information by their support coordinator. Whatever the situation, people are fearful and need help sorting everything out. We have been negotiating with OCDD officials to ensure that people are afforded their right to a hearing and that notice of that right is in an understandable format.
2. We continue to monitor facilities where people with developmental disabilities face all sorts of daily life issues. Here is one example:

One of our Pinecrest clients reported mistreatment by a Pinecrest staff member. Formerly expunged criminal charges dating back to this client's childhood were in his file and "staff book". A staff member used the information to humiliate the client before his peers. In another instance, this same staff member became annoyed and attempted to demean the client and "put him in his place" by asking him to spell a word he had just used - denial. The client could not spell "denial" and was again horribly embarrassed.

By the time the client reported the incidents to AC, he had already reported them to Client Rights and been interviewed by Adult Protective Services. APS did not feel that the situation required a full investigation and decided that it would be fine as long as Pinecrest removed this particular staff member from the client's care. The AC advocate and the client disagreed. They addressed the issues with Pinecrest's Administrator, David Gill. As a result, the information has been removed from the client's chart and the staff member has been retrained on Pinecrest's HIPAA and confidentiality protocols. This was a major success for the client as it allowed him to recapture a feeling of control over his own life.

3. We believe we have finally been successful at negotiating a budget for the Community Living Ombudsman Program. The Legislature appropriated \$625,000 for the program during its 2010 session. However, there have been many bumps along the road as DHH attempted to match those funds with Medicaid dollars. Now, six months into the program, we believe a solution has finally been found, allowing us to continue the program through the rest of the year. Here's the type of thing the CLOP program does for individuals with developmental disabilities:

His CLOP Ombudsman can "make things happen" according to Sam, a 19 year-old man living in a group home. He acquired his disability in his late teens due to an accident, which left him with intensive healthcare needs. Sam met the Community Living Ombudsman, when he first moved into the group home. Over the next year, Sam expressed his desire to move back home with his family and asked the Ombudsman to help him. He was on a very long waiting list for community services and his needs were too great for his family to provide alone. When Department of Health and Hospitals announced that they were privatizing state run group homes and downsizing developmental centers, the Ombudsman contacted Bayou Regions Supports and Services (formerly Peltier Lawless Developmental Center) to discuss a possible cascade of services. After many attempts, a person was located with similar needs as Sam and that person will take Sam's place in the group home, while Sam returns home with services. The Ombudsman continues to be involved in Sam's transition from the group home to the community. "Home for Christmas", is the target.