

We understand that you are looking for input about local services.

Our daughter has a developmental delay, and receives services from Bollinger Enterprises, Inc., the local sheltered employment facility in Warren, along with a small amount of support money which we use for respite care.

Our daughter currently lives with us. She is 28 years old. We expect that a time will come that we must find other living arrangements for her. We have been learning a little about the residential alternatives.

As we are exploring this new landscape, some things seem to be problematic for us:

We understand that family members cannot be paid for care, or for residential housing costs. Our daughter has many cousins, and some of them may be in a position to provide care in their homes in the future. Would they be eligible for reimbursement?

It seems to us that living with family members who have a long term commitment to the emotional and physical well being of the consumer would be a much better situation than working with the low paid care givers that might be willing to work in that industry. Maybe that is just a generalization, but it concerns us. Quality of care is important, and sometimes there can be breakdowns.

Our daughter will probably need some sort of support structure to live independently, and sharing an apartment or house with others may be her least restrictive environment. She may not need full group home care, but needs someone to look after her from time to time.

In related topic: I am a volunteer for the local Special Olympics program. We are in a rural area, and we struggle with transportation for our athletes who are often housed in group homes. Group home supervisors will not always be able to bring their residents to an event, if the entire house does not want to participate, or if one individual is ill, and cannot go out. The coverage is so thin that there is no way they can provide the activity for those who want to participate. We believe that the Special Olympics program offers a recreational and social opportunity that is of high quality, and adds to the quality of life for many individuals, particularly those in group homes. We think that there ought to be a way that the residential program can more fully support residents' participation.

Hope this helps. Sorry to be late.

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