

2003-04 SESSION
COMMITTEE HEARING
RECORDS

Committee Name:

Senate Committee on
Health, Children,
Families, Aging and
Long Term Care
(SC-HCFALTC)

Sample:

Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

- 03hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt01a
- 03hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt01b
- 03hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt02

➤ Appointments ... Appt

➤ **

➤ Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule

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➤ Committee Hearings ... CH

➤ **

➤ Committee Reports ... CR

➤ **

➤ Executive Sessions ... ES

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➤ 03hr_sb0057_pt02

➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc

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➤ **

Surprise! GOP lawmakers want to keep center open

2-26-03 Dawn C.
Lawmakers from around the state are criticizing a move by Governor Jim Doyle to slash more than 400 jobs at the Northern Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled in Chippewa Falls, reducing its capacity to a mere 17 beds.

"This cut is so huge, it can hardly be called 'downsizing' anymore," said Senator Dave Zien (R-Wheaton). "If Governor Doyle believes that one of the Centers has to be closed, let's have an honest discussion about it."

"What sense does it make to maintain two facilities in the southern part of the state, and close the one facility that serves the 90 percent of Wisconsin that exists north of Madison?" Zien asked.

The lawmakers say that the time may have come to stop reducing the capacity of all the state facilities and finally decide to close one of them: The Central Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled in Madison.

There are three state institutions for the developmentally disabled: Northern Center in Chippewa Falls, Central Center in Madison and Southern Center in Union Grove.

Wisconsin has endeavored in recent years to move as many patients as possible out of these state institutions and into community-based residential facilities. As populations in the

Center have dropped, it has become apparent that the state no longer needs to operate all three.

According to state Representative Jeff Wood (R-Chippewa Falls), Northern Center employees are effectively being punished by the Doyle Administration for doing their jobs too well.

"Neither of the other state centers has been as effective as Northern Center at placing resident out in their communities," said Wood. "Our facility has been the most effective in the State, and it's the only facility for people with severe developmental disabilities anywhere north of Madison, yet we're getting closed down. This is politics at its worst."

Zien, Wood and other out-state legislators will introduce the bill to close the Central Center next week. They say that, in addition to concern for maintaining services to the northern part of the state, there are also significant local economic considerations.

"Jim Doyle is quick to slash 400 state jobs in our community, where we've already lost hundreds of jobs and we can't afford to lose any more," said state Senator Dave Zien (R-Wheaton). "Madison, with an economy buoyed by 30,000 state jobs and hundreds of health care facilities, could absorb displaced health care workers much more easily."

Lawmakers;

Close Central Center;

Cadott 02-27-03
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Keep Northern Center

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Madison is home to numerous large health care facilities, such as the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics, A Veterans Administration Hospital and Mendota Mental Health Institution.

"If the Governor looked at the situation objectively," said Representative Scott Suder (R-Abbotsford), "he would keep the Southern and Northern Centers open, and

close the one in Madison. Since it's politically very difficult for him to close the facility in his home town, we're going to help him to do the right thing."


"I just wish the Governor and Secretary Nelson had consulted with the local legislators and the employees of the Northern Center to work toward a solution, instead of superseding the Legislature and making a decision unilaterally without all of the facts," added Wood. "This is an issue that has to be approached carefully with the best interest of our most vulnerable citizens as well as our taxpayers in mind."

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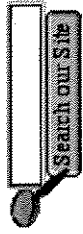
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Doyle plan would close disabled center

By **BARBARA MARTIN**
Journal staff

Advocates for people with disabilities are claiming a cautious victory in the news that Gov. Jim Doyle wants to end long-term care at the Northern Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled in Chippewa Falls.

However, they worry that the plan to downsize the center and move its estimated 150 residents into community care in their home counties could backfire if done wrong. And that, they said, could hurt efforts to close the state's other two centers for the developmentally disabled in Madison and Union Grove.

The plan already has drawn fire from state Rep. Scott Suder, R-Abbotsford, who said northern Wisconsin has been unfairly targeted and will lose hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars if the center closes. The Northern Wisconsin Center serves 52 counties.

"I agree with many portions of the governor's budget, but this is one we're going to have a fight over," Suder said. "It will be a huge economic loss to northern Wisconsin." Quality of life remains the primary issue behind any decision to move residents from the state centers, said Rep. Julie Lassa, D-Stevens Point. State and health officials need to ensure that family members' concerns about quality of life and care are addressed and that residents moved from the centers have access to the best community-based care possible, she said.

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"I think we need to look at what is best for the residents and their families," Lassa said. Community-based care often costs less than housing people with developmental disabilities in the state centers, said state Rep. Jerry Petrowski, R-Marathon. He said he plans to tour the Chippewa Falls site within a couple of weeks to get a firsthand view of the operation.

"I have to look at what is going to be beneficial for all of central Wisconsin," Petrowski said.

Suder calls for streamlining the center's operations to make it more efficient, selling about 100 acres that surround the center and sharing services such as laundry and security with a nearby prison.

"We can be more efficient at the northern center," he said. "There's no doubt about that." If one of the three centers must be closed, Suder calls for closing the central center in Madison. That way, residents would continue to be served by centers in the northern and southern parts of the state, he said.

Distance is a big concern for many families with members in the state centers, Petrowski said.

"If their loved ones are put farther away, it makes it harder to visit them," he said.

People First of Portage County supports Doyle's budget proposal that essentially would close the northern center except for short-term care, said Jed Buza. He is president of the local group that is part of a statewide organization that draws support for and from people with disabilities.

Doyle's budget plan would eliminate 150 long-term beds at the northern center by June 2004 and 300 jobs, but it would retain 20 short-term intensive treatment beds and 75 jobs. As many as 142 jobs could be transferred, along with some residents, to the central center in Madison.

The People First organization has pushed to close the state's three centers since its creation four years ago. Its efforts, along with those of other groups that advocate for people with disabilities, have been thwarted by state workers and families of residents living at the state centers who argue that the centers offer the best care for people with severe disabilities.

Portage County has been moving its residents out of the state centers gradually over the years. Three Portage County residents remain at the northern center, and they have "medically complex" or behavioral disabilities that create challenges when placing them in community settings, said Jim Canales, coordinator of Community Care of Portage County Division of Long-term Care Services.



The governor's budget proposal would increase the money that pays for community-based services to people with disabilities, which should improve the quality and quantity of care available to people who leave the center, said Dennis Harkins, state coordinator for the People Can't Wait campaign.

"The problem is, in the past, we haven't had funding available for people who need more support staff," Harkins said.

Martin can be reached at 344-6100, Ext. 2517, or at barbara.martin@cwnews.net.

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Front Page
3/4/2003 8:11:08 AM

Closing center could hurt dozens of families, employees say

Chris Vetter
Leader-Telegram Staff

CHIPPEWA FALLS -- Kim Benzschawel of Boyd says losing the Northern Center would have a vast economic impact on all of Chippewa County.

For more on this story, see today's edition of the Leader-Telegram.

Benzschawel, an employee at the Northern Center, said she knows how the loss of jobs would hurt dozens of families in the region.

In Boyd, 34 families are employed at the Northern Center, Benzschawel said. Another 84 families in Cadott have a family member working in the center.

Throughout the entire county, 206 families would be affected, she said.

"It looks really grim if they start to close us," she said.

L/SNOW



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Preliminary figures suggest closing the center could cost the Chippewa Valley \$40 million to \$55 million a year, said Rick Schafer, president of the Chippewa County Economic Development Corp.

