

## **Integrated day settings aren't appropriate for all**

The unintended effects of the Olmstead Act will be fewer day opportunities by the elimination of sheltered workshops and brick-and-mortar day habilitation programs for individuals with developmental disabilities. By mandating that all individuals move into integrated day settings, the federal and state governments are limiting opportunities for people with developmental disabilities.

I applaud those who can and will move into integrated day settings. However, these opportunities, due to the vastness and severity of disabilities, along with medical and behavioral issues, are not appropriate for everyone. One size does not fit all!

Similarly, New York State's 2008 moratorium on group homes has prevented the purchase of such residences for people with developmental disabilities. More than 12,000 known New York State residents are on a "registry" for such placements while their caregivers age, become more fragile and are at risk themselves.

This has led to dire situations and pleas for help, such as the letter from the 84-year-old mother caring for her 52-year-old son with cerebral palsy who recently broke his leg. Or the horrifying News story of the "Eight who lived in squalor moved from Terrible' Buffalo group home."

These scenarios will increase in frequency and severity, ending in a truly catastrophic result! The lack of safe and quality residential options displays a total lack of respect, by our state, for those families and their loved ones' dignity and quality of life.

With a nearly \$7 billion surplus in the state coffers, I passionately ask readers to contact their local legislators and Gov. Andrew Cuomo and implore them to invest in the lives of people with developmental disabilities and provide them with appropriately rewarding day opportunities and safe living situations. Remind the governor of his campaign promise, "We must ensure that critical programs receive adequate funding to protect vulnerable children and families."

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