



Statement from The Arc of Illinois on Governor's announcement regarding Choate Developmental Center

March 8, 2023

The Arc of Illinois applauds [today's announcement](#) from Governor Pritzker regarding the repurposing of Choate Developmental Center located in Anna, IL.

Numerous [media reports](#) have illustrated that the issues at Choate [reported by Equip for Equality](#) in 2005, and the [US Department of Justice](#) (DOJ) in 2009, have not ceased.

Contrary to national trends, Illinois has failed to prioritize the transition of state operated developmental center (SODC) residents to community-based services. Seventeen states and the District of Columbia no longer fund state operated institutions for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.ⁱ

"All people with I/DD deserve opportunities to live, work, and thrive in the least restrictive setting of their choosing. IDHS is grateful to all of our partners ... for working with us in good faith to build a system that better supports person-first, community-focused care for all people with disabilities," said Grace B. Hou, Secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services.

The comprehensive plan includes:

- Repurposing the Choate Mental Health and Developmental Center ("Choate") over three years in partnership with the SIU School of Medicine, and
- Implementing new safety enhancements at Choate and across all State-Operated Developmental Centers including appointing a Chief Resident Safety Officer, and
- Expanding support for families and individuals to pursue opportunities for community-based living while continuing to invest in provider capacity.

“While resident transitions will initially focus on Choate, IDHS will work to expand its emphasis on community-based settings across the developmental health system. With the investments included in Governor Pritzker's FY24 budget proposal, IDHS will have increased funding to the Home and Community-Based System by \$800 million. This brings total funding to \$1.7 billion, nearly double from when the Governor took office. In the years ahead, IDHS will work to further expand community-based capacity which will result in a lowered resident headcount and improved staffing ratios at State developmental centers.”

The Arc of Illinois looks forward to partnering with DDD/DHS to support the safe and thoughtful transition of Choate residents into the most appropriate and least restrictive settings. **Further, we continue to support increased funding to assure that the community system has the capacity to support all people with IDD in the communities of their choosing, particularly those with high medical and behavioral/mental support needs.** This increased funding is especially critical as we continue to manage the current [staffing crisis](#) which has resulted in a 25% direct support professional vacancy rate, closure of residential settings, an inability for community-based agencies to support new admissions, and additional stress on people with IDD and their families.

--- Amie Lulinski, PhD, Executive Director

ⁱ Larson, S.A., Neidorf, J., Pettingell, S., Sowers, M. (2022). Long-term supports and services for persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities: Status and trends through 2019. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Research and Training Center on Community Living, Institute on Community Integration. 10.13140/RG.2.2.23116.08320. Available: https://icis.umn.edu/files/y_7tYyJDmn/risp_2019_v6