

Public Press Conference Fri 10/7 at 1:30 at Capitol

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For Immediate release

Community Response to Abuse and Mistreatment Crisis at Pueblo Regional Center

**Press Conference Friday October 7th at 1:30 pm in Room 111 at the State
Capitol.**

The Colorado Cross Disability Coalition (CCDC) and Parents of Adults with Disabilities Colorado (PAD-CO) are hosting a press conference to address Colorado's Statewide Crisis in Disability services for those with intellectual disabilities, in response to conditions at the Pueblo Regional Center (PRC). PRC is a placement "of last resort", with a campus and 10 local group homes with a maximum of 8 people each. Residents have significant support needs, which are unable to be met in other placements, and are the most vulnerable of the most vulnerable. Management, ratios and training of PRC staff are major concerns. Regional centers (RC) serve a specific need; we are not advocating closures. People should get what they need, when they need it in a setting they need, including RCs. The Disability community stands in unity to demand immediate changes to the services at the Pueblo Regional Center and to address the findings of non-compliance statewide from the federal government review. Several speakers will share personal experiences and necessary actions to address the emergency at understaffed Pueblo Regional Center. Wider impacts also will be raised.

In March of 2015, months after allegations of abuse, 63 residents at the Pueblo Regional Center were subjected to invasive strip searches at the hands of the state, without their consent or their guardians' knowledge. Mari Newman, an attorney representing many residents observed, *"Instead of actually addressing concerns that residents were being mistreated, DHS delayed taking action for months, and then further abused residents by subjecting them to humiliating and degrading strip searches without their consent and in violation of their constitutional rights."*

In April 2016, the US Department of Health and Human Services, Federal Center for Medicaid Medicare Systems conducted an on-site review which resulted in systemic issues of non-

compliance and a request that Colorado submit a corrective action plan.

Dr. Denver Fox, Pad-Co moderator, is father to an adult son in residential services. He shares *"Despite overwhelming medical evidence of abuse nearly causing my son's death, the 18th Judicial District Attorney refused to prosecute. Until criminal accountability and prosecution is present at every level, including supervisors and administrators, this abuse will continue."*

Julie Reiskin, Executive Director of the Colorado Cross Disability Coalition commented *"People who require residential support live in every community in Colorado and all of them deserve to live with dignity and without abuse. We must get to the bottom of what is causing low pay and inadequate staffing that is leading to these inhumane conditions across the state."*

For questions Contact Maureen Welch mpwelchco@gmail.com or 720-436-4121

***The US Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services on site Review of the Pueblo Regional Center dated August 17, is available at <http://www.ourwebs.info/HHServicesCMSPRCOnsiteReportPDF.pdf>

