



March 7, 2023

Dear Governor Pritzker,

We the undersigned, in solidarity with the Going Home Coalition, are strongly advocating for the closure of Choate Developmental Center in Anna, Illinois. As Going Home Coalition self-advocate participant Bridget Brown stated, "We do not segregate the people that we value." Institutionalization for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities is no longer a societal norm. Closing Choate is an ethical and financial imperative for the state of Illinois. The funds from closure should follow the person and could be used to increase integrated, safe, affordable, and accessible housing allowing many more people with IDD the opportunity to live in the community.

Clyde L. Choate Developmental Center was opened in 1869ⁱ and currently houses 234 people with developmental disabilities.ⁱⁱ Going Home Coalition's previous letter, received by your office in May of 2022, outlined the incidents of at least 12 employees who had been charged with various crimes in connection with attacks on residents at Choate since January 10th 2020.ⁱⁱⁱ The varying degrees of these appalling and horrific charges ranged from assault against disabled residents, obstruction of justice, and criminal sexual assault against a female resident with developmental disabilities.^{iv v} Further details of these incidents can be found at Capitolfax^{vi} and Linked In.^{vii}

Additionally, a mental health technician was charged with aggravated criminal sexual assault on March 10, 2022.^{viii} Unrelated, the same alleged perpetrator was arrested on February 22, 2022 and charged with two counts of predatory criminal sexual assault, criminal sexual assault of a child who was less than thirteen years old and aggravated criminal sexual abuse of a child younger than thirteen years old.^{ix}

Since highlighting the above criminal human rights abuses, there has been extensive media coverage which has now been viewed by millions across the country. As leaders in the field of advocacy, we hear daily from Illinoisians disgusted by the abuses and demanding change. These articles include the following from several media resources:

ProPublica

09.02.22 <https://www.propublica.org/article/illinois-choate-mental-health-abuse-beatings>

09.02.22 <https://www.propublica.org/article/illinois-choate-mental-health-abuse-history>

09.06.22 <https://www.propublica.org/article/illinois-governor-calls-for-changes-after-awful-reports-of-abuse-at-developmental-center>

10.10.22 <https://www.propublica.org/article/illinois-choate-mental-health-abuse-911-staff>

11.11.22 <https://www.propublica.org/article/illinois-choate-abuse-code-of-silence>

12.22.22 <https://www.propublica.org/article/illinois-choate-mental-health-patient-arrests>

01.19.23 <https://www.propublica.org/article/illinois-choate-abuse-inspector-general>

02.10.23 <https://www.propublica.org/article/illinois-choate-mental-health-new-abuse>

Chicago Tribune

10.13.22 <https://www.chicagotribune.com/opinion/commentary/ct-column-choate-developmental-center-abuse-allegations-20221013-ofon7hpfpgqhc2ilhwsognz2ce-story.html>

10.21.22 <https://www.chicagotribune.com/politics/ct-choate-mental-health-abuse-pritzker-20230216-52uqp74s4rdktr5w2ztoa6jpm-story.html>

02.16.23 <https://www.chicagotribune.com/politics/ct-choate-mental-health-abuse-pritzker-20230216-52uqp74s4rdktr5w2ztoa6jpm-story.html>

02.21.23 <https://www.chicagotribune.com/opinion/editorials/ct-editorial-choate-mental-health-center-abuse-pritzker-20230221-btpl3xcegfcc5ef2xakfn4jpum-story.html>

News Conference

09/06/2022 Gov. Pritzker addressed the issues at Choate. (link is [here](#) and his comments begin at 35:10)

These incidents are just the most recent cases of the systemic abuse which has taken place for many years and was first documented in Equip for Equality's 2005 report.^x In a 2009 report, the US Department of Justice found that "Choate fails to provide its residents with adequate: (A) transition planning and placement in the most integrated setting; (B) protection from harm; (C) health care, including psychiatric care and physical and nutritional management; (D) behavioral, habilitation, and communication services; (E) special education services; and (F) integrated treatment planning."^{xi}

While immediate action is needed, there must also be future planning to address reducing Illinois's over-reliance on SODCs and increasing system capacity in the community. There is a national trend towards rebalancing from congregate care to home and community-based services. By 2019, 17 states plus the District of Columbia had closed all their large state-run IDD facilities.^{xii} Currently, only Texas has a higher number of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities than Illinois living in institutions.^{xiii} In fiscal year 2019, the average annual cost to support one person in an Illinois institution was \$286,000.^{xiv} Research suggests it is more cost-effective to serve people in the community. Diverting funds from Choate to community-based supports could further bolster your Administration's financial commitment to the Home and Community Based

Service (HCBS) system which we acknowledge has been more than any other Governor in decades.

Former residents of Jacksonville Developmental Center, closed in 2012, have had remarkable success in their transition to the community. Watch a video about a few by visiting our website www.goinghomeillinois.org/ or read the [evaluation^{xv}](#) to learn more.

We look forward to working with your Administration toward a safe and planned closure of Choate Developmental Center.

