



## **“ONE ILLINOIS” PROMOTES BETTER HEALTH CARE; Gubernatorial Candidates Need to Improve Necessary Supports for Persons with Disabilities Living in their Communities**

**For Immediate Release  
October 10, 2006**

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Springfield, Illinois (October 10, 2006) – The Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities today promoted better health care and long-term care supports for persons with disabilities. Government studies show that one in five adults with long term care needs and living in the community reported an inability to receive needed care. The statewide campaign calls on the gubernatorial candidates to strengthen the community-based infrastructure and options designed to encourage greater independence.

“Every community agency and community mental health center can relate a crisis in the life of an individual they serve created by the lack of health care,” said Janet Stover, Executive Director of the Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities. “The lack of basic medical services such as dental care, crisis stabilization in the community, or temporary intensive residential placements put people at risk of unnecessary institutionalization or personal injury. And yet when the candidates talk about ‘healthcare’ persons with disabilities and mental illness are not mentioned.” Stover went on to challenge the candidates by saying, “You can’t talk about health care without talking about the urgent need for community services.”

According to the “*ONE ILLINOIS: A Community Initiative for Persons with Disabilities*” campaign, over the past 15 years, admissions to state psychiatric hospitals have declined approximately 60 percent, and the state has reduced inpatient capacity proportionally. Funding for these individuals in state hospitals has not followed to the community to provide the necessary supports.

In addition, crisis prevention, intervention, and stabilization services statewide are severely lacking leading to unnecessary institutionalization and re-institutionalization. For instance, in a rural six county region, 6% of people with developmental disabilities had behaviors defined as dangerous to themselves or others in 2005 but had no options locally for stabilization.

The need for better basic health care integration and community supports comes as the Congress has enacted “personal responsibility” proposals, which were included in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. Among them is the ‘Money Follows the Person Initiative’ that establishes a new competitive state grant program to transition persons with disabilities and senior citizens from institutionalized care to home or community-based services.

IARF and its members, other community agencies, our One Illinois partners, consumers, family members, boards of directors, staff, and communities across Illinois are 2.2 million voters calling immediate attention to the platform issues – at stake is not just people’s votes or politics, but rather the quality of daily life for Illinois’ residents with disabilities. Statewide, 2.2 million voters are touched by, and care about disability issues and believe that you cannot talk about education, healthcare, housing, jobs, and human rights without talking about community services for persons with disabilities.

To learn more about “*ONE ILLINOIS: A Community Initiative for Persons with Disabilities*,” please visit [www.oneillinois.info](http://www.oneillinois.info) or contact Janet Stover by phone at (217) 753-1190 or email at [jstover@hso.net](mailto:jstover@hso.net).

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