



November 10, 2009

To: Parents and guardians of folks served in the RC Skilled Nursing Facility
From: Jeff Nichols, CEO, Mesa Developmental Services
RE: **Our efforts relating to providing and planning for community based services**

I want to take this opportunity to provide some updated information and clarification surrounding our efforts in planning for the transition of people from the Grand Junction Regional Centered Skilled Nursing Facility into community based services. I know that the majority of the team meetings have been conducted and that those meetings were an opportunity for parents, guardians and family members to discuss various services options for when the SNF closes. MDS' responsibility as both a Community Centered Board and service provider in the local area dictates that we find or develop necessary services for people with developmental disabilities in Mesa County. To that end, we have taken a very active role in various committee meetings, numerous efforts and discussions with various division and state Department of Human Services representatives, individual discussions with some of you and have undertaken a wide range of additional efforts to ensure that any residential, day services or medical needs will be met.

There are a number of providers throughout the state that have expressed interest in serving one or more people from the SNF. I know many of you are actively involved in looking at your options. To date though, a majority of you have not contacted specific providers nor confirmed final decisions regarding your choice of providers. While I truly understand this is a difficult process, I want to encourage you to seek out the providers you believe may best suit your family member's needs and confirm with them as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made without rushing the actual transition process.

For MDS' part, our provider departments (Residential Services and Day Services) have taken numerous steps to plan for and develop the necessary services. In order for us to move further, we need to know the number of people who may choose our services as soon as possible. We are committed to developing appropriate residential services, including group homes settings if necessary. Currently we

have no openings in any of our current group homes. As such, we will need to look at building new group homes for those of you that may choose that type of setting. While I understand some feedback I have received that parents want to be able to “see” what they are selecting, I simply cannot build group homes (or other types of facilities) or invest significant resources without the commitment from people. As that creates a bit of a “catch 22” or “chicken and the egg” problem, the best I can offer at this juncture is tours of our existing group homes, in particular 309 Kava Way. Knowing that many of you may not be able to tour the home personally, I am posting plans and pictures of this facility and other potential design options on our public web site www.mesadev.org to assist you in your decision-making process. An added benefit for those of you making an early commitment is that you will be able to participate to some degree in the design and planning process. Just like creating your own “dream home” – this process can be fun and exciting.

In order to have new group home facilities (or any of the appropriate residential, day service or medical services) available when the stated February 28 deadline, all of us as providers need commitments as soon as possible as the time frame is perilously short – especially if group home facilities are needed and desired.

In order to be ready to move as quickly as possible, MDS has been designing plans, contacting developers, raising funds, locating property and overall simply readying as many contingency plans as possible. We will not be able to begin specific construction until we have final commitments from families. Without those commitments in the next week, we will not be able to have homes available to accommodate people needing to move by February 28.

I know as well the level of staffing and qualifications of staff are also a concern for parents and guardians. We are committed to staffing levels that are appropriate to the needs of the people in services, including the potential need for on-site nursing as well as more highly trained direct support staff.

Please let me know personally what additional information you feel you need, what questions you have that I can attempt to answer or what concerns you have that need to be addressed to allow you to move forward with a decision. Please feel free to contact me on my cell phone 970-260-7096 via email at jnichols@mesadev.com.

MDS is very committed to finding appropriate service solutions or developing those services or facilities that are necessary to meet the needs of anyone seeking services in our local area. As time is short, we will be contacting you in an effort to assist you and your family in making a safe and successful transition into the community.