



January 10, 2010

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## State Outlines Goals for People with Disabilities

**DES MOINES, Iowa** – A five-year action plan focusing on choices and dignity for people with disabilities has been completed by the Iowa Department of Human Services.

The Olmstead Plan – named after a landmark 1999 U.S. Supreme Court decision – is based on the premise that there should be “a life in the community for everyone,” according to DHS Director Charles Krogmeier.

“Iowa has a lot to be proud of in the way we help people with disabilities, and there is much more we can do. We want to offer a vibrant and rich array of community services as an alternative to institutional service,” he said

The plan was compiled by the Mental Health and Disabilities Services division of the DHS in conjunction with the Olmstead Consumer Task Force, the Iowa Mental Health and Disability Services Commission, and other groups.

It includes broad goals, such as building community capacity to serve people with disabilities, and it suggests dozens of action steps to reach those objectives.

“We’re off to a good start,” Krogmeier said. He noted that both of the DHS-managed resource centers for people with mental retardation at Woodward and Glenwood recently improved services to reach civil rights standards set by the Department of Justice.

Officials at both centers aggressively seek community placements for their residents and in the last several years, discharges have exceeded admissions. There are now about 500 residents at the two facilities, a 20 percent reduction in five years.

The plan also calls for a coordinated system to deal with crisis behaviors. In many areas of the state, authorities are not trained to help people with mental disorders, leading to unnecessary stays in jail or psychiatric units of hospitals.

The entire plan may be seen at:

[http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/docs/NR\\_OlmsteadPlanJan2011.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/docs/NR_OlmsteadPlanJan2011.pdf)

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