



BILL HASLAM
GOVERNOR
STATE OF TENNESSEE

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**HASLAM, PAYNE ANNOUNCE END OF COURT OVERSIGHT, IMPROVED
SERVICES FOR TENNESSEANS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES**

Dismissal of Clover Bottom lawsuit ends 25 years of litigation

NASHVILLE – Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam and Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) Commissioner Debra K. Payne today announced the dismissal of the longstanding Clover Bottom lawsuit, effectively ending a quarter century of litigation and court oversight of intellectual disabilities services in the state of Tennessee.

U.S. District Chief Judge Waverly D. Crenshaw, Jr. dismissed the case and entered an order in which he found the state had complied with all conditions of a court approved plan to improve services and the quality of life for citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Tennessee now has quality assurance and protection from harm programs that support people with intellectual disabilities. These programs have been recognized nationally as models of best practice for other states.

“We have fundamentally changed the way we serve some of our most vulnerable citizens in Tennessee,” Haslam said. “I’m grateful for the tireless work of so many people to get to this point and ultimately improve the lives of thousands of Tennesseans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.”

People First of Tennessee filed the lawsuit in 1995 and it was later consolidated with a case filed by the federal government concerning the conditions at three state developmental centers: Clover Bottom Developmental Center in Nashville; Greene Valley Developmental Center in Greeneville; and Nat T. Winston Developmental Center in Bolivar. The court partially dismissed the case in 2016. The closure of Greene Valley Developmental Center was the remaining item to be completed and occurred in May 2017. A separate lawsuit concerning Arlington Developmental Center was dismissed in 2013. All four developmental centers have now closed and thousands of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities now receive home and community based supports.

“By every measure possible, the transformation has been a remarkable success,” said People First of Tennessee’s attorney Judith Gran. “Tennessee has one of the best community services in the nation, providing services and support in a rich array of programs.”



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“The parties recognize that Tennessee is providing high quality supports in the community and no longer needs court oversight,” Payne said. “The path to this day has not been an easy one, and could not have been accomplished without long hours, hard work, dedication and a deep passion for the people we support shown by the employees of DIDD.”

The dismissal of this case was agreed to by all parties, including the plaintiffs who represented hundreds of Tennesseans with intellectual disabilities who at one time lived in one of the state institutions, as well as two parent guardian associations.

In January 2015, the parties agreed to a plan to exit the suit in which DIDD and TennCare agreed to complete nine sections of requirements, including:

- Developing training for law enforcement officers who may come into contact with persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities;
- Authoring training for licensed physicians, caregivers and families to improve outcomes of medical care for people with disabilities;
- Revising individual support plans;
- Establishing behavioral respite homes in East and Middle Tennessee; and
- Closing Greene Valley Developmental Center.

DIDD is responsible for administration and oversight of community-based services for approximately 8,000 Tennesseans with intellectual disabilities, as well as 4,000 individuals through the Family Support Program and is the first and only state service delivery system in the nation to receive Person-Centered Excellence Accreditation from the Council on Quality and Leadership.

For more information on the Clover Bottom lawsuit, please contact Cara Kumari at Cara.Kumari@tn.gov.

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