Benzschawel was among 150 people who packed a room at the Chippewa County Courthouse on Monday, discussing ways to fight for the center's survival.

Gov. Jim Doyle announced plans last month to essentially close the Northern Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled in a cost-saving move, relocating residents into group homes or into the two remaining centers in the state.

Carolyn Wanish, a Northern Center employee, said losing the center would affect not only employees in the region, but businesses too.

For instance, Wanish said, the 178 residents at the Northern Center translates into 178 birthday cakes purchased each year at local grocery stores.

Bob Sommerfeld said his daughter, Lisa, is among the eight Chippewa County residents who live in the Northern Center.

If the center were to close, the county would be responsible for the bulk of the cost of her care, which Schafer estimated at about \$124,000.

Sommerfeld is 75. His daughter is 41 and has lived in the Northern Center since she was 18. The Sommerfelds moved to Chippewa Falls to be close to their daughter.

"We bring her home every week," Bob

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Sommerfeld said. "For the last two weeks, I've only been able to eat and breathe this (issue)."

Sommerfeld said he likely would move to whatever community his daughter were transferred to.

Schafer, who also serves on the Chippewa County Board, said the board would pass a resolution next week opposing the planned reductions and send it to the governor.

"We have a responsibility as a County Board to keep the Northern Center jobs in our community," he said.

State Rep. Jeff Wood, R-Eau Claire, said there are about 525 jobs at the center now. If Doyle's plan goes forward, the center would be scaled back to 75 workers; 300 jobs would be lost, while another 145 jobs would be transferred to the remaining centers in Madison and Union Grove.

Wood said his legislative plan that would close the central center in Madison and keep the Northern Center open.

"We're going to force the governor to the table, and at least sit down and talk about it," Wood said.

Wood disagrees with Doyle's estimates that closing the center would save the state \$2.2 million, saying the figures are inaccurate.

He encouraged the crowd to write letters to their representatives and the governor in a mass effort to save the center.

"I really think this battle will be won or lost in the

next week," Wood said.

Schafer agreed, saying the letters would help.

"The best thing we can do is slow the process down," Schafer said.

Schafer said he was impressed with the turnout and comments from the crowd.

"It's pretty obvious that the employees care about the residents and care about their jobs," Schafer said.

Vetter can be reached at 723-0303 or chris.vetter@ecpc.com.

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Jermstad, Sara

From: Driedric, Michael
Sent: Tuesday, March 04, 2003 9:53 AM
To: Jermstad, Sara
Subject: FW: Northern Wisconsin Center
 CR box...fyi not constituent
 -----Original Message-----
From: Bunny Calkins [mailto:my_bunny_mail@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 04, 2003 12:58 AM
To: Sen.Roessler@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: Northern Wisconsin Center

I am an employee of the state, a taxpayer, a voter, and a concerned resident of northern Wisconsin. I am also concerned about the "down sizing" of the Northern Center for the Developmentally Disabled. As a resident of Wisconsin shouldn't we all be given an equal opportunity to utilize state facilities? Wouldn't Wisconsin residents be best served by having facilities at both ends of the state? Wisconsin has a democratic society, we elected our Governor, Representatives, etc to serve ALL classes of people equally to preserve the best interests of our vulnerable citizens as well as the taxpayer.

The Northern Wisconsin Center (NWC) serves 90% of Wisconsin's counties at the current rate of \$29 million, the lowest of the three centers that we currently have. It has the most cost effective work schedule. The only center that has not been through the Department of Justice investigation. The employees have a 20 year track record of being the best in the state. NWC as followed the legislative mandate to place people into the community. 64% of the people placed out are from NWC. Many of the people at NWC have dual diagnosis not just developmental disabilities. These people require intensive treatment, NWC has done just that, through proactive approaches, continuity of care, and a genuine love and concern for them.

NWC also has potential, when the High View prison is opened and the Stanley prison are running services can be shared food, laundry, and medical. It would be a shame not to use what is already there. What about juvenile services, I can't imagine that those services are only needed in the southern part of the state. Rest-bit and day care for those who need special care are also possibilities. NWC could bring in services truly needed.

Try to put yourself in the shoes of those that have loved ones with special needs. Wouldn't you want to be close to them, to be able to share holidays and special occasions with your son, daughter, or sibling? Wouldn't you want to be able to see their progress first hand? If you have to plan a three, four, or five hour drive one way just to see them for an hour or two chances are you would not be able to do it as often as you like. Who benefits from that, no one. We, the staff, at NWC see our residents at their worst and at their best. We help them through the bad times and celebrate their successes. We become a part of their family. Families are important, as well as being treated equally and fairly. Please consider our plea to keep NWC alive and well. To keep northern Wisconsin alive and well.

03/04/2003

Sincerely,

Cheryl Calkins

534 S. Crestwood Ct.

Cadott, WI 54727

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Closing center will be costly

Chris Vetter

Chippewa Falls News Bureau

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County: Toll could be \$55 million

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Throughout the county, 206 families would be affected, she said.

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Wood plans to introduce legislation in the Assembly to close the Central Center in Madison and keep the Northern Center open. Similar legislation was introduced Monday in the Senate.

"We're going to force the governor to the table and at least sit down and talk about it," Wood said.

Doyle and administration officials were unavailable for comment.

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Jermstad, Sara

From: Ann Stelzer [astelzer@ecol.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 05, 2003 11:41 AM
To: Rep.Balow@legis.state.wi.us; Rep. Carpenter@legis.state.wi.us; Rep.Gard@legis.state.wi.us; Rep.Kreibich@legis.state.wi.us;
 Rep.Suder@legis.state.wi.us; Rep.Underreim@legis.state.wi.us; Sen.Jauch@legis.state.wi.us; Sen.Roessler@legis.state.wi.us;
 Sen.Zien@legis.state.wi.us; Rep.Wood@legis.state.wi.us

Subject: Closure of Northern Wisconsin Center

I am in total disgust with Secretary Helene Nelson and Governor Doyle's plan to close the Northern Wisconsin Center (NWC). In different communications from the two of them, they state that the people living at NWC are our most vulnerable and special people. But they take total disregard for these people and their best interests. They have no idea what is best for these people.

I have been employed at NWC for over 7 years now and I see each and every day the needs of the population from NWC. There is a reason that the remaining population at NWC hasn't been put in community placements. They are the extreme. The most medical needy, the most physically aggressive and the dual diagnosis (developmentally disabled & mentally ill). I also have been to alot of group homes visiting former residents and on when placing NWC people in a group home. And I guarantee you that the majority of group homes are not trained nor are they equipped to provide NWC individuals with a better life. After 30 days of placement in a group home NWC no longer follows up on these individuals. But I could give you countless stories of individuals that left NWC for group homes, that lived at NWC for years that died within weeks of being placed in a group home. I don't want to see this happen to our remaining population.

NWC has always been the class of the three institutions. Numerous times we have been told this from people within the DHFS. Our excel program (intensive treatment program), where we take in troubled DD people from the community and teach them the skills to succeed in the community, is in a class by itself. County's have raved and are amazed at how well this program works. We are limited to only 20 beds for this program. And I always felt this was the future building block for NWC. But our director never promoted the idea and now that program will die also. Which is sad because there is a true need in the communities for the excel program. We have always had a waiting list for people to get into the program. But, because we were only limited to 20 beds people had to wait or go else where.

Some of the individuals living at NWC are aware of it's possible closing and they are upset. Wondering why they have to leave the only home they have ever know or why they have to leave when they are finally some where that they feel is home. Please fight for and represent our most special people, because they aren't able to do it themselves.

