

Representative Ciresi (D-146th) visits Bon Homie, Ltd. Adult Day Center

By Ann Short, Director, Bon Homie, Ltd.

This summer we had the opportunity to sit down with state Representative Joe Ciresi (D-146th) as he visited our Center on Lewis Road. After touring the Adult Day Center, he listened to staff members and program participants to get a firsthand experience of what our center provides.

We focused on the two most important areas that are affecting our center, clients and caregivers.

1. We spoke about the difficulties facing parents who have children that are disabled and are getting ready to transition from a high school environment to a day program environment.

Many Families are searching for programs that attend to their adult children's medical needs as well as providing a meaningful social experience in a safe environment, but not many programs can meet the expectation or requests. Bon Homie provides comprehensive nursing oversight and has developed programs to meet the specific needs of each client that is enrolled in our program. Bon Homie is one of the few if not only program that staff's nurses.

Many other programs and schools refer clients needing a high level of care directly to us. Many of these families have children who are transitioning and are waiting to hear if their child will receive waiver funding.

There is a growing waiting list for individuals needing the Consolidated, Community Living and P/FDS waiver. Many of these families won't hear if they will receive funding until close to the time, they are ready to transition out of school, which makes planning for their child's next step near impossible.

2. We also discussed the impact of the States Final Rule and Community Integration Policy has had on our small family owned and operated business has been substantial. Community Integration requires Bon Homie to take the individuals that attend our program out into the community, while still meeting the demands of our center's original mission to provide a safe, controlled, simulating environment for disabled individuals.



When CMS introduced the Final Rule and Community Integration, the program we worked so hard in developing wasn't recognized. Every agency providing services to developmentally disabled individuals were grouped in the same category no matter who they served, or the level of care the individuals received.

We met with Representative Ciresi with hopes that he could help us convey to CMS and the PA Human Services Committee the need to create program categories under the Consolidated, Community Living and P/FDS waivers designed specifically to serve the higher-level-of-care client, with focus on the medically fragile, and whom are determined by a qualified team to be unable to safely go out into the community.



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This category would shift the demands of community integration off programs like Bon Homie and allow our program to continue to employ nurses and provide the high level of care that everyone requires.

"Ann Short and the staff at Bon Homie are a tremendous resource to the greater Limerick community. Their mission is all about helping people with developmental disabilities, brain injury, or dementia to make positive contributions to their neighborhoods. There's amazing value in that and we should be supporting it any way we can," Ciresi said.

In the months ahead, Ciresi and his staff plan to organize a roundtable discussion with other elected lawmakers, as well as providers, and advocates, to address concerns related to the Department of Human Services and waiver programs.

Other areas we hope to address is the limit amount of time that a client is funded to attend day program. They can only attend eight hours a day, five days a week. Many of the parents of these individuals work fulltime jobs and require time to commute to and from their job.

The number of young potential clients waiting to get placed on a waiver is significant and availability to them is limited. Some waiver reimbursement rates for day program is so low that many programs don't accept the waiver or limit the number of individuals they accept.

Transportation is always a concern and providing transportation to support the needs of the individuals using services is vital.

