



Hi there. It's Larry and you are listening to *Disability Nation*, an audio magazine by and for people with disabilities. And as I always say, thanks for tuning in again this week.

This is show number 70 and I know I've had a couple of shows lately, more frequently than usual; trying to put more shows out more often. But also, this wasn't really planned. There was a situation that came up I thought I would cover and that has to do with an ADAPT protest at a nursing home facility run and owned by the county and also the city of Philadelphia. Really, really bad environment. They found syringes and needles in people's beds and a number of other violations so it's really, really a bad place and several members of ADAPT and Liberty Resources -- which is a Center for Independent Living in Philly -- and a number of other organizations have been out there protesting so I thought we would talk with them about what that's all about.

Also on the show this week I'm going to take a couple of minutes to chat with you about some of the new features on the *Disability Nation* website. I realized I've done a lot of things to the site lately and some things in the last couple of days that are pretty significant changes so I thought I'd talk with you about those. There are definitely some ways you can get more involved with the website, sharing the content that's on there and whatever you want to do there, so we'll talk more about that in a couple of minutes.

You can get in touch with me in a couple of ways. You can send e-mail to [contact@DisabilityNation.net](mailto:contact@DisabilityNation.net). You can also call the *Disability Nation* phone portal. That number is (480) 302-9300; it's brought you by [PhonePortals.com](http://PhonePortals.com). Again, (480) 302-9300. You can leave messages at that number and also listen to past episodes of the show. And don't forget, if you don't know already, you can stop by the *Disability Nation* website. That address is [www.DisabilityNation.net](http://www.DisabilityNation.net).

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Reporter: Protesters say the disabled residents of the Philadelphia nursing home are prisoners with no way out so they pitched their tents here for a very serious sleepover. They've been here since 9:00 o'clock this morning and they say they are ready for the long haul.

Man: We are very tired for them to keep warehousing this disabled community in this nursing home.

Woman: Let them out of here.

Woman: I call them death camps. You are to sit there waiting to die.

Reporter: ADAPT, a disability rights group, has been talking to the city about transitioning dozens of nursing home residents into the community and shutting the place down.

Man: Since January we haven't had any concrete commitment.

Dr. Donald Schwarz: We have a lot of confidence in the nursing home itself.

Reporter: Dr. Donald Schwarz, Deputy Mayor for Health and Opportunity, says the city has contracted a private entity to help with placement.

Dr. Donald Schwarz: We are looking for housing opportunities for these folks. We have assessed every person at the nursing home.

Reporter: The city says they have given Philadelphia housing vouchers to the residents but a past of self-sufficiency isn't that simple.

Dr. Donald Schwarz: Finding housing is difficult and putting supports in place for a number of people is difficult because of the severity of their condition. We do not want people with serious medical conditions to be turned out onto the street.

Reporter: Protesters also spoke of deplorable conditions inside.

Man: They see feces on the floors; I've experienced that myself. There are syringes and needles left in beds.

Reporter: You've seen that in there?

Man: I've seen that myself in there.

Man: We have both investigated that care, the state has investigated that care and federal assessments have been done.

Reporter: And protesters say you will see a presence from them 24/7 until they get a commitment from the city. Meanwhile, the city says they are doing the best they can for the residents. They also say that some don't want to leave the nursing home and they say others are simply unable to care for themselves outside these walls.

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That report you just heard was filed earlier in the week by a local media outlet there in Philadelphia covering the story. The ADAPT group actually stayed around all week and to my knowledge they're still there working to get some demands from the city and Mayor Nutter of Philadelphia on how to move forward with closing down this facility and improving the conditions for people that are there in the meantime.

I had a chance on Thursday morning to talk with German Parodi who is with ADAPT. He's been with ADAPT for about a year and a half. He told me a little bit about the situation and what's going on at this point down in Philadelphia.

Larry Wanger: Okay. And you folks have been out for a few days now in action trying to encourage the mayor of Philadelphia to close down a facility there. Can you tell us about your action and about the facility?

German Parodi: Certainly. We have been out here since Monday morning at 9:00 a.m., 24 hours a day. Different organizations also coming throughout the day from Liberty Resources, which is a Center for Independent Living in the Philadelphia area; [inaudible] Worker Right, which is another organization in Philadelphia that's for human rights.

