Alliance for the Betterment of
Citizens with Disabilities

Empowering People: Providers Shaping Policies

ABCD POSITION PAPER
Maintaining Informed Choice
Emergency Closure of DDD Provider Agencies
February 26, 2020

In instances when an agency must close due to practices that are not in the best interests of the individuals being served or because of financial realities, an established protocol must be followed for individuals to change agencies.

For the individuals, the process must provide:

- Protections for their health and safety
- Assistance to acquire the information needed to exercise Informed Choice and Self Determination

For providers, the process must provide

- Uniform criteria so that the expectations are understood
- Equitable opportunity to demonstrate interest and capacity to support the individuals looking for new options.

By way of example, in 2018 the state decided to cease admissions and appoint an independent monitor at Bellwether. Though the monitor did not recommend closure, the state decided it was an emergency and selected 9 agencies to replace Bellwether services. ABCD does not know the specifics behind the determination by DHS/DDD that necessitated immediate action or the criteria for selecting replacement agencies. The definition of and criteria for an emergency must be clearly defined and understood by individuals, families and agencies.

ABCD understands that the state thought they had to act quickly to protect the residents and day clients of Bellwether programs and does not contend that Bellwether should have remained open, but rather, that the process used by the NJ Department of Human Services/Division of Developmental Disabilities (DHS/DDD) to select programs for individuals previously served by Bellwether be consistent with the principles of choice and self-determination.

127 Route 206, Suite 26, Hamilton, New Jersey 08610 Phone: 609-581-8375 Fax: 609-581-8512
Email: Admin@abcdnj.org Web: www.abcdnj.org