



# Shut Them Down

## Closing Institutions choosing Independence

Issue: 3  
February 1st,  
2022



### SB 5938 is a giant step to close Washington State's DD Institutions|

Source Shut them Down

### Closing Institutions choosing Independence

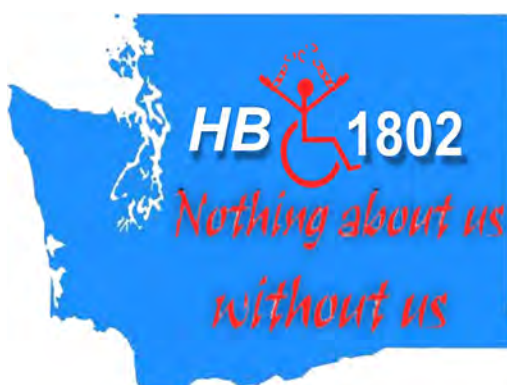
- SB 5938 It's time to close RHCs
- Change to community living & inclusion
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In the past few weeks, the Shut them Down Coalition with assistance from the Northstar Coalition has worked with Senator John Braun to draft up SB 5938. This bill if passed would close all 4 Residential Habilitation Centers or DD Institutions by 2028. The bill sets up a timeline to achieve that goal by first giving our State and DD advocates 18 months to create a person-centered transition plan.

During these months advocates like Robert Wardell and Shawn Latham want to see State Services and State housing opportunities be expanded. Robert Wardell a former resident at Rainier School states he likes this bill because it is time to close the institutions and allow people to live in their local community. Robert adds that the State needs to increase community funding for various services so that all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities can have a safe place to live wherever they choose. In addition, if State funds were used to support the community more instead of keeping up large, segregated settings Robert believes we could improve local transportation systems, and expand employment and recreational services.

Shawn commented that while some believe our State is not up for this change, he and other self-advocates believe if not now when. While Shawn does agree that the State will have to budget in more funds for these and other community services, he believes the State needs to act now instead of always pushing this change off in the future. Robert and Shawn are not alone because hundreds of self-advocates from the organizations of Self Advocates in Leadership, People First of Washington, and Allies in Advocacy have said enough. This Coalition has argued for well over a decade that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities deserve their freedom and their civil rights. They believe all people need to be afforded the right to receive medical level care in their local community. They should not be told to receive some services they must move hundreds of miles from their family and into congregate settings, which as we have seen with the COVID-19 pandemic can be dangerous.

As it was mentioned SB 5938 gives 18 months for our state to come up with a person-centered transition plan. After the plan is created the State will transition at least 20% of the residents at each DD Institution into the community each year starting in 2025. According to the timeline in the bill, all residents will be out by December 31st, 2028. The institutions at this time can be closed and sold off. The proceeds of the sale will go to the Dan Thompson Trust fund. While we the self-advocate community are very excited about SB 5938, we are also concerned that the bill will die in committee as so many bills will do this week. Advocates are asked to immediately contact Senators Cleveland and Frockt who are the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee. Advocates need to get an emergency hearing for SB 5938, so we can get it out of committee before it's too late. We urge you to use your voice before the committee cut-off date of February 3rd. We also ask Legislators who are reading this to please help us get a hearing for this bill.







# Shut Them Down

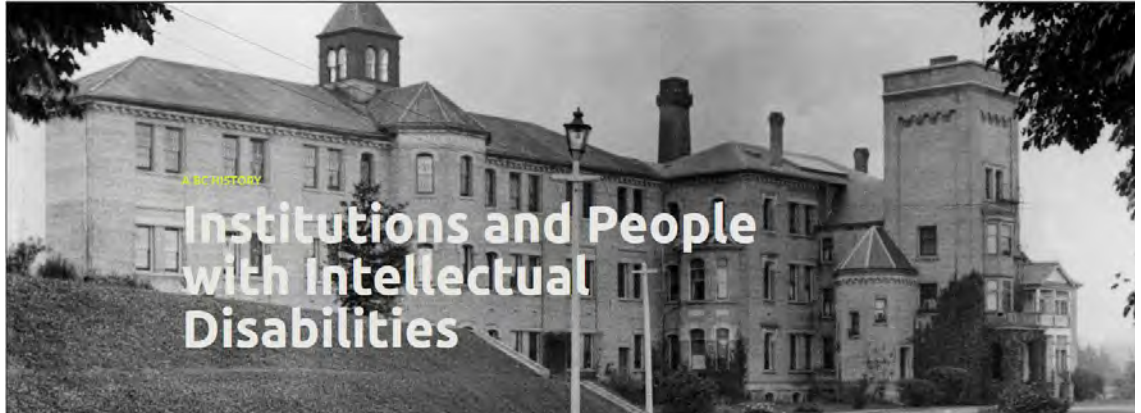
## Closing Institutions choosing Independence