Sincerely,
 Todd R. Stelzer
 23681 69th Ave.
 Cadott WI. 54727
 (715)-289-3125

03/05/2003

MAR 11 2003

Chippewa Falls, Wi 54729
March 5, 2003

Dear Senator: *Raessler*

I attended a meeting on March 3, 2003 at the Chippewa County Courthouse. Jeff Wood and a representative from Dave Zien's office as well as local business people, area chamber of commerce, county officers and employees of NC were present.

Chippewa County noted an interesting fact which I believe the county you represent may be interested in.

The funding provided by the state for the harder-to-care-for individuals still residing at NC is inadequate. While funding for community placements will increase from its current \$225 per day to \$325 per day, that is not sufficient to care for residents in the community. Chippewa County currently has 8 clients at NC. Two of these cannot be placed in the community because of safety concerns. Two will be able to be placed at the \$325 rate. The remaining four will need an additional \$124,100 a year of county funding to be placed in the community. This is a shift to county taxpayers. When all counties are included, property tax payers in the 52 counties served by the NC will share more than \$2 million more in additional property taxes. A thought to ponder – how will the placements in your county affect its funds?

Another interesting fact – closing NC would save \$2.2 million according to DHFS Secretary Helene Nelson. This is a fraction of what could be saved by closing Central Center. Central Center is located in the richest area of Madison. Property values there are among the highest in the state. The Central Center has 72 acres, DHFS has not had the land appraised. The assessed building value of Central Center is \$50 million. The NC assessed building value is \$33.2 million.

NC serves the most counties – 52 out of 72 counties in Wisconsin. Closing the NC would force some families to drive hundreds of miles to visit loved ones in the Southern part of the state.

Jeff Wood and Dave Zien are proposing a bill to close Central Center. This bill would require DHFS to terminate all services at Central Center and sell the property. The department would be required to submit a proposal to the Joint Finance Committee to spell out how it would terminate services and transfer residents and employees. The proposal also would include how it would sell the personal property and real estate of the center.

Please support this bill which is just and best supports the developmentally disabled people in Wisconsin.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Margaret Jacobson

Jermstad, Sara

From: Roessler, Carol
Sent: Thursday, March 06, 2003 7:53 AM
To: 'betbu26'
Subject: RE: Northern Center

Thank you for your email.

Due to the volume of emails I receive, I ask that all emails include a home address. This will ensure that my constituents receive the highest priority. Your assistance is greatly appreciated. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

CAROL ROESSLER

State Senator

18th Senate District

-----Original Message-----

From: betbu26 [mailto:betbu26@sysmatrix.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 05, 2003 8:02 PM
To: carol.roessler@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: Northern Center

I am writing this letter to you in the hope that you may give me some home regarding Northern Center. I understand Gov. Boyle is making a terrible mistake in closing the Center where my daughter (40 years old) has been a resident for the past 25 years!! I feel very strongly that nobody in Madison cares a hoot about the dear people that are residents at Northern and that all they DO care about is the dollar sign. Surely there must be a better answer than turning these defenseless, ill people out. Each 6 months, the guardians receive letters from the Dept. of Health and Family Services in Madison stating that the Utilization Review Board "team" requires our thoughts regarding moving our "client" to the "community". Each time such a letter is received, I answer most vehemently that I want my daughter to remain at Northern where she is loved and very well cared for by a wonderful and caring staff. The so called "team" only reads reports and they do not know the people they read about. Only once, I would like to see one of the "team" visit. Maybe then they would come to the conclusion that those clients left at the Center are not anywhere ready for a move to the community.

Jermstad, Sara

From: beibu26 [beibu26@sysmatrix.net]

Sent: Thursday, March 06, 2003 9:34 AM

To: Roessler, Carol

Subject: Northern /center

Mistakenly I believed you wanted mail sent to your home address! My address is:

Betty Buick
3718 NE 8th Pl., Apt. 204B
Ocala, Fl. 34470
(352) 694-1591

March 6, 2003

MAR 11 2003

Dear Senator Roessler:

I am a Resident Care Technician at the Northern Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled. I have worked there for thirteen years. I feel that Northern Center as a whole, is being punished for the good care we provide for our clients. It has been known for years that the Northern Center is the best of the three centers in Wisconsin. One of the reasons for this is because Central and Southern Centers have such a high staff turnover. Northern Center has many staff that have been here 30 plus years. They often time care for the same clients for many years. I would think that the clients would feel pretty secure knowing that the same staff member will be there for them every day, giving them what they need.

Group homes are another problem; staff come and go like flies. My Sister has been in several group homes. When she was 12 years old, she was diagnosed with Paranoid Schizophrenia. So my parents decided to put her in a group home instead of an institution. Staff physically and emotionally abused her. She was denied food for punishment. My parents moved her to different group homes in the area. There was one home that had a lock on the refrigerator. It was there to prevent people getting food without permission from the staff. My sister has a medical problem and she is to eat 4 to 6 small meals a day. Staff denied the extra food because they felt that it was not fair for her to eat and not the other people. Needless to say, a Medical order was necessary in order for my sister to have extra food.

After my sister had been in several group homes, the decision was made by my family to have her move into her own apartment. Our family now supervises her. I'm sure You know how I feel about Group Homes especially in the Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls area. STAY AWAY!!

My proposal is to keep Northern Wisconsin Center open and to open the Highview Geriatric prison. Northern Center can provide the laundry and food services and power plant Services. We should be using the facilities that we have available.

Sincerely,



A Northern Wisconsin Center Resident Care Technician

*Victoria Selzler
4980 174th Street
Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin
54729-9182
Telephone Number: 1-715-723-0712*

Cheryl Patten
7674 141st Street
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
(715) 726-1558

March 6, 2003

RE: Keep Open the Northern Center for the Developmentally Disabled

Dear Governor Doyle, Senators and Representative:

I am respectfully asking that you keep the Northern Center for the Developmentally Disabled open. I have worked at the center for over 19 years. I believe that the Wisconsin Legislature should take a careful look at closing the Central rather than Northern facility.

Our Northern Center may have a higher cost of care per client, but our clients have higher medical and behavioral needs than the clients at the other two centers. If the Northern Center is closed it will have a devastating impact on the workers, the northern community (which is already struggling compared with southern Wisconsin with a 6.5 compared to a 2.4 unemployment rate), and most of all, the clients and their families.

If the Central facility is closed, the State of Wisconsin will benefit greatly from the sale of the real estate on which it is located. The real estate and buildings are valued at over 50 million dollars.


Finally, consider that if you close the Northern Center, it will become harder and more costly to start up and run the Highview Geriatric Prison, which was slated to share services with the Northern Center. In the future, with the aging prison population the State will benefit greatly from the Geriatric Prison that can share services with the Northern Center.

Please do not move the jobs to southern Wisconsin, where they are not needed. Please do not disrupt the lives of countless clients that to many of us workers have become family. Remember that our clients are themselves often elderly and either have elderly immediate family or no family at all. Moving them and taking them out of a facility that they have spent their lives in, with workers who have known them for decades, is emotionally devastating, cruel and will in all likelihood be physically detrimental.

Finally, please do not make a hasty decision. Consider the intolerably high human and economic consequences of closing the Northern Center.

Support Senator Zein's and Representative Wood's bill to close the Central facility.

Respectfully,


Cheryl Patten

MAR 14 2003

March 6, 2003

Dear Senator Roessler;

I am writing as a concerned employee of 26 plus years at Northern Center. I have a few points regarding the closing of the center.

