

Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI)

Disability Rights Ohio is a non-profit corporation and the federally and state-designated protection and advocacy (P & A) system for people with disabilities in Ohio, including individuals with mental illness.

People with a mental illness want the same opportunities available to everyone in the community: to live and work where they choose; to have friends; and to make decisions about their lives and their futures.

Yet, many people with a mental illness face discrimination, segregation and lack of control over even the most basic activities of everyday living.

Disability Rights Ohio partners with people with disabilities to improve their opportunities to lead full and integrated lives in the community. Disability Rights Ohio not only investigates instances of abuse and neglect at psychiatric hospitals and other institutions. It also promotes efforts of systemic change that can help individuals with mental illness get the treatment they need, obtain or retain employment, and live in the community so they can be productive members of society.

The State Of Mental Illness in Ohio

- An estimated 25% of American adults suffer from a mental health condition, including conditions such as depression, bipolar disorder and general anxiety disorder¹.
- Approximately 6% of American adults have a serious mental illness, including conditions like schizophrenia, major depression or posttraumatic stress disorder².
- Roughly 600,000 Ohioans ages 18 and over reported a mental health condition that kept them from doing work or other activities for 14 of the past 30 days³.
- 55,000 Ohioans have a serious mental illness⁴.
- 60% of adults and 70% of children with mental illness are unable to get the treatment they need for their mental health condition.

Recovery Requires a Community

Across Ohio, thousands of individuals with mental illness who are capable of living and working in the community are being required to stay in nursing facilities, a violation of their rights under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Olmstead v. LC*.

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Disability Rights Ohio has been working with state agency and non-profit partners to create a new program called Recovery Requires a Community. Over the next year, this program will identify and allow 1,200 people with mental illness who currently are in nursing facilities to return to the community where they can live healthy, productive lives. The savings realized by transitioning each individual out of an expensive nursing facility and into a community environment will be used to support the program.

School to Prison Pipeline

Many young Ohioans with mental illness are not receiving the services and supports they need to be able to learn in school. An estimated 70% of children with a mental illness do not get the treatment they need for their mental health condition⁵.

Instead, young people who show signs of mental illness are being suspended, expelled or arrested—severely impacting their future ability to graduate and thus to obtain or retain steady employment in their adult lives.

Disability Rights Ohio is working with the Supreme Court of Ohio, the Attorney General, the Public Defender's Office, the Children's Law Center, the Department of Youth Services, and the Department of Corrections, among many other stakeholders, to raise awareness and address this issue across departments. We are working to ensure that Ohio's children who have mental illness can receive treatment at the first sign of mental illness, have access to the services and supports they need to stay in school, learn, graduate and get jobs.

Restraint and Seclusion

No Ohio child should spend the majority of the school day locked in a windowless closet. No youth at a treatment facility should die at the hands of care center staff using a prone restraint. No child should ever face physical harm and isolation when there are positive behavior supports that can improve the health, well-being and learning environment of the child.

Disability Rights Ohio has worked tirelessly to educate and inform Ohio agencies and the public about the risks associated with restraint and seclusion intervention practices. In 2009, then-Governor Strickland issued an Executive Order banning prone restraints across all state systems. In 2011, Governor Kasich re-issued this Executive Order.

In August of 2013, after three years of work, the Ohio Department of Education implemented a rule limiting the use of restraint and seclusion interventions and requiring the implementation of positive behavior supports for students in public schools.

Disability Rights Ohio continues to monitor the implementation and enforcement of this rule, as well as the implementation of the 2009 Executive Order to ensure that all children with a mental illness or other disabilities are safe from this form of abuse and neglect.

Abuse and Discrimination in Jails and Prisons

Citizens of the United States have a right to protection against cruel and unusual punishment.

This, however, was not the case for people with mental illness and other disabilities in the Franklin County Corrections Centers. Officers in these corrections centers were inappropriately

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using Tasers against individuals with mental illnesses and other disabilities.

Disability Rights Ohio exhausted all other options before filing a class-action lawsuit that led to a settlement where the Franklin County Corrections Centers agreed to stop using Tasers in an inappropriate or unconstitutional manner.

Disability Rights Ohio continues to monitor and investigate allegations of abuse and discrimination against individuals with disabilities in jails, prisons and other institutions. Such efforts also provide opportunities to ensure individuals with disabilities have access to necessary medications and other supports they may need to keep the environment safe for themselves, other prisoners and facility staff.

Learn More

To learn more about Disability Rights Ohio and how we partner with people with disabilities to improve their opportunities to lead full and productive lives, please visit disabilityrightsohio.org or call us at 1-800-282-9181 (TTY 800-858-3542).

References

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