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### HB 1802 Nothing About Us Without Us

For as long as time, people with disabilities have been left out of conversations about our services, caregiving, education, rights, and all other aspects of life. We have had to fight to have our voices heard over parents, providers, and allies. We should be able to speak for ourselves and our communities, but are too-often left out of important conversations that directly impact our lives.

Last session, Representative Pollet dropped HB 1802 - the Nothing About Us Without Us Act. If passed, HB 1802 will require any group established by the legislature whose activities are related to people with disabilities to have representation of those with direct lived experience related to the issues being addressed. We are building a coalition around the Nothing About Us Without Us Act. During session we will be meeting at 12:30 PM every Tuesday. At these meetings we will be discussing what is happening with the bill and what actions we need to take.



In the past, it was common practice to label people with intellectual disabilities as “mentally retarded” or “mentally handicapped” and place them in institutions, or in segregated schools or workplaces, where they had few rights.

The institutionalization of people with intellectual disabilities began hundreds of years ago with the creation of a large institution like Willowbrook, first called the Provincial Asylum for the Insane and later known as Woodlands School, or just Woodlands. Other large institutions – Tranquille, Glendale, and the Endicott Centre – were later created around the province. People with intellectual disabilities lived in these facilities apart from their families and communities, sometimes for their whole lives.

This short video chronicles the closure of institutions in BC and honours the history of the community living movement.

The experience of the past few decades has shown that no one needs to be separated from their community because of a disability. Living among family, friends and neighbors fosters new abilities and creates communities where everyone is welcome. Even those who require extra support or specialized care have a better quality of life when they receive care and support in their home and community, rather than in an institution.



### The Change to Community Living and Inclusion

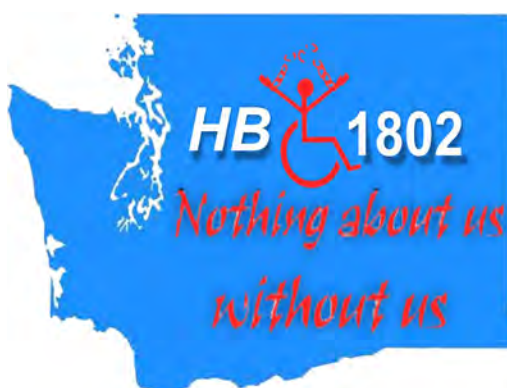
One of the primary goals of the movement for “community living” has been to close institutions and help people return to communities and participate as full citizens. The movement was started mainly by family members who dreamed of a better life for their sons and daughters who lived in institutions, who wanted them to learn in school, have friends, and be welcomed in their community.

People with intellectual disabilities also began to advocate for their own rights to live as full citizens, and created the “self advocacy movement.”

Source: Inclusion BC  
[See full version here](#)



We now know that institutions cannot begin to tap the potential of individuals to learn, participate and contribute to their communities. They isolate people from family, friends, and communities. And increasingly, we are finding out that they create high risk environments for abuse and neglect





# The Power of COMMUNITY

## Community Living and Inclusion for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

By: Karen Parenti, MS, PsyD Krystina Cassidy, MS Ed Kimberly Duhanyan, MEd, BCBA, LABA Mary Jane Weiss, PhD, BCBA-D  
Melmark March 26th, 2021 activities, community living, inclusion, independence, integration, quality of life, self-determination,

It was not long ago that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities were cared for in settings quite separate and isolated and were deprived of full integration into their communities. Thankfully, in recent decades, the entitlement to community living and learning opportunities has become clear, and the integration of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities into their communities has steadily improved. Still, much work remains in understanding what components of community involvement matter, in identifying how to enhance these opportunities, in understanding how to increase community acceptance, and in ensuring that individuals with disabilities experience the full range of community immersion experiences.