1. We have a resident population from 52 counties with many special needs that simply cannot be met in a group home setting and still receive the quality care that has been provided through staff that comes here to work and remains here for many years often until retirement, which results in consistency of care.

2. There is also the issue of the parents and guardians who visit frequently and would not be able to make the trip to Central Center, this would create an undo hardship on them. A center that is located in the southern and northern part of the state would serve everyone with less hardships on clients and parents and guardians.

3. Economically the Chippewa Valley has been already hit hard and this would only add to the problems creating more unemployment, whereas the Madison area would be able to more absorb the jobs being lost. Already strapped counties would have to raise taxes even with the increase in funding to care for clients

4. We as employees of Northern Center have a record far better than then Central or Southern when placing residents in the community, and feel losing our jobs for doing a good job is not fair or just.

5. We also have very good medical facilities in this area to handle needs that may arise.

Your time is appreciated in this matter of Northern Center, its clients, staff and community.

Thanks;
Sincerely,



Darrell Friedel
29055 Cty Hwy X
Cadott, Wi. 54727

MAR 10 2003

Virginia F. Stelter
3262 90th Street
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

March 6, 2003

Page 1

Dear Senator,

I am writing to you in regards to Governor Doyle closing down Northern Center for the Developmentally Disabled, located in Chippewa Falls.

The residents at Northern Center require a higher degree of care and we are concerned that the special needs and care of the residents can not be met in the community as they are at the center. That is unfair to them when their needs are so great. For example, the shortage of dentists willing to take Medicaid is at crisis low proportions and further more, there is a severe shortage of nurses everywhere in the state. Many of these residents require skilled nursing supervision. Closing the center will also bring hardship to the resident's families. Many have moved into this area to be close to their loved ones. Now they will have to drive hundreds of miles just to visit loved ones in the southern part of the state.

The Governor also wants to transfer the residents back to the county in which they lived prior to coming to Northern Center. In doing so, he is expecting each county to cover the cost for the residents to live in that county. The Northern Center serves 52 of the 72 counties in Wisconsin. The funding by the state for the harder to care for individuals still residing at the center is inadequate. While funding for community placements will increase from its current \$225 per day to \$325 per day, that is not sufficient to care for residents in the community. For example, Chippewa County currently has 8 clients at Northern Center. Two can not be placed in the community because of safety concerns. Two will be able to be placed at the \$325 rate. The remaining 4 will need an additional \$124,100 a year of county funding to be placed in the community. This is a shift to county taxpayers. When all counties are included, property tax payers in the 52 counties served by the Northern Center will share more than \$2 million more in additional taxes.

The cost of operating Central Center for last year was \$52.9 million all funds, compared to \$29 million for Northern Center. Further, closing the Northern Center would save \$2.2 million according to DHFS Secretary Helene Nelson. This is a fraction of what would be saved by closing Central Center. Central Center is located in the richest area in Madison – not too far from the Governor's mansion. Property values there are among the highest in the state. The assessed building value of Central Center is \$50 million, not to mention the land value. Northern Center was assessed at only \$33.2 million.

Chippewa Valley is being unfairly penalized. Closing the Northern Center would have a devastating economic impact on the Chippewa Valley. Coupled with the fact that the Highview Prison won't be opening, which is also proposed by Governor Doyle, and the brunt of downsizing will be unfairly felt in the community. With the job losses, the community will loss approximately \$40 - \$55 million a year. Dane County can better absorb displaced workers with a 2.4 percent unemployment rate as compared to 6.5 percent in Chippewa.

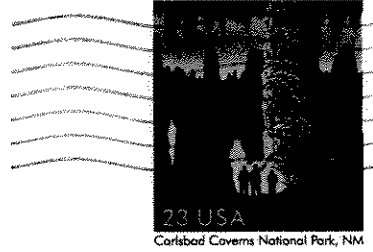
A bill has been presented to Governor Doyle to keep the Northern Center open and to close Central Center instead. We are asking for your support in this matter, so we may continue to offer services to all 52 counties.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia F. Stelter". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Virginia F. Stelter

Donald Frerking
7381 203rd St.
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729-6482



MAR 11 2003

Carol Roesler
State Capital
P.O. Box 8953
Madison, Wi.

3708+8953



Please Save our
Northern Center.
We need it in Chippewa
County.
Don + Kathy Frerking

Jermstad, Sara

From: hydro200hp@aol.com
Sent: Friday, March 07, 2003 7:04 AM
To: sen.roessler@legis.state.wi.us; rep.underheim@legis.state.wi.us; sen.robson@legis.state.wi.us; sen.jauch@legis.state.wi.us;
 sen.erpenbach@legis.state.wi.us; sen.leibham@legis.state.wi.us; sen.brown@legis.state.wi.us; rep.gielow@legis.state.wi.us;
 rep.rhoades@legis.state.wi.us
Cc: hydro200hp@aol.com
Subject: (no subject)

Dear Senators and Assembly Persons,

I am an employee of the Northern WI Center for the Developmentally Disabled. I am a Therapy Assistant-Objective. I have worked at the Center for 14 years. I live in Jeff Wood's district. My Address is: Becky Kries

13083 37th AV
 Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

I commend you all for your support. THANK YOU.

I ask that you continue to work at keeping the Center open and/or Opening the Highview Geriatric Prison. We need good jobs in the Chippewa Valley. I need mine.

Hardship and heartache are real. I have a great compassion for the people I serve. They are like my family. I provide Vocational training and Community Outings for the people I serve. I have seen many positive changes in the quality of life that these people have. It sickens me to think that when Helene Nelson made her decision, she was not thinking of the People I serve. When the people I serve move out to group homes or private adult homes, the guidelines and rules change. Vocational programming is not mandatory. Their chances of vocational opportunities and community outings decrease due to their limited number of staff and limited money they have to spend to provide these services.

I have worked with many challenged people and I have had so much success. What will the peoples' chances/opportunities be once they leave Northern Center? Very Limited. I ask you, to Ask Helene Nelson and her Client RIGHTS TEAM ... What are their rights now, as they move to another institution (CWC, SWC, less served group homes)? Will their quality of life be improved by changing their caregivers, home, environment, vocational training, recreational experiences and not to mention changing them All at the same time!!? The people have feelings and they do better with familiar/consistent caregivers.

I love the people! and yes, I need my job and my benefits. I cannot provide for my family on a group home caregivers wage (minus the benefits). Helene Nelson would like us to serve the same clientel for 1/3 the pay (benefits included).

Where will I work when its all gone? Who will be caring for the people I worked my hardest with, to give them probably some of the best quality of life (ie. being productive, increasing self esteem, providing recreational opportunities, etc.) that they could have ?

I am a Christian and I have to put my faith in God. I will survive some how... I know, but What Is the Governor's point? What is he doing to/for Us in the Chippewa Valley?

May God Bless you all, the employees at NWC and the People who live there. I'm also praying for the Governor and Ms. Nelson, that they may see the light. Thanks for Shining for Us!
Thank you!

