



February 2004

## **Shattering Myths** *about* **People with Intensive Needs Living in the Community**

***Q: Can everyone with a developmental disability be served in the community? Are there individuals who are not able to live outside of an institution?***

**A: All people currently in institutions can live in the community.<sup>i</sup>**

- Former Great Oaks Center residents who rely upon ventilators and portable oxygen, require positioning every two hours, and need suctioning are now living safely with home and community supports in Maryland.
- Nine states, plus the District of Columbia, have closed all state institutions: Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia. People are living successfully in the community.
- People are receiving 24-hour care and support, 365 days a year, when needed, to be safe in the community. They also have a better quality of life.

***Q: Are people in institutions more challenging and disabled than people living in the community?***

**A: No.**

- While many people remaining in institutions do have multiple disabilities and extensive support needs, there are people with similar disabilities and more intensive needs who are living with their families or are supported in community programs throughout Maryland.

**It is NOT reasonable to segregate people in institutions when experience and research prove that even people with significant disabilities and intensive needs can be supported in the community.**

**It is NOT reasonable to continue to invest scarce public dollars operating large, inefficient congregate settings.**

**It is NOT reasonable to deny even one person the right to live among us in the community, where services and supports can be provided.**

<sup>i</sup> Some people in DDA institutions are there under a court order because of involvement with the criminal justice system. They are referred to as the forensics population. Whether or not they can be served in the community is under the jurisdiction of the court, and therefore, not a part of this discussion.

**MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION**

**People on the Go of Maryland - The Arc of Maryland - Maryland Association of Community Services  
Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council - Maryland Disability Law Center**