Individuals with disabilities deserve to become an integral part “of” their communities, and not just go on outings “in” their communities. A goal for community living and full integration should be to achieve meaningful joining with the community, and to ensure that the integration is multidimensional and includes a wide range of activities that enhance quality of life. Ideally, individuals should be engaged in the community not just for errands and essential tasks

, but for leisure activities, volunteer events, employment, and social activities. For example, individuals should be encouraged to the extent possible to participate regularly in various activities offered by the local YMCA, church, or community center. Additionally, individuals should be encouraged to participate in neighborhood activities and events, and when possible, get to know and have regular engagement with their neighbors. Activities for engagement can be geared towards individuals’ various likes and preferences, which may differ amongst individuals.

Individuals should also have outreach and maintain connections with their local community liaisons, police officers and community figures. This, in turn, will help individuals with disabilities build meaningful and sustainable relationships with people who are not paid to care for them. Finally, to the extent possible, individuals with disabilities should be given ongoing choices of what community activities they want to be a part of including their level of involvement. This gives them more control over their life and also increases their overall independence and satisfaction.

## Community Integration and Quality of Life



Community inclusion and engagement are closely related to the concept of quality of life, which has also been increasingly discussed as an essential outcome for individuals with disabilities. Quality of life is difficult to define, but is related to the individual’s capacity for contacting fulfillment and joy in everyday pursuits (Ayes et al, 2016; Biggs & Carter, 2017; Parsons et al, 2012). Experiential components that impact quality of life include: housing, employment, leisure interests, and social connections (Schalock, Bonham & Marchand, 2000). Fortunately, there is some agreement on which elements of quality of life are most important (e.g., Bramston, Pretty, & Chipuer, 2002; Plimley, 2007). These include:

1. Emotional well-being, often considered synonymous with happiness
2. Social well-being, associated with connection, engagement, and relationships
3. Physical well-being, associated with general health, level of physical activity, and overall wellness
4. Self-determination, as evidenced by the degree of control and choice
5. Social inclusion, as indicated by community immersion and engagement
6. Personal development, focused on skill development and the attainment of independence
7. Personal rights, including the preservation of dignity

[Full Version of this article found here](#)



### Myth 3. Mortality

#### Statement of Myth

People with ID/DD who live in the community will experience higher mortality than those who receive care in an institutional setting.

#### Statement of Reality

The mortality rate of people with ID/DD is a function of quality of care and the availability and quality of services and supports, not the setting in which they receive care. This myth is based on a 1998 study by O’Brian and Zaharia that statistically analyzed the mortality rate of people who were transferred out of institutions in California between 1993 and 1999. Their methodology and findings have been discredited by numerous other researchers, who have found no increase in mortality rates as a result of moving out of institutions.

**Supportive Information:** Some of those who oppose institutional closure claim that some people with ID/DD are so severely disabled that they cannot handle or benefit from community living and that institutions are the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. They claim that Olmstead gives people with ID/DD and their guardians the right to choose the setting they believe is most appropriate, even if that setting is an institution.

However, the Olmstead decision says that state facilities may remain open without violating the ADA, but it does not say that states must keep institutions open (if they have them) to comply with the ADA. Courts generally agree that neither the ADA nor Olmstead gives people the right to institutional care.





## Dehumanization, Discrimination, and Segregation

Source: Disability Justice | [Full version found here](#)

**Tom Nelson shares knowledge he's picked up learning about equal justice for adults with disabilities.**

### People with developmental disabilities are regularly dehumanized and devalued.

Several disturbing themes dominate the history of people with developmental disabilities. Documented as far back as 400 B.C., these recurring themes continue to impact the lives of people with disabilities today and are reflected in the way that the justice system serves the disability community. These themes include:

Whenever a group of people is deemed less valuable or less important, they become vulnerable to abuse, neglect, discrimination and exploitation. Stereotypes, misinformation and a general lack of interest all contribute to a culture of ignorance where people with developmental disabilities are viewed as a single, homogenous group, rather than as individuals with unique abilities, skills, interests and needs.

Despite a wealth of evidence to the contrary, stereotypes persist that people with disabilities, particularly individuals with developmental disabilities:

- Do not have human feelings and emotions. In essence, that they are less than human.
- Are unable to feel basic physical sensations, such as pain, cold and hunger.
- Do not make any worthwhile contributions to society and, therefore, are viewed as less valuable.
- Are incapable of making decisions for themselves. Therefore, they should not be allowed to control their finances, own a home, develop serious emotional relationships, experience normal sexual feelings, or control their own reproductive decisions.