Sincerely, Becky Kries

Jermstad, Sara

From: hydro200hp@aol.com
Sent: Friday, March 07, 2003 7:05 AM
To: sen.roessler@legis.state.wi.us; rep.underheim@legis.state.wi.us; sen.robson@legis.state.wi.us; sen.jauch@legis.state.wi.us;
sen.erpenbach@legis.state.wi.us; sen.leibham@legis.state.wi.us; sen.brown@legis.state.wi.us; rep.gielow@legis.state.wi.us;
rep.rhoades@legis.state.wi.us

Subject: (no subject)

Dear Wisconsin States Persons:

I am a retired insurance agent of Chippewa Falls. My wife and I raised our family in Chippewa Falls. While in the business, I got to know many of the folks who dedicated their working lives to the people who live at the Northern Center. We have a severe need to keep the Northern Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled open. First and foremost, the persons who live at NWC have special needs. The people who live at Northern Center can/are functioning at their maximum potential, given these services provided by Northern Center. When these services are eliminated they will lose their sense of wellbeing, self esteem and not to mention their consistent caregivers who are in fact like their family. The Northern Center meets these peoples needs!

Most of these individuals, who live at Northern Center, have lived there for their adult life. It is home. Combine their extremely challenged life with all the changes that Secretary Helene Nelson has to offer (living environment, care givers, family, vocation, recreation, medical care, etc.) and they cannot be expected to cope/adjust with this devastating, life change. It is a fact that these individuals do better with consistency. We do not want these people to be set up for failure, when they have reached astounding personal growth and productivity in their present home, Northern Center. This community needs the jobs, revenue, taxes, etc. that are provided currently through the Northern Center. The Northern WI Center is the 3rd largest employer in Chippewa Falls. If you take away 500 families' jobs, the impact on the economy in this area will suffer greatly. We have recently lost hundreds of jobs in the area: Mason Shoe, Rutledge Home, Silver Springs, Silicon Graphics Inc., etc. Eau Claire, WI is approximately 10 miles away from Chippewa Falls. In the Eau Claire Leader Telegram, Sunday March 2, 2003 edition, it states that the number of persons receiving unemployment in the Eau Claire area is 4300. This is the highest that it has been since 1991. If Northern Center closes, it will just add to the unemployment problem. The trickle down effect will hurt the local (50-mile radius) businesses, causing more hardship for many communities and ours.

The delay of opening the Highview Geriatric Prison, which was also proposed by the Governor, has to been devastating to

03/07/2003

our community. The prison is ready for prisoners. Why keep it empty and send our prisoners out of state and give the other states our jobs? Keep our money in our state and spend it wisely.

If the Governor would listen as he said he would, to alternate ways to decrease our deficit, I have ideas I'd like you to pass on to him and your colleagues. If DHFS were to terminate all services at Central Wisconsin Center instead of Northern Wisconsin Center the savings would be greater for our state budget deficit. Here is how...

Northern Center serves 52 Counties, that is 75% of the counties in WI. Central and Southern Center serve 20 counties combined, and they are both located within 50 miles of each other. In comparison of operating costs, The cost for operating Central WI Center last year was \$52.9 million all funds, compared to \$29 million for Northern Center. The number of residents at Central Center as of December 2002 was 353, and Northern Center, 174. The inpatient rate as of December 2002 was \$465 for Central Center and \$522 for Northern Center. The higher rate reflects the fact that the patients at Northern Center require a higher degree of care.

Northern Center employees have an excellent track record of caring for the individuals who live there and the employee turnover rate is extremely low at Northern Center compared to Central Center. In addition, Northern Center employees have the best community placement record in the state, which was supposed to be a mandate on all three centers. Because Northern Center employees were so efficient and effective at their jobs, they now are being punished by the state. The total population at all of the centers combined dropped 53% since 1990, from 1,671 to 792 at the end of 2002. Northern Center experienced a 64% drop in the same period, from 493 to 174- the highest of the three centers combined!

The funding provided by the state for the harder-to-care for individuals still residing at the Center is inadequate. While funding for community placements will increase from its current \$225 per day to \$325 per day, that is not sufficient to care for individuals in the community. Chippewa County currently has 8 clients at the Northern Center. Two of these people cannot be placed in the community because of safety concerns. Two will be able to be placed at the \$325 rate. The remaining 4 will need an additional \$124,100 a year of county funding to be placed in the community. This is a shift to the county taxpayers. When all counties are included, property tax payers in the 52 counties served by Northern Center will share more than \$2 million more in additional property taxes.

Northern Center has a more stable work force compared to Central Center, leading to better care and better efficiency. Central Center has a higher turnover rate of staff, so they have to stagger new employee orientation classes. Dane County can better absorb displaced workers. The job losses will be much better absorbed by a county with 2.4 % unemployment rate (Dane) compared to 6.5% unemployment rate (Chippewa).

Central Center property is more valuable for resale compared to Northern Center. Closing the Northern Center would

save \$2.2 million according to DHFS Secretary Helene Nelson. This is a fraction of what would be saved by closing Central Center. Central Center is located in the richest area of Madison... not too far from the Governor's mansion. Property values there are amongst the highest in the state. Central Center has 72 acres. DHFS has not had the land appraised. The assessed building value of Central Center is \$50 million. The Northern Center will share more that \$2 million more in additional property taxes.

Please listen to the needs of the people who live at Northern Center and to the needs of our community. The state cannot afford to make the wrong choice...to keep Central Center open and to close Northern Center. Keep the Northern Center open.

Sincerely,

Harold and Shirley Aamodt

Jermstad, Sara

From: Asbjornson, Karen
Sent: Friday, March 07, 2003 3:55 PM
To: Jermstad, Sara
Subject: FW: DAWN Alert: SB 57 hearing

Karen Asbjornson
Office of Senator Carol Roessler
(608) 266-5300/1-888-736-8720
Karen.Asbjornson@legis.state.wi.us

-----Original Message-----

From: Solie, Denise
Sent: Friday, March 07, 2003 3:23 PM
To: Asbjornson, Karen; Driedric, Michael
Subject: FW: DAWN Alert: SB 57 hearing

FYI! Received this in my email from a disabilities group that I monitor...

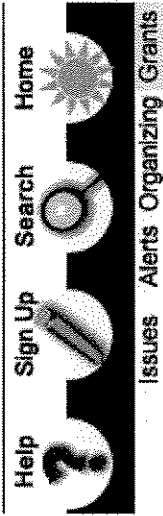
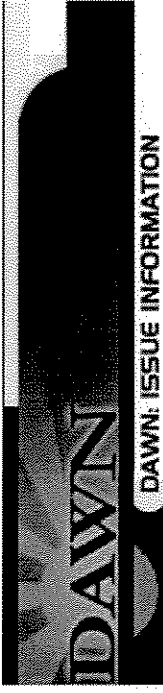
DAWN Alert: SB 57 hearing

The Senate Health, Children, Families, Aging and Long Term Care Committee will have a hearing on SB 57 at 1:00 pm on Tuesday, March 11, 2003. The hearing will be held in Room 411-South in the State Capitol. This bill proposes to close Central Center for the Developmentally Disabled, while keeping Northern and Southern Centers open. This bill would allow also for the placement of children under 22 years of age at Northern and Southern Centers.

The governor's budget includes a proposal to downsize Northern Center while keeping Central and Southern Centers open. His proposal has generated much discussion in the geographical area surrounding Northern Center. This bill is being proposed due to constituent's economic concerns for the Northern Center area. To read more about this bill including a list of talking points, go to the DAWN website at: <http://www.dawninfo.org/advocacy/leg/intro_leg.cfm>.

The Committee is accepting public testimony at the hearing. It is also accepting written testimony. Written testimony should be sent to the Committee Chairperson, Sen. Carol Roessler, Room 8 South, State Capitol, P.O. Box 7882, Madison, WI 53707-7882.

Come to the People Can't Wait budget rally on April 23, 2003 in Madison at Noon at the State Capitol.