Most sincerely,

Going Home Coalition

The [Going Home Coalition](#) is a diverse statewide network of self-advocates, families, community service providers and allies who purposefully advocate to create systems change, transition away from institutional living through increasing community capacity, and empower fair and equal choices and opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Our vision for people with disabilities in Illinois is to live in a truly individualized person-centered system with the supports and services they choose. Everyone, no matter what challenges they may face, has the right to live a full life in the community. Community is strengthened by diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Organizational Co-Signers:

1. Access Living
2. ACLU of Illinois
3. The Alliance
4. The Answer
5. The Arc of Illinois
6. The Arc of Iroquois County
7. Arts of Life
8. Association for Individual Development (AID)
9. Benefits Plus Us, LLC
10. Blue Tower Solutions

11. Butterflies for Change
12. Caring Across Generations
13. Champaign County Christian Health Center
14. Chicagoland Autism Connection
15. Chicagoland Disabled People of Color Coalition (DPOCC)
16. Don Moss and Associates
17. Easterseals Joliet Region
18. El Valor
19. Envision Unlimited
20. Garden Center Services
21. Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities (ICDD)
22. Illinois Parents of Adults with Developmental Disabilities (IPADDUnite)
23. The Institutional Rescue and Recovery Coalition (IRRC)
24. Lambs Farm
25. Livingston County Mental Health Board
26. McManus Consulting
27. New Star
28. Niswander Training and Consulting
29. Progress Center
30. Ray Graham Association
31. Riverside Foundation
32. Supporting Illinois Brothers and Sisters (S.I.B.S.) Network
33. UCP Seguin
34. Ups for Downs

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- ⁱ Department of Human Services. (2022). Choate Developmental Center Profile <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=58712>
- ⁱⁱ Department of Human Services. (2022). Overall PUNS snapshot as of 02.01.23 Available: <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=82095>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Hundsdorfer, B. (2022, March 9) Prosecutor alleges he accessed confidential documents in attempt to derail State Police investigation. *Capital News Illinois*. Retrieved from: <https://www.capitolnewsillinois.com/NEWS/administrator-of-state-run-developmentally-disabled-center-accused-of-obstructing-investigation>
- ^{iv} Hundsdorfer, B. (2022, March 14). Charges filed against man accused of abusing developmentally disabled woman at state-run facility. *Capital News Illinois*. Retrieved from: <https://www.capitolnewsillinois.com/NEWS/charges-filed-against-man-accused-of-abusing-developmentally-disabled-woman-at-state-run-facility>
- ^v McManus, E. (2022, March 17, No. 223). Legislative Session Ending - Choate Abuse Scandal - Objections to ICFDD Vax Rule. *McManus Consulting; Ed's Newsletter*. Retrieved from: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/eds-newsletter-legislative-session-ending-choate-abuse-ed-mcmanus/?trackingId=EFkWB4uquN0wx1Ux6bwSgQ%3D%3D>
- ^{vi} McManus, E. (2022, March 31). Choate Developmental Center abuse scandal timeline. *Capitolfax*, Retrieved from: [Choate Developmental Center abuse scandal timeline](https://www.capitolnewsillinois.com/NEWS/choate-developmentally-disabled-center-abuse-scandal-timeline)
- ^{vii} McManus, E. (2022, March 30). Abuse Scandal at Choate Developmental Center. *Linked In*; Retrieved from: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/abuse-scandal-choate-center-ed-mcmanus/?trackingId=4iC9NxOrJe4sbnGsRIS9zw%3D%3D>
- ^{viii} Hundsdorfer, B. (2022, March 10). Man accused of sexual misconduct with patient at state-run facility charged with child molestation in unrelated case. *Capital News Illinois*. Retrieved from: <https://capitolnewsillinois.com/NEWS/man-accused-of-sexual-misconduct-with-patient-at-state-run-facility-charged-with-child-molestation-in-unrelated-case>.
- ^{ix} Hundsdorfer, B. (2022, March 10). Man accused of sexual misconduct with patient at state-run facility charged with child molestation in unrelated case. *Capital News Illinois*. Retrieved from: <https://capitolnewsillinois.com/NEWS/man-accused-of-sexual-misconduct-with-patient-at-state-run-facility-charged-with-child-molestation-in-unrelated-case>.
- ^x Equip for Equality (2005). Clyde Choate Developmental Center: How an archaic system results in tragic consequences for people with disabilities. Available: <https://www.equipforequality.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Clyde-Choate-Developmental-Center-How-an-Archaic-System-Results-in-Tragic-Consequences-for-People-with-Disabilities.pdf>
- ^{xi} US Department of Justice (2009). Investigation of the Clyde L. Choate Developmental Center, Anna, Illinois. Retrieved 2/22/2023 from: https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2010/12/15/Choate_findlet_11-09-09.pdf.
- ^{xii} Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, RISP, Research and Training Center on Community Living, Institute on Community Integration. Retrieved from: <https://risp.umn.edu>.
- ^{xiii} Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, RISP, Research and Training Center on Community Living, Institute on Community Integration. Retrieved from: <https://risp.umn.edu>. Infographic: [FY 2018 RISP Infographics | How many people with IDD live in large state-run IDD facilities? | Institute on Community Integration Publications \(umn.edu\)](https://risp.umn.edu/infographics/fy-2018-risp-infographics-how-many-people-with-idd-live-in-large-state-run-idd-facilities-institute-on-community-integration-publications-umn.edu)
- ^{xiv} Tanis, E.S., Lulinski, A. & Wu, J., Braddock, D. & Hemp, R. (2021). The State of the States in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Psychiatry, University of Colorado. www.stateofthestates.org
- ^{xv} Vasudevan, V., Lulinski, A., Heller, T., Owen, R., Rizzolo, M.C., Spassiani, N., Schmidt, A.J., & Friedman, C. (2015). An Evaluation of the Jacksonville Developmental Center Closure. Chicago: Institute on Disability and Human Development, University of Illinois at Chicago. Retrieved: https://eppu.ahslabs.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/2017/04/jacksonville-closure_report.pdf.