This nursing home, which is owned by the city, harbors already 450 residents and is expanding a wing to go to its maximum of 500. We know, myself being a community advocate, we go in there and we found feces in bed and people laying on them, syringes in bed; we know of many cases. Someone with Alzheimer's was found drinking bleach in a closet recently. Many, many things that are against human rights.

Right now, after we started, we know many people are in there, they wanted to come out and show their support. They have been told that unless a Paratransit ride comes to get them they cannot leave the facility, so they're prohibiting anybody from exiting. CMS has put out statistics on this nursing home. It goes over the average of the national average of people with beds for short term and long term.

So it's a deplorable state. People live in there and their rights are being taken away from them and there's no reason for the city to harbor the disabled community in this nursing home.

People here, we know of one lady that her house burned down and after that they put her in here. I mean, Mayor Nutter is doing this housing [inaudible] for the homeless and apparently it's ending up to be [inaudible] the nursing home.

We want them closed. We have been meeting with him and the health commissioner, Donald Schwarz, since January to no avail. No commitment. And a few days ago he stated that he will not be closing the nursing home. So apparently he wants to continue the nursing home business.

Larry Wanger: And has this home been cited by Medicare or Medicaid or anything like that for violations and safety issues in the past?

German Parodi: In the past yes, it has numerous times.

Larry Wanger: Okay. And so you've been talking with the mayor and the other folks from the city about closing this for some time and why are they not willing to at least work towards a plan to transition people to the community? What's the hold-up?

German Parodi: That's a very good question. We don't know. They haven't given us a reason. Many times they say, "What about the housing crisis?" Many people in there do not need housing; they need support in the community.

Their transitioning services are horrible. We know because I've been with transition plans to the community that they do. They don't have their medicines when they leave. They don't have the appropriate DMEs. They're not really helping people that want to transition, transition. And they just want to keep filling those beds up.

Larry Wanger: This home is owned by the city, correct?

German Parodi: Yes, it is owned by the city.

Larry Wanger: So they obviously are getting reimbursements from Medicaid and/or Medicare to operate the facility. Follow the money. Is it possible that the city is making some kind of profit off running this facility?

German Parodi: Oh, it's owned by the county and Philadelphia -- it's owned by the city. So definitely. I mean, there's no doubt that they are having revenue from us. We're cash cows for them. It's a deplorable state. We're already in this time and age and they still think of the disabled community has a hindrance to the rest of the community. They just want to put us away in a nursing home and that's unforgivable.

Larry Wanger: Do you have any idea how much money the city makes and county make off this facility at all?

German Parodi: Well, for each individual at least -- if I'm not mistaken -- to Medicaid it's over \$60,000 for every person a year, and that's without counting what the state puts in.

Larry Wanger: Okay. So pretty substantial. You guys have been out there for a couple of days. How many people roughly have you had out there with you?

German Parodi: Well, during the day time we have gone up to about 50, sometimes 60. Like I said, different organizations come in and out. Twenty-four hour has been between 10 and 20 people that are staying overnight all the time.

Larry Wanger: And are you getting food brought in and -- how are living conditions for the folks that are staying there overnight?

German Parodi: Yes. We have a number of cots. We have put a tarp and we have a tent. Different organizations and churches are bringing us breakfast, lunch and dinner. We coordinated this. So in that sense we have been pretty well.

Larry Wanger: And is your goal just for a complete shutdown of this facility immediately or are you looking for -- I assume you're looking for a structured process that will help people transition to the community and its eventual closure?

German Parodi: Well, yes. I mean, we asked the city at a time pursuant -- that we just wanted the thing to be shut down tomorrow. I mean, we want the facility to be closed but we don't want our community to be out in the streets with no services and that cannot happen in a day with having 450 people. So wanted the city to commit a downsizing transitioning plan. We're looking for the city, Mayor Nutter, to commit to at least 50 people within six months, closing those beds, then continuing this process and so the facility is empty and closing.

Larry Wanger: How long will you stay out there?

German Parodi: Until we have this commitment. I mean, our brothers and sisters in this nursing home have to live there. We have the opportunity, the privilege, the chance to be out in the community but how can I sleep in my own bed, relaxing, knowing that they are there without -- having their rights being stolen from them? That is why we must be out here, so they know we are for them and that we will fight for their rights.