Advocacy Info:

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- Overview

■ Talking Points for SB 57 hearing:

The Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities supports closing two of the State Centers for the Developmentally Disabled and Central Center could be one of the two, but Northern Center is the logical first choice for closure because of the following:

- Department of Health and Family Services staff and Northern Center staff have identified a higher percentage of people at Northern Center than the other Centers as being able to be supported in the community at the current rate.
- Capacity for supporting residents from Northern Center in the community is higher in the northern part of the state than other parts of the state. (Residents are from many counties rather than just a few, responsibility is spread over many counties, capacity of counties to develop relocation plans would be higher, etc.)
- Northern and Southern Centers are not equipped/able to admit children.
- School districts around Northern and Southern Centers are not able to educate the influx of children transferred to Northern or Southern from Central Center.
- Medical staff and equipment are located at Central Center; this would be costly to relocate.
- Northern Center has the highest rates because of overhead costs associated with having the fewest number of residents; it makes economic sense to downsize it.

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The Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities
600 Williamson Street
P.O. Box 7851, Madison, WI 53707-7851
608/266-7826

TTY/TDD 608/266-6660 **Fax:** 608/267-3906
E-Mail: wiswcdd@dhfs.state.wi.us

Website Problems or Questions to craig@4handgoal.com

Jermstad, Sara

Subject: FW: 2003 Senate Bill 57

Importance: High

-----Original Message-----

From: Sheri Hartzheim [mailto:shartzheim@Banta.com]

Sent: Friday, March 07, 2003 4:21 PM

To: 'sen.roessler@legis.state.wi.us'

Subject: FW: 2003 Senate Bill 57

Importance: High

Senator Roessler,

Please see my letter below. In addition to it, I would like to add:

Please submit my e-mail letter as a written testimony at the hearing Tuesday March 11, 2003 for Senate Bill 57. I would like my letter to be read at this hearing to the committee for SB 57.

I have also sent e-mail letters to the Senators on your committee regarding this issue.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sheri S. Hartzheim

-----Original Message-----

From: Sheri Hartzheim

Sent: Friday, March 07, 2003 2:53 PM

To: 'sen.roessler@legis.state.wi.us'

Cc: Mom and Dad Hartzheim (E-mail); Mom Hartzheim (E-mail)

Subject: 2003 Senate Bill 57

Importance: High

Dear Senator Roessler,

I am writing to you as a concerned relative of a resident at the Central Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled. I am strongly opposed to

Senate Bill 57 and ask that the Committee on Health, Children, Families, Aging and Long Term Care and you, as Chairperson, consider the information contained in this letter.

This bill, as you know, proposes the closing of the Central Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled (CWC). I cannot imagine the life that my sister-in-law, Missy Hartzheim, would have should the CWC close and her home be lost. Missy has spent many years at CWC and has had the care and attention that she's needed from the professionals there. Before her move to CWC, her continual grand mal seizures (as many as 24 a day) made living in her family's home impossible. Try as they did (with countless hours of volunteer assistance from family, friends and neighbors in Winneconne, WI), Missy's family could no longer give her the continual care and medical attention she needed in their home. It was a heart-wrenching decision for her parents to make; but Missy NEEDED CWC in order to LIVE, not just for a semblance of well-being. Without the CWC, Missy would no doubt have received sub-par care living in a less safe facility or even died in her family home.

Governor Doyle's 2003 budget proposes the closing of the Northern Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled (NWC). It is my assumption that Governor Doyle does not like the idea of displacing ANY of the developmentally disabled in the state of Wisconsin. However, since his budget calls for the closing of that facility, I assume that he and his staff also put much thought into the ramifications of closing any one of the three Wisconsin Centers for the Developmentally Disabled and have a proposal for how to care for those displaced by his proposal (those currently residing in the NWC in Chippewa Falls, WI).

In my research, I have found two significant items I would like to point out to you. First, the CWC is a larger facility, containing 477 licensed beds (versus the 260 offered by the NWC). Thus, fewer displacements of residents would occur with the closing of NWC than with the proposed closing of CWC in Senate Bill 57. As I'm sure that you can imagine, this will not be an easy process for those residents and their families; but both the emotional and the financial impact to 260 residents (and their families) versus the same impact on 477 residents (and their families) is no doubt less. I have great empathy for those who will be displaced. But I know that fewer families will have to experience the difficulties of such a move if the NWC is closed rather than the CWC.

You may think that closing the larger facility (CWC) would be beneficial to the Wisconsin since it would seemingly save the state money in these times of state budget crises. However, I assure you that the costs of closing the larger facility would, in fact, be greater -- both in terms dollars needed to transfer those displaced out of a state facility into group homes or elsewhere and the lives affected by such a facility closure. And those like Missy, who cannot in any way be placed in a group home (or the like) due to her seizure disorders and other profound medical needs, will still need a medical facility like CWC for long-term care.

Second, I cite the 2001 Consumer Information Reports for Facilities for the Developmentally Disabled (FDD) when I state that the NWC had a greater number of federal regulation deficiencies and a greater number of federal building safety violations than the CWC. Granted, both facilities' violations were BELOW the statewide averages for federal regulation deficiencies and building safety violations (-- kudos to the operations management of these state-owned facilities!). However, here are the numbers in comparison:

	Federal Regulation Deficiencies	Federal Building Safety Violations
CWC	3	2
NWC	5	14

It is apparent to me from these statistics that the NWC is not as safe or as well-run as the CWC. Thus, I agree with the Governor's budget proposal in this matter and hope that you, too, will see that the proposal to close the NWC is better for the RESIDENTS AND FAMILIES and for ALL state of Wisconsin residents than the closing of CWC. A decision to close any of these facilities is a weighty one, no doubt. But I hope you keep this letter in mind when you and your committee consider Senate Bill 57 and when the Senate votes on this bill..... and I hope you vote NO.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Sheri S. Hartzheim
1053 Tayco Street
Menasha, WI 54952

Jermstad, Sara

Subject: FW: Vote to KILL Senate Bill 57

-----Original Message-----

From: rick@accratec.com [mailto:rick@accratec.com]

Posted At: Friday, March 07, 2003 5:13 PM

Posted To: Sen.Roessler

Conversation: Vote to KILL Senate Bill 57

Subject: Vote to KILL Senate Bill 57

Dear Senator Roessler,

Please submit my written letter as written testimony at the hearing Tuesday March 11, 2003 for Senate Bill 57. I would like my letter to be read at this hearing to the committee for SB 57.

I am writing to you to ask that you vote AGAINST Senate Bill 57 which proposes the closing of the Central Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled (CWC). My sister has lived at CWC for the past 35 years. In addition to being severely and profoundly retarded, Missy suffers from very extensive medical problems, including but not limited to frequent grand mall seizures. She requires the kind of 24 hour hospitalization that can only be found at CWC.

Over the past 30 years, the state has dramatically cut the size and scope of the facilities devoted to the care of the developmentally disabled. Many patients were transferred to group homes and other such facilities. Only those with the most profound medical needs have remained in the care of the three Wisconsin Centers. Virtually everyone that could possibly be shipped elsewhere has already been moved out. Those who still live at CWC are not merely special ed students with low IQ's. They are for the most part physically and mentally disabled in a literal medical sense. They can not be cared for in group homes or the homes of their families. There are no alternatives for the residents of the CWC.

I strongly support many of the budget cuts that have been proposed. However, the closing of CWC can not be considered purely in monetary terms. This is not a debate about whether some UW extension "needs" new bleachers for the football field or if Menasha "needs" marble floors in their new library. This is a decision that will literally determine the very health and possibly survival of hundreds of people.