Stereotypes are harmful. Many people have taught Judge Frank about breaking them down.

Ensuring that all people are participating in society may help break down stereotypes.

*Living in  
the  
Community.  
IT'S MY CHOICE!*

### Do these beliefs exist today?

Unfortunately, they do.

### People with developmental disabilities encounter discrimination in many areas.

People with developmental disabilities may be discriminated against in virtually every area of life. These discriminatory practices often make it difficult for them to:

- Find jobs in the community that pay at least minimum wage, including benefits.
- Have opportunities for promotions and career advancement.
- Find appropriate, safe, accessible housing.
- Access the health care system, receive adequate care or be allowed to make decisions regarding their own care.
- Get access to appropriate communications support.
- Access a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).
- Pursue post secondary education.

### Does discrimination continue today?

Unfortunately, it does. Whether overt or subtle, discriminatory practices are commonplace

Find more information at <https://disabilityjustice.org>





Source: Shut them Down

Shawn is one of the nations leading self-advocates. He has learned that we must fight for our rights.

Shawn is the Director of Allies in Advocacy, an organization of self-advocates focusing on the various gaps left by other organization. A organization fighting for equality of those living with disabilities.

Shawn was interviewed on a national radio show, as well he is

The host of his own radio show with partner Michael Rogers. The show is called "No More BS" on the first Tuesday of each month at 7PM pacific time on your phone 424-243-9540. All are welcome

During his interview, we could hear how humble Shawn is. He takes nothing for granted. He is grateful he had the supports to live independently and not in an institution.

It comes as a stark reality that if he lived in a institution he would not have experience all the opportunities that life has had. That being part of the community made all the difference.

He is very proud of his accomplishments and involvement dealing with disability issues. Besides all of this Shawn is the chair of the shut them down coalition, a officer on a local People First group, involved with SAIL self-advocates In Leadership, SABE self-advocates becoming Empowered, nothing about us without us HB 1566.

Shawn is just one of thousands of self-advocates across the country that believe that warehousing people with disabilities is as barbaric as one could imagine.

With a track record of abuse, neglect and isolation. Not to mention the loss of all opportunities that he himself has enjoyed in his life. Shawn believes all institutions should be closed and people with disabilities live in a community setting of their choice.

Shawn enjoys many hobbies and friends and it weighs on him knowing that there are thousands in this country who still don't even know these freedoms are possible.

Professions and unions fight to keep people with developmental and intellectual disabilities institutionalized when all the studies show better lives, happier lives and much safer lives for those living in a community setting.

Shawn has become a warrior of change in these old ways of thinking,

## Shawn Says: SHUT THEM DOWN

The Shut them Down Coalition in partnership with Self Advocates in Leadership put on a Rally in Olympia, Washington to bring more awareness to the issue of why we all need to demand the closures of our State's Residential Habilitation Centers.

### NEW YEARS DAY Brought Supported Decision-making law to Washington!

Big changes are on their way for guardianship. Supported Decision Making – known by the initials "S.D.M." becomes part of our law with the New Year. SDM is an alternative that allows people to accept help from others they choose in making their decisions, but does not take away their rights.

In 2019, the Washington State Legislature adopted the "Uniform Guardianship Act. Senator Pedersen was the prime sponsor.

The good news is that in 2020, Senator Pedersen improved the bill with some changes that protect rights. He also agreed to include "supported decision-making" (SDM), which is part of the law in eight other states already. So Washington law now requires that the judge must first consider whether supported decision-making would work for the person before setting up a guardianship! The new law went into effect on January 1, 2022.

What is supported decision-making? Supported decision-making allows people to make a legally-valid plan with people they trust to help them make their decisions. The person does not give up rights, and can end the agreement at anytime. To find out more about supported decision-making see: <https://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/resource/supported-decision-making-agreements>

The new law also makes big changes in our state's guardianship law, and all guardians will need to be trained in the new forms, rules, responsibilities and terminology. See Washington Courts website: <https://www.courts.wa.gov/guardianportal/index.cfm?fa=guardianportal.guardianship2022>

Source: David Lord

## SHUT THEM DOWN