

Residents Bring 'Homes' to Albany to Protest

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After driving from New York City during a snowstorm, a group of adult home residents carried four boxes representing their homes into the mental and hygiene budget hearing last week in protest.

The adult home residents all have mental health problems and attended the hearing with members from the Coalition of Institutionalized Aged and Disabled to protest the lack of housing options available to them and the need for independent case management. Independent case managers would not be part of the adult home staff.

"Adult homes were never designed to deal with mental health," said Davin Robinson, policy associate for Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy.

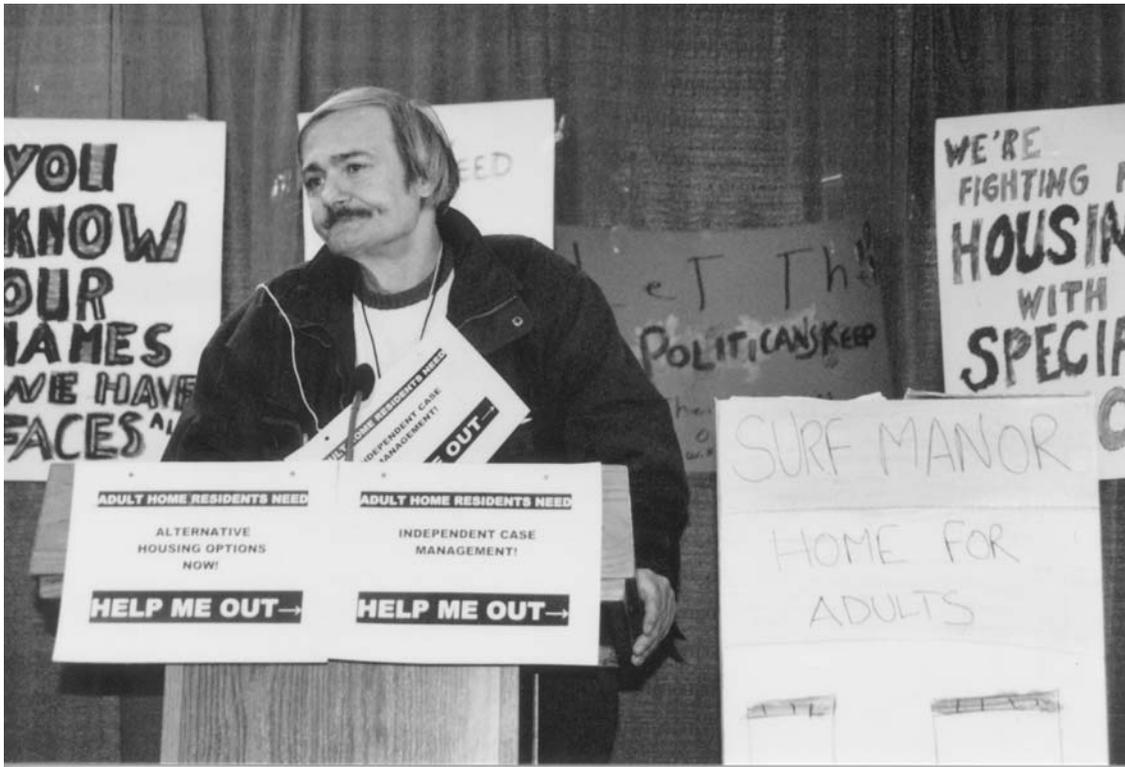
Davin and Karen Schimke, president and CEO of SCAA, presented testimony to the executive budget committee where they asked the Legislature for such things as to "restore funding for community mental health services," support for the governor's budget proposal to increase 'stipends for supported housing,' 'additional community beds,' 'assure that people living in adult home have access to OMH' and 'continue to expand the supportive case management and peer specialist programs.'

Two residents also spoke to the committee requesting additional housing options.

In addition to speaking with the committee, the residents met privately in the office of state Sen. Thomas P. Morahan, R,C-Rockland, with one of his staff members, Steven Natoli. The adult home residents told Natoli of their concerns and what they would like the Legislature to do about it.

"Something is wrong with the system," said Patrick Rapp, who has been living at Surf Manor Adult home, with 200 other residents, for six years, "we need to change the system."

"I had no choice to be put into a home. ... If I had an independent case manager I would be an individual, not 200 people," he said.



Surf Manor resident speaking at a January 26, 2005 CIAD press conference on the lack of housing options and services in adult homes in New York State.