I believe that it is the fundamental responsibility of the State to care for those who can not care for themselves. I trust that you will do the right thing and vote to KILL Senate Bill 57.

Thank you,

Rick Hartzheim
1053 Tayco Street
Menasha, WI 54952
rick@accratec.com

03/11/2003

MAR 14 2003

1605 Deerfield Road
Eau Claire, WI 54701
March 7, 2003

As a state employee working at Northern Wisconsin Center this has been some very stressful few weeks.

Not only will I be losing my job with all the benefits that go with it I am also very concerned about the people that I take care of every day. They are very special people that have many difficult problems be it medical or behavioral. We at Northern Center have worked with these people for many years and have gotten to know them as if they were our own family. We can tell when things are bothering them and when they feel pain and discomfort. They know us and rely on us to help them and understand their needs.

We take these special people into our homes to meet our families and to play with our pets. We take them to movies, dancing, concerts, shopping and out to eat, We take them on picnics and on boat rides. They have been camping and some even got to go to Wisconsin Dells this last summer. Some were even able to attend Country Fest in Cadott. If one of our people should leave and they see the staff years later they remember us with a big hug. This I think proves that they rely on us.

Northern Center serves 52 counties Many of these counties do not have the resources to place these people. The funding has been increased for the community placements but this will not cover all the costs for our people. This cost will have to be provided by higher property taxes. The operating cost at Northern Center is higher than the other institutions but I feel that that reflects the fact that our people require a higher degree of care. We have nursing and therapy staff on grounds and a Dentist and Doctors. In the community these people will have to be driven all over and that not a good thing when they are sick.

Northern Center has the most stable workforce of all the institutions in WI. This means that they probably have more efficient care at NWC. With the unemployment rate in the Chippewa Valley at 6.2% it will be very difficult to find other jobs. There certainly will not be any state jobs here. Dane County has an unemployment rate of 2.6% so they will be better able to absorb the workers.

The states that have closed their institutions have found that it has not been a good solution. The cost has become higher in the community and the special people have not benefited from it at all.

Please reconsider the closing of Northern Center. The DD/MR people need us and the community needs the jobs!

Fran Schneider



MAR 14 2003

March 7, 2003

Dear Senator Roessler:

I have been an RCT at Northern Center for the past 24 yr. And would like your help in keeping it open. I am concerned about what will happen to our people. Most of the people left here are severely handicapped or have very bad behaviors. A lot of group homes do not have enough staff to handle either, nor do they provide 24 hr. nursing care and most staff in-group homes have very little training. We are all required to be C N A's and have on-going training all year.

I would like you to back Rep. Jeff Wood when he introduces his bill to close Central Center instead of Northern. Here at Northern, we have a stable workforce who leads to better care and efficiency. Central has a high turnover rate and always have new employees in orientation. We also serve the most counties in Wisconsin and if Northern would close, parents and guardians would have to drive hundreds of miles to visit their loved ones.

Northern Center has also worked hard to place people in the community, which all three centers were supposed to do, but Northern has placed the most and now because our population is so low, it seems that we are being punished for doing a good job.

Closing the Northern Center would have a devastating economic impact on the Chippewa Valley because of all the lay-off and businesses closing in the area. There are very few state jobs to transfer to in this area. Dane County has a lower unemployment rate and there are many state jobs in Dane County for employees of Central to transfer to.

Hopefully the Governor Doyle will take this proposal as an alternative to closing Northern Center and I hope that you would back this proposal too.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Boya
425 N. Main
Cadott, WI 54727

March 7, 2003

MAR 14 2003

Northern Wisconsin Center has been my place of employment for the past 13 years. During this time I have worked with the same group of residents and have come to know them and their needs. I have also met many of their families.

Since the Governor's announcement of downsizing NWC, I have attended several meetings, read many articles, listened to the news and participated in many discussions concerning this issue and the effects it will have.

Factors concerning this issue like the past success NWC has had with community placements, the low turnover rate of employees, the devastating effect on the economy of Chippewa Valley and surrounding communities, the lack of jobs available in this area, the degree of care needed for the remaining residents at NWC, and the hardships this would place on families of residents all need to be considered thoughtfully and by consulting with caregivers, other support staff, and families of these residents.

Our local legislators have my full support.

Sincerely,
Carlee Becker
Resident Care Technician

Jermstad, Sara

From: Becky Nichols [edsville@discover-net.net]
Sent: Saturday, March 08, 2003 7:07 PM
To: Sen.Roessler@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: Fw: Reasons to keep Northern Center open

-----Original Message-----

From: Becky Nichols <edsville@discover-net.net> <Becky Nichols <edsville@discover-net.net>>
To: Sen.Meyer@legis.state.wi.us <Sen.Meyer@legis.state.wi.us>
Date: Saturday, March 08, 2003 6:56 PM
Subject: Reasons to keep Northern Center open

Dear Legislator,

I am an employee of NWC asking for your support in the effort to save NWC.

As you may know, Governor Doyle and Sec. of the DHFS, Helene Nelson recently issued a directive which would significantly downsize the NWC and end long term residential services. As a result of this decision, parents and guardians would have to travel to southern Wi. causing a hardship on the parents and guardians in the Northern part of the state. NWC serves 52 of the 72 counties in the state of Wi.

150 beds will be eliminated, and about 450 people will lose their jobs. The impact on the Chippewa Valley will be economically devastating. An estimated \$44-55 million dollars will be lost to the community.

The local Legislators have submitted a counter proposal to close Central Center in Madison instead of NWC. The Central Center property is more valuable than NWC property. According to Sec. Nelson, the state could save 2.2 million dollars by closing NWC. This is only a fraction what Central Center property is worth. Dane county can better absorb displaced workers. Dane city has 2.5 percent unemployment rate compared to 6.5 in Chippewa Cty. Sec. Nelson has retained 142 positions to take care of the additional residents transferred to Central. Therefore Dane City receives an additional 142 jobs, and Chippewa Cty loses over 400. Not exactly fair is it!!!

In closing, I urge you to please support us in our efforts to save the homes of the people we care for and our jobs. Thankyou for your time.

Sincerely,

Peggy L Nichols
N15740 Koser Ave.
Thorp, Wi.

03/10/2003

Senator Rössler

MAR 14 2003

3-5-03

I am an employee at Northern Wisconsin Center, my livelihood depends upon my job. My husband has been unemployed since the Cornell paper mill went down, so just there you can see jobs are not easy to come by in this area. The NWC supports a lot of businesses in the Chippewa Valley, but I guess you know that. I also have a daughter with a GPA of 3.92 that in the near future would like to go to college. How do you tell her, that's not possible? Now I'll get to the people who reside at NWC. If you ask and they could speak, was not their wish to be born as they are. So by moving them to a strange place & surroundings would be devastating to them, but they can't voice their opinion. So we employees are trying to tell you, please keep the NWC open. We tried to keep this short and to the point.

Thank You

Loni Ramminger
24711 CHWY CC
CORNEU, WI 54732

March 8, 2003

MAR 13 2003

Senator Roessler,

I am writing in regards to Governor Doyle's proposed downsizing/closing of Northern Wisconsin Center. I have been an employee at NWC for 23 years and I truly believe closing/downsizing the center would be a terrible injustice to our people who live there, and to the people of Wisconsin.

