

Dear Ms. Kuhno:

We would like to make a few comments on Shared Living and the current system. We have lived in Forest County, Pa for the past 35 years and have a 45 year old Down's Syndrome Son that has always lived with us. As we age we are concerned that at some point in the future we will no long be able to provide for his care. Last year his only sibling passed away and he was our "safety net" for [REDACTED] care.

Our County and Warren County are a jointure with most of the services being provided, being located in Warren County. This had not been the case in the past. There is no facility "group home" located in our county that [REDACTED] could transition to if the needs arises. In past years we have seen many residents, with special needs, taken out of Forest County and placed else where in order to receive the services they need. Then I have been told through DHS and our County Commissioners that we have less services located in our County because there are less clients and the need for the services is less. I have read about the "shared Living" program and doubt very much that this would work for the majority of those needing living arrangements, unless it was their own family members.

[REDACTED] has been fortunate to be able to attend "Venango Training and Development Center". This Center has helped him grow into a productive adult. One of the problems we do have is transportation. Living in a rural community there is no public transportation. His transportation was provide for many years thru the DHS. Once the state changes started requiring private providers, providing services instead of DHS problems arose. For over a year the only provider that DHS could find was "County of Forest Transportation" at a cost of \$60 a day. We live about 25 miles from the Center and about half hour driving time. Using present guide lines DHS could not hire a private person for \$60 a round trip, an individual could only be paid by the mile or for an hour of time. Well below the \$60 a day cost we were forced to pay. Given the fact that there were two clients riding to VTDC the "County of Forest" collected \$120 a day for that service. Also given the fact that this was a shared ride program, many times [REDACTED] sat on the van for hours waiting for other riders. At present, DHS has secured another provider at a lesser cost, most likely because of additional clients attending the VTDC, but what happens if the additional clients no longer go to the Center? This is just one example, there are others, as to how the cost has risen since we have to have private providers for all services.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to express some of our concerns.

**[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]**