



Why target the institutions for funding cuts, if the total DMR budget does not increase enough to fund community supports? Making community supports first priority corrects for a bias favoring funding for institutions. The National Conference of State Legislators documented the institutional funding bias that it observes nationally: "As long as states continue to operate large public facilities, state funds will be used to support those facilities, per capita costs of operating facilities will continue to increase and expansion of community services will decline."³



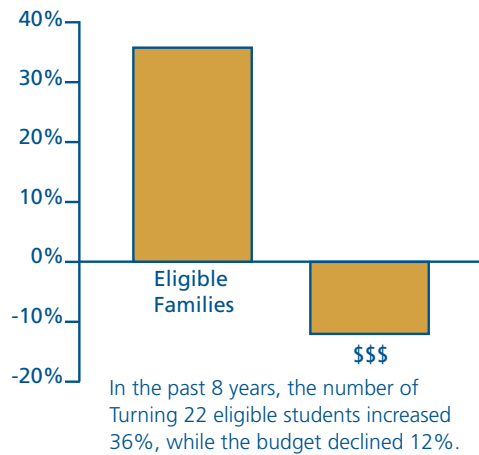
Massachusetts' two-service system – community and institutions – is no longer affordable, as shown by the bare-bones community support budget. In spite of on-going legal skirmishes over the disposition of Fernald – and potentially the five other institutions – legislators should plan on their closure, and fund the community system as requested above. Only with sufficient budgets can DMR meet the needs of all eligible constituents for lives in the community.

¹ Commonwealth of Massachusetts Budget for FY2008 and Governor's Proposed Budget FY2009 (House Bill #1)

² Commonwealth of Mass Budgets for FY2000 & FY2008

³ Deinstitutionalization of Persons with Developmental Disabilities: A Technical Assistance Report for Legislators by DeWayne Davis, Wendy Fox-Grage, and Shelly Gehshan. Available on-line at <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/health/Forum/pub6683.htm>

TURNING 22 PERCENT CHANGES? FY2000 TO FY2008



institutions to the community: In the 2009 budget, the state institution line item increased by more than \$3 Million.

It is time to do all we can to fund community supports as the main priority for the DMR budget. For DMR, funding for more people in the community is only possible through new allocations to the budget, or by restructuring services that consolidate and close one or more of the six remaining DMR institutions.

Critical needs are described above: 607 young adults turn 22 during FY2009; 2,247 other people – many with elderly care-givers – wait for family supports. The services for these 2,854 people are only possible through added dollars or restructuring to close institutions.

The Arc has produced fact sheets reviewing the following essential requests for the DMR community-based FY2009 budget:

- Turning 22
- Family Support and related DOE-DMR program
- Residential Rate Initiative
- EOHHS Salary Reserve
- Wait List for community services
- Autism Division
- Address Community Housing Home Modification and Facilities Consolidation Fund

See: www.arcmass.org/StateHousePolicy/StateBudget/tabid/186/Default.aspx

Housing for constituents with disabilities is also taking a financial hit from FY2007 to FY2008. Three programs were cut 14% to 20% for a total cut of \$3 million – the Community Based Housing, Home Modification, and Facilities Consolidation programs. The cuts strike at the heart of independent living – a dream, a desire, an expectation of nearly everyone, including those with disabilities.

Over the past three years, the number of people served in the community system increased a total of 5%, while the number in DMR institutions dropped a total of 11%, But the dollars are not moving from

Community Funding: A Priority

SERVICES
AT THE
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OF MENTAL
RETARDATION



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Constituents with intellectual disabilities and their families choose to live in the community. Two examples are Joyce and Michael; their stories show the positive successes of their lives. Joyce lived for decades at Fernald; today her community home is a real home. Michael was a special education student until he turned 22; today his avocation of sports has become his vocation in the community.

Success stories like those of Joyce and Michael are familiar to legislators. In spite of excellent outcomes like these, lack of funding for DMR's community services is a systemic problem. There are thousands of others, in districts across the Commonwealth, who also want a community life, but lack the dollars for supports.



MICHAEL'S HOBBY IS HIS VOCATION IN THE COMMUNITY

Michael is a 23-year-old young man with autism spectrum disorder. He attended Norwell Public Schools under Chapter 766 with mainstream classes and special education support. Michael is passionate about running and playing ice hockey, and while at Norwell High, he ran track three seasons and received twelve varsity letters in four years. He joined the South Shore YMCA in Hanover, Mass. during his high school years for recreation and fitness. While at Norwell High, his work experiences included landscaping and warehouse work prior to turning 22.

Upon turning 22, Michael's liaison at Norwell High contracted with The Arc of Greater Plymouth and the YMCA for Michael to be employed as a custodian with funding through DMR's adult services. For four years, he has been successful and happy in the community with the aid of a job coach, and the support of the YMCA staff and his parents.

JOYCE'S HOME IN THE COMMUNITY IS A REAL HOME

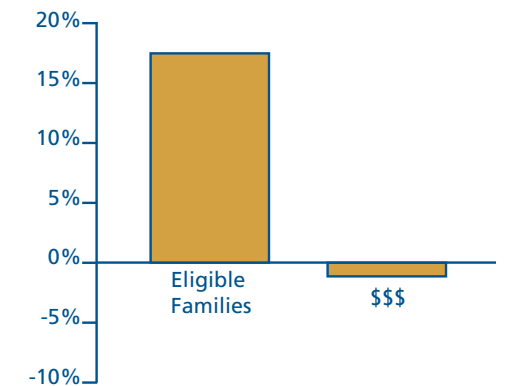
Joyce, who is blind and non-verbal, is tuned to her senses— the fragrance of home cooking, smelling flowers in her backyard. She wants her home to feel like a home with the choices that most people take for granted – coffee when you want it, access to a bathroom without waiting in line. She lived for decades at Fernald where these were not choices, restricted by the rigors of even a well-meaning bureaucracy.

The staff at Fernald taught Joyce essentials through her formative years – activities of daily living and signing that are major challenges for people with severe intellectual disabilities. Today, Joyce lives in the community in Georgetown, in a shared house that feels like home. She smiles about that feeling, and how wonderful it is to sleep in on her day off, and to take trips with the staff who include her wishes in the trip plans. Joyce's home in the community is a real home.



DMR's popular Family Support program is a response to this need, but the funding level is woefully short. Now 13,465 people are served, with 2,247 families waiting for some level of service. It is commonly accepted that this money is well spent for essential supports, but hardly meets the need. Yet, Family Support has no new money for FY2009, and the program received a \$327,000 cut in FY2008.

FAMILY SUPPORT PERCENT CHANGES¹ FY2007 THROUGH PROPOSED FY2009



13,465 Families Supported with a waiting list of 2,247; Family Support budget of \$55.4 million was cut \$327,000 in FY2008.

Turning 22 is another community-based program lacking dollars. The dollars spent for special education stop on a person's 22nd birthday, but the amount DMR spends for supports of that same person as an adult is much less, sometimes a cut of 80% or more. An example: a \$40,000 special education program becomes \$8,000 of DMR supports, providing a bare, bare bones day activity program and no supports for independent living.

In the past 8 years, the number of eligible students Turning 22 increased from 446 to 607. Like everyone else, constituents with disabilities want a life in the community, yet Turning 22 declined \$800,000 from FY2000 to FY2008. For FY2009, the Governor's budget has a further \$1.6 Million cut.