

Testimony prepared by Pamela J. Neibuhr, a family member of a nursing home resident, and read at the public forum by Sally Petrone, State Long Term Care Ombudsman

Jamie, I don't really see where this has anything to do with Cori. She is not elderly. **(Which by the way is part of the whole problem.)** But here is my two cents, three or four.

This whole conference is geared towards the elderly. When I was a child it may have been appropriate. People went to nursing home to die. With today's medical advances and technology more and more of the younger population are surviving. Yeah! The doctor rushes in, saves a life, not thinking about what that LIFE is going to be like, such as my daughter.

Cori is 32 years old. She is a spastic quad with a severe closed head injury. She only has the use of one arm. Due to cutbacks in funding she was forced into a nursing home after six years. She requires 24 hour a day care. It takes two people to transfer her, sometimes three. She is wheelchair bound and cannot do anything for herself. She can't even see good enough to read a phone book. She does not belong at home because there is not enough care. She cannot be left alone and if she was, I would be accused of neglect and abuse. But that is where the State of Illinois put us.

Now the nursing home is trying to force her out. Why? Because she doesn't belong there, so the staff says. She is too young and requires too much care.

She had a recent visit at the ER. Another resident punched her in the face. Imagine my dismay at the nursing home requesting a psych evaluation when she was the one who was attacked. Oh yes, I forgot, if the resident is deemed a danger to themselves or others they can evict her. Luckily for us she was deemed to be safe to herself and others.

I wept as she asked the doctor, "Where do I belong? I can't be at home with no help and they tell me I don't belong in the nursing home because I am too young. Please tell me where do I belong?" The doctor could not answer, but later suggested I get her out for her own safety. Possibly a group home **that doesn't exist.**

I don't have the answers so I will tell you what my daughter has to say, and this is in her own misspelled words.

"The state needs to open group homes for young people with head injury that can function in everyday life with some assistance."

A fifth grader can do the math. It would be more cost effective to help fund the group homes than it is to warehouse people in nursing homes. You can't cut funding, force people into nursing homes, then not pay the nursing homes, who by the way are trying to force the people back out into the community with no funding

because the State cut the budget. And by the way, the nursing homes are treading in dangerous water. Putting someone out in an apartment without help, in my daughters condition would kill her. Who will take responsibility for that?

If anyone at this conference can tell me just where my 32 year old adult disabled daughter belongs, I would greatly appreciate it. We are not asking for a free ride, even though my daughter is in a nursing home I still spend anywhere from \$200-\$500 a month making sure her needs are met because she just can't seem to get that care she needs.

Can you image a nursing home asking ME to hire someone to spend time with Cori every day because they don't have the resources! That is exactly what happened.

Pamela J. Neibuhr

Mother to Cori R. Neibuhr, 32 years old, MVA 01/31/1997