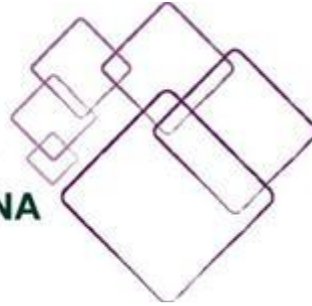


DISABILITY RIGHTS NORTH CAROLINA

Champions for Equality and Justice



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Disability Rights NC Files Suit to Stop Transfer of Dix Patients

Raleigh, NC-

Disability Rights North Carolina today filed suit in Wake County Superior Court to stop the planned move of patients from Dorothea Dix Hospital to Central Regional Hospital until the state can demonstrate it is in compliance with directives passed in July by the North Carolina General Assembly.

The lawsuit seeks a temporary restraining order (TRO) and preliminary injunction that would prohibit the state from moving the patients into the new hospital in Butner, N.C., until it meets the legislative requirements that the new hospital is in compliance with the regulations of both the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JACHO). The state currently plans to begin moving the patients on Oct. 1.

“This agency has great concerns that the new hospital has significant issues regarding the safety and care of patients,” said Vicki Smith, executive director of Disability Rights NC. “The Department of Health and Human Services continues to provide assurances they will fix the problems, but to date, serious problems still exist. This is not a question of whether Dix should stay open indefinitely, rather it our intent that known safety issues at Central Regional Hospital be addressed prior to introducing another 170 patients.”

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Disability Rights North Carolina is the state's federally mandated protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities. One of the P&A's primary federal mandates is to protect and advocate against the abuse and neglect of people with disabilities, including mental illness, in the care of state institutions.