Our Developmentally Disabled people who have lived at the centers over the years have had many different levels of disabilities ranging from very mild to extremely severe medical and behavioral problems. Some of our people have been able to benefit by moving to the community. Usually these people were not the severely disabled. Most of the residents who live at NWC now either have severe behavioral problems or severe medical problems. The level of care and number of trained staff it takes to provide this care makes it very hard to safely place them in the community. At NWC all of our residents get active treatment throughout every day. Some of the activities include; training in daily living skills, getting out to workshops and recreational areas, getting out into the community on outings (shopping, picnics, out to eat, going to the fair, horse drawn wagon rides, pontoon rides, sports events, and more), and going to special events presented on grounds such as dances a circus and holiday parties. If these people are placed in group homes will they still receive the same amount of active treatment that they get now? Will there truly be enough trained staff available to keep them safe 24 hours a day? What kind of training do the people who work in group homes have? Do you realize how severe some of their behaviors really are? Please think about this.

As you think about all of the issues involved in this downsizing/closing please keep this at the very top of your thoughts. The developmentally disabled, no matter what their level of ability is, are very special people, not just dollars and cents on some sheet of paper. I think this is hard to remember sometimes when you do not see the actual people. If you could see the smile they have when they are told they did a "good job", or the laugh when they pull a trick on you, or sit with them when they are sick, or hold their hand as they die from a disease like cancer, maybe then you could really understand what special people they are. These same people, who are mostly older people, are being told the home they have known most of their life is being taken away from them. That they will no longer be living with the same people they have spent most of their life with. That they will no longer be spending time with the staff that they have cared for and that have cared for them for so many years. And that most of them will now live even farther away from their parents and families, and probably won't be able to see them near as often as they do now. Do you really think this is the CHOICE they would make? I don't!

A few years ago all three centers were mandated to downsize, NWC has the best record (highest percent placed) of all three centers and now we are being punished for it. Part of our higher cost per resident comes from the fact that the residents we have left require a higher level of care. Because we placed more people out into the community that didn't need the higher level of care, we now can not average those in to help decrease the cost per person, as the other two centers can. So if we had kept 200 more residents we could be running at a lower cost per person also, but of course the state would be paying that price for 200 more people than it would need to. If you look at it that way NWC has already been saving the state money, compared to the other centers.

If we have done our job and done it better than the others why are we being penalized? The Chippewa Valley has already been hit hard with raising unemployment. And now with the governor wanting to get rid of 450 more jobs at NWC, and not opening the geriatric prison preventing another 300 jobs that we had been promised, he is proposing cutting out 750 jobs from the Chippewa Valley. Some reports are trying to say only 300 people will be losing their jobs because reportedly there will be 142 jobs available in Madison at Central center. But the reality is there are 525 jobs here now and supposedly NWC will be downsized to 75 employees, that means 450 people will no longer be working here in the Chippewa Valley. Chippewa County has studied the financial impact and figures closing NWC will cost the county 40 - 55 million dollars a year. Other counties will also be effected financially, but just haven't realized it yet.

The Governor said to come up with alternatives well here is a couple. First off he said we must all bear the burden of the budget shortfall, so why not have all state employees mandated to take 5 "zero days", that is five days off, in a years time, with no pay. I don't know the numbers but it would sure have to help some. Then the other alternative would be to close Central Center instead of Northern Center and sell the land CWC is on. I think this is a proposal legislators from the Chippewa Valley have or will be making. Please look that proposal over carefully and really consider it. The Northern half of the state is still part of Wisconsin and does deserve a fair chance at having these jobs stay in our area.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Please look at all aspects of it, not just the fact that the Governor thinks this would be best because someone who only had her job for 6 weeks chooses to close the one farthest away.

Sincerely,

Jo Gerrits

Mrs. Jo Gerrits
126 Reynolds St.
Boyd, WI 54726

MAR 10 2003

1748 113th Street
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
March 8, 2003

Dear *Senator Roesser*

I have worked at Northern Center for 12 years. Some people think 12 years is a long time at one job. Twelve years is just a sprinkle in a down pour at NC. My mom retired from NC after 32 years of service. Northern Center has been good for my family and the Chippewa valley. After more than 100 years, Governor Doyle has elected to close NC. Closing NC would have a devastating economic impact on the Chippewa Valley.

The people who work at NC are good at what they do. There was an article in the Chippewa paper that insinuated the people who live at NC don't laugh. Staff were devastated. People truly do have a good time. They experience home cooked meals, dances, bowling, horse back riding, the circus, fair, day camp at Lake Wissota's Camp Kenwood with bon fires, smores, camp fire songs, pontoon rides and arts and crafts. There are birthday parties, holiday celebrations and so much more.

Is working at NC all a bed of roses? Of course not. Recently, I was bit and hit in the same day. I was lucky, the bite didn't break my skin but it did hurt. The physical pain wasn't as bad as the pain my feelings experienced. I care for the people who live at NC and want only the best for them.

I am asking you to back Dave Zien's and Jeff Wood's proposal to keep NC open and close Central Center. If the goal of closing NC is to help decrease the deficit, millions of dollars more could be saved by closing Central. The job losses would be much better absorbed by a county with a 2.4 % unemployment rate(Dane) compared to 6.5% unemployment rate (Chippewa). Chippewa's unemployment rate is about to increase because Mason Shoe is also closing it's doors.

Please support Dave's and Jeff's proposal. It benefits the Chippewa Valley; it benefits Wisconsin.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Schamberger

Susan Schamberger

Jermstad, Sara

From: Allen Loew [loewland@bloomer.net]
Sent: Sunday, March 09, 2003 10:01 AM
To: sen.roessler@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: re: SB 57

Senator Roesler,

It has come to my attention too late for me to send a letter regarding SB 57, and I really wanted the opportunity to offer my comments.

I am the parent of a young woman who will soon be 26 years old, we were told when she was born that she should be placed at the "Center". She now (in spite of developmental delays and chronic health conditions) works in the community, and enjoys many recreational activities. We have also become guardians for a woman who was placed in the community from Northern Center, we fought her placement, we were concerned about her ability to cope with new environment, (she is blind, deaf, severely developmentally disabled and her health is precarious) she is doing so very well, and smiles most days, although she does have days where she is a challenge.

Many of the residents at the Northern Center have not had a lengthy opportunity to "fit in", most have been institutionalized for their entire life, with no chance for appeal. They learn from each other, because regardless of training you learn from your surroundings. It will be difficult for those employed there to find jobs, because they are used to a standard of pay that is above the average for this area, they also have health insurance and other benefits that exceed those who are similarly employed.

My concern with closing Central Center is as follows: Central Center has long been a facility that will do evaluations for a variety of medical and behavioral problems being experienced by young children across the state. Their clients have a greater risk of their health if they are placed out in the community, and a greater risk of failure. I don't know of the population that would then be placed back into their communities (how many would Chippewa, Eau Claire and Dunn Counties be placing in their communities)?

I find it difficult to balance the cost of the "Centers" in general, when I look at the needs of some of the citizens within the community. How families balance within their means, when many are losing jobs, and lack of health insurance. They are also looking for support within their community, and it is not addressed, instead we are

03/10/2003

looking for a few who want to be maintained at their present status at the cost of those who are doing one heck of a job caring for their families within their homes. Opportunity for change is now, maybe it would be a start to downsizing all of the "Centers" with those most able to have their opportunity for "appeal".

I would not have the chance to be heard, if it weren't for your e-mail.

Thank You,

Donna Loew

3672 125thAv

Colfax, WI. 54730

(715) 568-1732

Donna Loew

loewland@bloomer.net