



Support a Stabilization Unit for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities and Co-Occurring Mental Health Conditions

A recent study from the CDC found that an estimated 17.4 million individuals with disabilities experience frequent mental distress, which is 4.6 times as often as individuals without a disability. Individuals with a co-occurring Developmental Disability and Mental Illness are a vulnerable population often people served by Medicaid, the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD), and the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH).

Over the last 15 years, the two in-patient units equipped to serve this populations the Developmental Neuropsychiatric Unit and Stabilization Unit (DNP, SU) equipped to serve this vulnerable population were closed. These closures forced families to struggle alone, individuals to reach crisis levels which leads to the state paying to send individuals out of state to receive needed treatment, or admit individuals into Pinecrest at a cost of over \$200,000 a year.

What these individuals and families need are access across the continuum of care:

- **Access to community based mental health treatment, including intensive evidence-based options.**
- **Crisis services including therapeutic respite**
- **Residential/inpatient treatment when indicated (SU).**

How will this help these individuals and families?

Creating an option for the opening of a stabilization unit will help support the needs of those who exceed the supports offered or provided by community-based programs. These individuals often enter an SU in crisis, and over time stabilize, and then transition to a lower level of care with the goal of reintegrating them into community-based settings. In 2011 – average length of stay was 4/5 months.

What can legislator do?

Support HCR XXX by Representative Paula Davis that will require the Department of Health to develop a committee that will study need of individuals with co-occurring disabilities. This committee will also look at how OCDD and OBH can better meet the needs of this population and lastly, require LDH to develop a proposed option for the development and opening of a stabilization unit.

Its time to prioritize the needs of this population and keep our families in Louisiana!