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Welcome to the October 2010 issue of the Real Choice Newsletter

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## Upcoming Events

**Election Day**  
November 2

**Speak Up Speak Out**  
November 4 & 5

**Department of Justice Hearing**  
November 18

**About REAL CHOICE**

The Campaign for Real

## Campaign Continues to Monitor Medicaid Managed Care

For nearly a year now, the Campaign for Real Choice, along with advocates from the Community for All Coalition and other stakeholders from around the state, have closely monitored the development of Illinois' Medicaid Managed Care pilot program for the Chicago suburban area, which will impact an estimated 40,000 people with disabilities and their medical and long-term care services.

In recent months, the Department of Health Care and Family Services (HFS) has announced that HMOs Aetna and IlliniCare (a subsidiary of Centene) have been awarded the two contracts to operate as Managed Care Organizations in the pilot area. The Campaign, the Community for All Coalition, and staff from the Centers for Independent Living in the pilot area have coordinated several meetings with representatives from both HMOs as well as HFS to express our concerns and ensure that advocates and consumers have a voice throughout this process.

Check out the [Community for All Coalition - Medicaid Managed Care Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

## Tragic and Preventable Deaths at Chicago's Alden Village North

Since 2000, 13 children and young adults with disabilities have died at the Alden Village North nursing home, largely due to neglect and consistent failures to adequately respond to residents' acute as well as basic health needs. Here is yet another example of a large, institutional care facility failing to provide quality care for people with disabilities, and state regulators completely ignoring a pattern of neglectful behaviors by nursing home staff that lead to otherwise preventable deaths.

Had it not been for Chicago Tribune reporters investigating this horrendous facility, the state would most likely have continued to overlook and inadequately investigate the growing number of deaths and incidents of neglect at Alden Village North. To his credit, Governor Quinn responded to this tragedy by appointing a health monitor to the facility, but it was too late for the 13 young adults and many, many others who have perished in institutions and nursing homes across Illinois.

The state needs to do much more to move away from an institutional system that places children with developmental disabilities in nursing homes! Every child and adult, even those with the most significant disabilities and medical needs, can and should live in the community with the proper supports and services.

Choice in Illinois is people with disabilities organizing for freedom and choice. We are a grassroots, citizen action organization consisting of people with disabilities and their supporters. For more on the Campaign, go to [realchoiceinillinois.org](http://realchoiceinillinois.org)

### Pass it on

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Know anyone who might be interested in our newsletter? [Click here](#) to forward this email to up to 5 friends at once.

Click on the links below to read more from the Chicago Tribune:

[Children with disabilities die on care facility's watch](#)

[Troubled facility for children gets monitor](#)

## Olmstead Victory in Illinois!

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On September 30, a U.S. District Court Judge approved an historic agreement to better serve individuals with mental illness in Illinois.

Thousands of persons with mental illnesses in Illinois took a significant, critical step toward independence and dignity after a federal judge gave final approval to an historic agreement worked out by the State of Illinois and a coalition of legal services organizations. The agreement in *Williams v. Quinn* gained final approval from U.S. District Court Judge William Hart following a fairness hearing on September 7, 2010 that drew hundreds of interested class members and relatives to a Chicago courtroom. Once implemented, the agreement paves the way for individuals with mental illnesses to move out of Illinois' outmoded, segregated nursing home system and receive the services they need in the community.

The approval begins a systemic process of giving approximately 4,300 persons with mental illnesses the choice to move out of large nursing homes known as "Institutions for Mentally Diseases" (IMDs) and into community-based settings with the support they need to be successful. These large, impersonal IMDs are operated in a manner that allows individuals little opportunity for independent living and personal growth.

For more information, including full press releases, court documents, and fact sheets, visit [Williams v. Quinn](#).

## Speak Up and Speak Out Summit 2010

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The 2010 Speak Up and Speak Out Summit will be held November 4-5, 2010 at the Hilton Hotel in Springfield.

For more information, including agendas, support requests, stipends, hotel information and registration materials, visit [SpeakUpSpeakOutSummit.org](http://SpeakUpSpeakOutSummit.org)



## Equip for Equality's Election Day Helpline and Accessibility Survey

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Equip for Equality will have advocates available by telephone from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Election Day, November 2, 2010, to answer questions about any problems experienced by voters with disabilities when they go to vote.

The toll-free numbers to call are:

1-800-537-2632

1-800-610-2779 (TTY)

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Equip for Equality is also seeking the help of voters with disabilities on Election Day. Please take the [Illinois Voter Polling Place Accessibility Survey](#) with you to your polling place when you go to vote. By completing this survey and returning it to Equip for Equality, you will help us identify barriers to the

accessibility of polling places so that we can inform local election authorities and work to improve access. Equip for Equality will provide hard copies of the survey and postage pre-paid return envelopes upon request.

For a copy of the survey, visit [Illinois Voter Polling Place Accessibility Survey](#)

## **YOU can provide comments to the Department of Justice**

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On November 18, the Department of Justice will hold a hearing here in Chicago at Access Living, 115 W. Chicago Avenue, from 9:30 to 4 pm. Any interested person can present comments or testimony to the staff from the DOJ who will be here to listen to your concerns. The topics they want to hear comments about are:

1. **Accessibility of Web Information and Services** - covered by the ADA
2. **Movie Captioning and Video Description**
3. **Accessibility of Next Generation 9-1-1** - how to make 911 emergency services more accessible
4. **Equipment and Furniture** - provided by places covered by the ADA--- includes but is not limited to medical equipment and furniture, including examination tables and chairs in doctors' offices, scales, radiological diagnostic equipment, and lifts; beds in hospitals, nursing homes, and hotels; accessible golf cars; and electronic and information technology, including POS devices, kiosks, and ATMs.

The DOJ is collecting information that will help them develop rules and standards for ADA access on these topics.

More details, such as how long testimony should be (5 minutes) and how to request accommodations for a disability are at [www.ada.gov/anprm2010/public\\_hearing\\_anprm\\_2010.htm](http://www.ada.gov/anprm2010/public_hearing_anprm_2010.htm) There is also info about how to submit written comments by email. You can RSVP to register to testify by either calling (800) 514-0301 (Voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY) or emailing Linda Garrett at [linda.garrett@usdoj.gov](mailto:linda.garrett@usdoj.gov). Requests for accommodations, such as ASL interpreters or CART, should be made no later than November 11.

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