

July 17, 2023

Tonya Piephoff, Director
Illinois Department of Human Services – Division of Developmental Disabilities
Alton Mental Health Center
4500 College Avenue
Alton, IL 62002

Dear Director Piephoff,

The Association of Mental Health Authorities of IL (ACMHAI) offers support to a growing number of local [behavioral health](#) and [developmental disabilities](#) authorities across the state of Illinois, to meet the challenges and to mobilize the strengths unique to public trust fund boards-and to assist them fulfilling their statutory obligations to their communities by improving behavioral health, substance use disorder, and intellectual and developmental disability services, requiring not only sensitivity to local resources, priorities, and needs but also understanding of the operating environment. As this larger context is under the control of state and federal government agencies and policy makers, we stay abreast of issues.

In regard to the State Developmental Centers, we are appalled at the reports of abuse, cover-up, life threatening mistakes, and the 45% increase in allegations. These people who just happen to live at these Developmental Centers deserve to have a comfortable living environment, be treated with respect, have trained and caring staff, and not be punished for behavior that they might exhibit. Training, support, activities, and people who actually care about them are what they need! The environment at any of these seven Developmental Centers is determined by the integrity, honesty, and leadership by means of the Administration in these Centers. The buck stops at their desk. Something must be done at the leadership level, to assure that all staff are trained appropriately on all aspects of supporting people with IDD, their care, appropriate behavior support plans, reporting incidents, and especially compassion.

We are seeking a written response from the Division on plans to address this urgent matter. If you would like to speak to our members directly, we would be happy to arrange a virtual meeting with our membership.

Please feel free to reach out to ACMHAI State Coordinator, Jodi Dart at 217-306-5823 or jdart@acmhai.org with any questions.

Respectfully,

Lynn Canfield, ACMHAI President
Champaign County Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Boards

Christine Myers, ACMHAI I/DD Committee Chair
Livingston County Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Boards

Jodi Dart
ACMHAI State Coordinator