



New Jersey
Department of Human Services
Division of Developmental Disabilities

Report to the New Jersey Joint Budget Oversight Committee on the closure of North Jersey Developmental Center and Woodbridge Developmental Center

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Introduction

Pursuant to P.L. 2011, c. 143, an independent “Task Force on the Closure of State Developmental Centers” (Task Force) was established. The Task Force, comprised of appointments made by the Governor, Senate President and Assembly Speaker, was instructed to perform a comprehensive evaluation of all of the Developmental Centers (DCs) and provide binding recommendations for the closure of one or more. In August 2012, the Task Force recommended the closure of North Jersey Developmental Center (NJDC) followed by Woodbridge Developmental Center (WDBR), within five years.

A subsequent Blueprint for the Closure of North Jersey Developmental Center and Woodbridge Developmental Center was published in March 2014. That document described the activities undertaken by DHS to close North Jersey Developmental Center by July 1, 2014; and Woodbridge Developmental Center by January 1, 2015. Actual closure dates varied slightly based on the conclusion of the pertinent pay period.

This document is provided to the Joint Budget Oversight Committee as a summary of the North Jersey and Woodbridge Developmental Centers’ closures.

North Jersey Developmental Center

Public Hearing

Per N.J.S.A. 30:1-7.4, whenever a facility is to be closed or services privatized that shall result in the abolition of 100 or more non-vacant full time positions a public hearing must be held with adequate notification. This is to allow the citizenship an opportunity to provide testimony on the topic.

The public hearing pertaining to the NJDC closure was held on May 16, 2014 from 10am to 1pm at the Morris County Public Safety Training Academy located at 500 West Hanover Avenue in Parsippany. Notice of the hearing was published on the Division's web page. Additionally, the notice was published in the Star Ledger and Bergen Record on May 5, 2014. CART services and sign language interpreters were offered.

Three individuals attended the hearing and provided testimony. All testimony was positive on the closure:

- Testimony from two trade organizations was provided that spoke positively on the closure of the developmental center. They expressed the ability of community providers to safely serve individuals moving out of developmental centers to community settings. Reference to national trends moving away from reliance on large institutional settings was also included.
- An agency that provides community supports and services provided testimony which told the story of a woman that it served who moved out of a developmental center in the 1980's. It was described how the movement of this individual brought her family closer together and presented an opportunity to re-connect past relationships.

Overview of Resident Movement

The closure plan for NJDC began in August 2012 following the binding recommendations submitted by the Task Force for the Closure of Developmental Centers and culminated on June 27, 2014. At the time of the Task Force Report's publication on August 1, 2012, there were a total of 359 individuals residing at NJDC: 176 male and 183 female.

Total census reduction from August 2012 through June 2014 was attributed to:

- 138 to homes in the community;
- 199 to other Developmental Centers;
 - 21 to Greenbrook Regional Center
 - 9 to Hunterdon Developmental Center
 - 68 to New Lisbon Developmental Center

- 63 to Vineland Developmental Center
- 38 to Woodbine Developmental Center
- 8 skilled nursing home placements;
- 1 discharge from services (family moved out of the country); and
- 13 individuals who passed away at the DC.

Woodbridge Developmental Center

Public Hearing

The public hearing pertaining to the Woodbridge Developmental Center closure was held on September 2, 2014 from 10am to 1pm at 30 Van Dyke Avenue in New Brunswick. Notice of the hearing was published on the Division's web page. Additionally, the notice was published in the Home News and Courier News on August 15, 2014. CART services and sign language interpreters were offered.

Written testimony for the hearing was collected from four individuals. None of the testimony was in favor of the closure:

- A representative from Woodbridge Developmental Center Parents Association provided testimony to concerns over the health and safety of current and former Woodbridge development center residents, the hardship placed on the parents and family members of residents in relation to visiting their loved ones and the readiness of other facilities to care for this population.
- A representative from Hunterdon Developmental Center Parents Association provided testimony stating that the Intermediate Care Facility model (This is the model used in developmental centers) is superior to Home and Community based system (This is the system used in the community). They cited a Rutgers University study entitled "Overlooking Oversight".
- An attorney who provided written testimony protested the public hearing because they had not been directly notified of the hearing date.
- An advocate for New Jersey developmental centers expressed that the staff of these facilities are caring and dedicated to the population they serve. The testimony goes on to reference the hardship the closure places on guardians, parents and family members in the visitation of their loved ones and the importance of that visitation for the individual.

Overview of Resident Movement

This closure plan for WDBR began in August 2012 following the binding recommendations submitted by the Task Force for the Closure of Developmental Centers and culminated on January 9, 2015. At the time of the Task Force Report's publication on August 1, 2012, there were a total of 333 individuals residing at WDBR: 196 male and 137 female.

Total census reduction from August 2012 through January 2015 was attributed to:

- 83 to homes in the community;
- 236 to other Developmental Centers;
 - 25 to Greenbrook Regional Center
 - 18 to Hunterdon Developmental Center
 - 43 to New Lisbon Developmental Center
 - 76 to Vineland Developmental Center
 - 74 to Woodbine Developmental Center
- 2 skilled nursing home placements;
- 2 discharges from services (family moved out of the country); and
- 10 individuals who passed away at the DC.

Fiscal Analysis for Both Facilities

Once the formal closure process began, a detailed fiscal analysis was performed to determine the reduction in appropriations to the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) resulting from the closure of the two targeted facilities and the movement of some individuals who chose a transfer to another developmental center, instead of moving into the community. This analysis incorporated the anticipated staffing and non-staffing impact resulting from (1) the closure of North Jersey Developmental Center (effective date of Reduction in Force, June 27, 2014), (2) the closure of Woodbridge Developmental Center (effective date of Reduction in Force, January 9, 2015) and (3) the transfer of staff to the remaining five developmental centers to accommodate any changes to census resulting from closure.

This analysis resulted in an overall reduction in appropriations of \$74.023 million during FY15. The Department retained \$3.6 million to support ongoing costs of maintaining the properties until disposed of by the Department of Treasury's Division of Purchase and Property. Additional annualized savings will be realized in FY16 because Woodbridge was closed midway through FY15.

The Department will continuously monitor the impact of these closures across the Department as the fiscal year progresses through its quarterly spending plan analysis.