

**Coalition for  
Persons  
Disabled by  
Mental  
Illness**

February 15, 2012

The Honorable Beverly Perdue  
Governor, State of North Carolina  
20301 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

Dear Governor Perdue:

We are writing to you about the Dix property. We represent the Coalition of Persons Disabled by Mental Illness, and we care deeply about a legacy for Dix that honors Dorothea Dix and her dedication to the best possible treatment and care of those affected by mental illness. We are joined in this effort by NAMI Wake County.

As stated in previous correspondence to you, our request is to preserve the funding from the sale of the land in order to use this funding to support innovations in services to people with mental illness. The money could be disbursed through some sort of a structure, such as a foundation, whose fundamental purpose would be to award community grants for evidenced based practices in the field of mental illness. To make this work, we want to see the Dix land sold for fair market value, the proceeds protected by the foundation and used to improve the lives of those who are affected by mental illness.

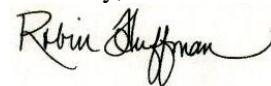
Recent news stories have focused on converting the property to a public park, debating the property appraisal, the plans of the Dix Visionaries. Concerns for the original purpose of the property—for those with mental illness—are tucked away in the last paragraphs.

We think it vital that the sale be for the full market value so that the proceeds can support the legacy we have described. We also urge you to put a line item in your upcoming budget that would assure that any proceeds from the sale or lease of the Dix property be used to fund evidence-based community services for persons with mental illness.

We would like to request a meeting with you to review our proposal and discuss steps we can take towards its realization.

We look forward to helping create a solution that leaves a positive legacy that honors Dorothea Dix and puts some funding where it should be-- to support mental health. With the challenges our system has faced, with the cuts made to the mental health trust fund, and with so many changes in the fundamental structuring of mental health that has ended in chaos for so many, it is time to make a bold action supporting funding community practices that work.

Sincerely,



Robin Huffman  
Chair CPDMI

EASTER SEALS/UCP of NC & VA

MENTAL HEALTH  
ASSOCIATION CHAPTERS IN NC

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
SOCIAL WORKERS – NC  
CHAPTER

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON  
MENTAL ILLNESS NORTH  
CAROLINA

NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL  
OF COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

NORTH CAROLINA MENTAL  
HEALTH CONSUMERS'  
ORGANIZATION

NORTH CAROLINA MENTAL  
HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL

NORTH CAROLINA  
NURSES ASSOCIATION

NORTH CAROLINA PROVIDERS  
COUNCIL

NORTH CAROLINA  
PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

NORTH CAROLINA  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

**Coalition for  
Persons  
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December 9, 2010

The Honorable Beverly Perdue  
Governor, State of North Carolina  
20301 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

Dear Governor Perdue,

We recognize the tremendous pressures you, our department leadership, and our legislators have in front of you with the pending budget deficit. We know there will be calls to take desperate measures to secure funding for necessary state services.

The Coalition for Persons Disabled by Mental Illness (CPDMI) urges you to preserve the covenant made more than 150 years ago to the citizens of North Carolina with mental illness. If Dorothea Dix Hospital is closed, please give strong consideration to preserving the property for the future benefit of these same citizens.

We ask you to consider the CPDMI position presented in the document attached that we will be distributing.

We welcome meeting with you and working with you to ensure that any disposition of this property is used to establish a binding trust fund that helps provide real services to those living with mental illness. This will be the best way to preserve the legacy of Dorothea Dix.

Gratefully,



**Robin Huffman**  
Chair Coalition for Persons Disabled by Mental Illness

Enclosures

cc: Lanier Cansler, DHHS Secretary  
Charles Meeker, Mayor of Raleigh  
Paul Coble, Chair Wake County Commission  
Members of the Wake County Legislative Delegation  
Members of the Legislative Oversight Committee DMHDDSA

DISABILITY RIGHTS NORTH  
CAROLINA

EASTER SEALS/UCP of NC & VA

MENTAL HEALTH  
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ASSOCIATION

# COALITION FOR PERSONS DISABLED BY MENTAL ILLNESS

## Planning for the Future – An Opportunity Not to Be Squandered

December 2010

With the closure of Dorothea Dix Hospital imminent, now is the time for proactive planning regarding the future of our institutional and community services. The Coalition for Persons Disabled by Mental Illness (CPDMI) urges the state to turn this into an opportunity to look carefully at what is needed for our citizens with mental illness.

Any funds generated from the sale of the property must be used to provide what has been needed for years – supported housing, supported employment, more local inpatient bed capacity to be located where the wait times are the longest, peer support, and support for the recovery model.

People with severe mental illness want to live in the community. They want jobs and housing like everyone else – but they need the support to make that possible. And, the funds must be protected and used only for this purpose: the Mental Health Trust Fund established years ago at the beginning of the reform effort was not protected and, in fact, broke the public trust.

- One in four North Carolinians will have a diagnosable mental illness at some point in their lifetime. Yet only about 27% received any services. The demand for these services has grown dramatically. Yet thousands of North Carolinians are still waiting for services. Services for those living with mental illness and their families need dramatic reform to move towards recovery model services.
- While mental illness, as well as addictive disease and developmental disabilities create challenges, with appropriate treatment and support services individuals can live successfully in communities of their choice. But, there are not enough community services available.
- A small, but significant number of people continue to be discharged from state hospitals to homeless shelters. Others are consigned to family care and adult care homes because they have no alternatives that are appropriate and affordable. Residential services for persons with severe mental illness are badly under-funded.
- A recent report on state psychiatric hospital delays showed an average wait time of 2.6 **days** for those waiting for inpatient care, compared to 4.26 **hours** for those waiting in emergency departments for non mental health emergencies. This cannot be tolerated.

If any decision is made to lease, transfer or sell the Dorothea Dix Hospital Property, CPDMI feels strongly that the State has a moral obligation to use the proceeds from this land for the benefit of the citizens of North Carolina who need services for mental illness and/or have co-occurring disabilities of mental illness and substance abuse, or intellectual disabilities.

In fact, we believe the State has a legal obligation. The US Supreme Court's Olmstead decision mandates that states provide quality alternatives in the community to persons currently institutionalized by the State. Use of any profits from the Dix land would show the State's true commitment to these citizens.

The NC General Assembly in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century made a covenant with its citizens by securing land and building a hospital to care for those with mental illness and other emotional problem, and to honor nurse and advocate Dorothea Dix. CPDMI respectfully requests that more than a century later our current state leadership take the appropriate steps to ensure that this historic covenant with its citizens with mental impairments be kept. The disposition of this property should not be made with an eye to a quick fix to the state's current budget woes, but must be dedicated to a special trust for the MHDDSA system of the state.

*The Coalition for Persons Disabled by Mental Illness was formed in 1981, and is composed of statewide, non-profit advocacy, consumer, family and provider organizations that advocate for adequate, quality services for citizens of North Carolina with mental illness. CPDMI represents tens of thousands of people all across the state.*

**COALITION FOR PERSONS DISABLED BY MENTAL ILLNESS**

**Member Organizations**

**December 2010**

Disability Rights NC

MHA Chapters in North Carolina

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) North Carolina

NC Chapter, National Association of Social Workers

North Carolina Council of Community MH/DD/SA Programs

North Carolina Mental Health Consumers' Organization

North Carolina Mental Health Planning Council

North Carolina Nurses Association

NC Providers Council

North Carolina Psychiatric Association

North Carolina Psychological Association

Easter Seals/UCP North Carolina and Virginia