



DPC Issue Brief

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for Texans with disabilities.

Title: Policy Statement on State Institution Closure and Consolidation (also known as “state schools for the “mentally retarded”)[†]

Background: Texas operates 13 state institutions for people with intellectual and other related conditions warehousing more than 5000 children and adults. These state institutions are named in law “state schools” and/or large residential congregate care facilities that segregate large numbers of individuals labeled with a wide range of intellectual disabilities.

Texas continues to warehouse more people in these 13 state institutions than any other state. It costs the state of Texas more than two times the amount to keep a person in a state institution as compared to a Medicaid Home and Community Services (HCS) waiver living options. Limited resources continue to pour into segregated, congregate care facilities as more than 100,000 people wait on Medicaid waiver waiting lists to live in their community.

DADS is the State agency with responsibility to operate these state institutions and has provided very limited leadership in the consolidation or downsizing of these state facilities. In the current DADS Legislative Appropriation Request, DADS is requesting 78 million dollars to maintain these state institutions in addition to the high annual cost of individual placement in a state institution, as thousands of Texans with disabilities continue to wait for community services.

Recommendation: The Disability Policy Consortium (DPC) recommends that the Texas Legislature direct the Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) to develop and implement a plan to close at least three state institutions, also known as “state schools for the mentally retarded,” within the next two biennia. All funds saved through these closures should be directed to support the transition process for individuals from state institutions to community services and to fund community based Medicaid waivers.

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MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS: *Statewide Members:* Advocacy, Incorporated, Brain Injury Association of Texas, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, Epilepsy Coalition of Texas, The Institute for Disability Access/ADAPT, Lone Star Association for Persons in Supported Employment, Mental Health Association in Texas, National Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Texas, National Multiple Sclerosis Society of Texas, Texas Advocates, Texas AIDS Network, Texas Association of Centers for Independent Living, Texas Association of the Deaf, Texas Center for Disability Studies/ Texas Technology Access Project, Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities, Texas Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health, Texas Legal Services Center, Texas Mental Health Consumers, Texas State Independent Living Council, Texas State Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, The Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University, Council for Families for Children, United Cerebral Palsy of Texas, The Spina Bifida Association of Texas, Inc., and the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Texas. *Local Members:* Epilepsy Foundation Central & South Texas. REACH Resource Centers on Independent Living – Dallas, Fort Worth and Denton, Corpus Christi Committee for Persons with Disabilities, Goodwill of Central Texas and Coastal Bend Center for Independent Living

[†] See Texas Health and Safety Code § 531.002 *et seq.*