

Mission Statement:

The MCPD's mission is to be an educational and solution orientated advisory board serving as a network, which is a catalyst and referral organization, promoting self advocacy, equality and accessibility for all people regardless of their disAbility.

Issue:

The right to make choices about life, health and safety for people with developmental disabilities is not being supported or advocated to the fullest extent possible.

Background:

According to the United Nations, approximately 15% of the world's population, over one billion people, are afflicted with a disability (United Nations Enable, n.d, www.un.org/disabilities). In 2006, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and according to United Nations Enable, "the UN General Assembly in the recent years has repeatedly emphasized that the genuine achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed development goals, requires the inclusion and integration of the rights, and well-being, as well as the perspective of persons with disabilities in the development efforts at nation, regional and international levels" (United Nations Enable, n.d, www.un.org/disabilities) .

People with disabilities, from all parts of the world, face barriers on a daily basis that prevent living as an equal member of society. Our citizens in Wyoming with developmental disabilities and their families are not excluded from these barriers. In fact, barriers are increasing and resulting in extreme turmoil due to the proposed changes to the Home and Community Based Waivers, implemented and monitored by the Department of Health, Behavioral Health Division. Home and Community Based Waivers are programs in which federal and state monies are designated to help people with disabilities live in the least restrictive environment and offer choices other than living in state institutions.

The new waiver applications submitted to the Center of Medicaid Services by the Wyoming Department of Health includes limits on a person's ability to choose providers, where to live, services and activities. This proposed document specifies how many people can live in a home, how much time a person must be in the community and whom they can, or more significantly; cannot choose to provide services to them. This turmoil has further been increased by the release of investigative reports by the Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc., in regards to the Wyoming State run institution for people with developmental disabilities. According to these reports, there are significant health and safety concerns for people living in the institution, some which are life threatening.

Significance:

The impact of the Medicaid Waiver Application and the findings of health and safety risks at the Wyoming Life Resource Center by Protection and Advocacy is a significant step backwards in regards to the progress made and goals of inclusion and integration of rights. Both the documents mentioned above results in the gross violation of rights for person with disabilities. The rights for choice, health, safety, privacy, dignity and to receive supports paid for, have been ignored and tossed aside.

Position Statement:

The Mayor's Council for People with Disabilities (MCPD) serves as an advisory board to the Mayor's Office, the Governing Body and Cheyenne City staff for the inclusion of, as well as, on the problems and concerns of persons with a disability or handicap as they relate to activities of daily living; including Accessibility, Recreation, Commerce, Employment, Transportation and Self-Advocacy for people with disabilities and their families in the Cheyenne community.

Further:

To bring awareness and educate the community on issues relevant to people with a disability or handicap.

A review of the Department of Health and Protection and Advocacy documents indicates clearly that choice, health and safety for people with disabilities is not being provided through the Wyoming Department of Health.

The Mayor's Council for People with Disabilities (MCDP) offers the position that:

All persons with disabilities have the right to be informed of his/her choices and allowed to make those choices in a manner that they feel best meets his/her goals, desires and lifestyle.

All persons with disabilities have the right to choose his/her living arrangements. Further, people with disabilities have the same rights to a safe, healthy and protected living arrangement, same as all citizens in Wyoming and the Nation.

All persons with disabilities have the right to expect that services and living environments that they purchase are provided and provided in a manner that adheres to the person's choices.

References:

International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 3 December 2013 n.d, www.un.org/disabilities.

Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc. (2013, Sept) *Summary for Public Release Investigation Report of Conditions at the Wyoming Life Resource Center* First in a Series of Reports, Protection & Advocacy Cheyenne

Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc. (2013, Nov.) *Summary for Public Release Investigation Report of Conditions at the Wyoming Life Resource Center* Second in a Series of Reports, Protection & Advocacy
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Wyoming Department of Health, (2013, Oct). Comprehensive Waiver Application.
<http://www.health.wyo.gov/DDD>