

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE--February 11, 2011**

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### **Statement of The Arc of Virginia on U.S. Department of Justice Findings Letter**

Last night, the Commonwealth of Virginia received a letter of findings from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) investigation concerning services people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The DOJ report concluded that the inadequacies identified “have resulted in the needless and prolonged institutionalization of, and other harms to, individuals with disabilities at CVTC and other segregated training centers throughout the Commonwealth who could be served in the community.” The report also finds that the Commonwealth violates the ADA by placing “individuals currently in the community at risk of unnecessary institutionalization at CVTC and other training centers.”

“The DOJ report represents a major milestone in the ID/DD civil rights movement” said Howard Cullum, President of The Arc of Virginia. “For more than 40 years, Virginians with intellectual and developmental disabilities, family members and concerned citizens have fought for access to community-based services. This report validates their efforts.”

“In response, The Arc of Virginia urges the Commonwealth to fulfill its commitment to eliminate the ID/DD Waiver waiting lists, protect existing community-based services and end the practice of institutionalization and segregation of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities”, said Mr. Cullum.

“The Arc applauds the Administration’s stated commitment to help Virginia transition to a community-based system” added Mr. Cullum. “Cost savings achieved by this transition must be reinvested in order to expand access to community-based services. Keeping this funding in the ID/DD system is critical in order to protect civil rights and meet the urgent needs identified in the DOJ report.”

As of today, more than 6,400 Virginians with intellectual and related developmental disabilities are on waiting lists for community-based services. Nearly 3,000 of these individuals are identified as being in urgent need due to circumstances such as living with an aging caregiver, being at risk of abuse or neglect, or aging out of foster care.

Despite being ranked 45<sup>th</sup> in the country in terms of fiscal effort towards intellectual and developmental disability services, Virginia is currently contemplating additional cuts to ID/DD Waiver services. While 12 states and the District of Columbia have closed all of their state-operated institutions for people with ID/DD, Virginia remains one of 10 states that have failed to close any institutions. Five of these ten states only have one institution. More information on the state of ID/DD services in Virginia can be found at The Arc of Virginia’s website [www.thearcofva.org](http://www.thearcofva.org)

“Virginia must have a well-planned effort to move people out of the state operated institutions and prevent institutionalization in the first place,” said Mr. Cullum. All people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, regardless of the significance of their disability, deserve the opportunity to experience ‘*A Life Like Yours*’ in the community. Now is the time for bold action.”

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