Larry Wanger: If people -- someone's listening and wants to help, are there certain needs that your group needs to help you keep up this vigil? I mean, are there things that we can be doing to help you?

German Parodi: Really what we would need is to have you contact Mayor Nutter and his office and plea that he does meet with us, that he gets out of the

nursing home business. The phone number straight to his office is (215) 686-2181; that's directly to the mayor's office. It's not the '70s where money was extremely being made off from us and nursing homes. It's city-owned. I mean, it's one of the biggest cities in the United States, supposedly the City of Brotherly Love, and are we not brothers to be loved as well because we're disabled?

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Just a reminder that if you want more information about topics discussed on today's show or wish to download a transcript, or to get a copy of this or any other episode of the show, head over to the *Disability Nation* website. That address is [www.DisabilityNation.net](http://www.DisabilityNation.net).

So I want to take a couple of minutes to let you know about some of the new features that you'll find on the *Disability Nation* website, if you'll head over there. You might remember, if you listen regularly, I might have mentioned several months ago that I did a lot of work on the site and I've continued to build on that and offer some additional features.

First and foremost, you have some options. If you want to get regular updates about the show and what's happening I do offer an e-mail subscription newsletter. You can just simply go to the website and on the top right corner you see a place that says, "Enter your e-mail address to receive free updates." Just enter your e-mail, click Submit, and then you have to verify your address. And it is an accessible process, so just verify your address and you can get the e-mails and be subscribed.

You could also subscribe to what's called the RSS feed. I don't want to get too complex and technical. That's just a process that allows you to get the latest updates about the show sent directly to you in what's called a feed reader. So maybe you use Google Reader or NewsGator or different services like that, Yahoo! maybe. If you look on the website on the right side you also see some links for those various ones. You just click the appropriate one and follow the instructions. It's very simple.

Next I've really trying to step up efforts to bring you the latest headlines and news from the disability community. Lots of things happen that I don't cover on the show necessarily but are certainly of importance and so I want to give you an opportunity to learn about those. Also on the right side of the page you'll see a header that says, "Latest disability news," and below that are at least the latest 10 headlines that I've posted that focus on disability issues and things that are happening that you might want to be aware of. You just click the link and it takes you directly to the news article or website or whatever the source is.

I make it easy to get those updates as well. If you want them to come directly to you there's a service called Twitter. I know many people probably don't know what that is but it's a microblogging platform. It's just a simple way to get information. So if you are on Twitter and a user, just go over to the *Disability Nation* page. Right in that column

where you see the latest headlines, on the bottom there's a link to my page on Twitter and you can just follow me there and get those updates sent right to you.

And hopefully I haven't confused anybody else.

I've also tried to take some steps to make it possible to share information and content that's on the site. So you will see several icons at the bottom of each post. Maybe you use one of these services and you can click on the appropriate icon and share the content with people, post it and pass it on if you think it's interesting.

In addition to that I've posted a rating system. You'll see below every post five stars and you actually can rate the post and the content that's on the site. So if you like something that you read or you think it's good, absolutely click one of the stars; give it a rating. You can vote one time on each article or blog entry or episode of the show, whatever the case might be. So just feel free to do that as you wish.

And finally, I want to remind people that you can leave comments on the website. If you don't have an account yet, you need to get an account. Simple to do. You just go to the website and click "register for an account" and it'll ask for your e-mail address and some very basic information. I'll provide you with an opportunity to get the newsletter, as I mentioned earlier. And just follow the process and you'll have an account and that enables you to leave comments. Right now I do require that you have an account to do that. So it just takes just a few minutes and then you can participate in the discussion and leave comments or whatever you want to say about what's on the website.

So there will be many more things to come in the next couple of weeks. I'm working on a couple of other things that will improve your ability to find information and share content with other people, whatever you'd like to do.

So as always, thanks again for tuning in and listening and we will talk again soon. Take care.

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*To contact Disability Nation you can send e-mail to [contact@DisabilityNation.net](mailto:contact@DisabilityNation.net); call (480) 302-9300, the Disability Nation phone portal by [PhonePortals.com](http://PhonePortals.com); or visit our website at [www.DisabilityNation.net](http://www.DisabilityNation.net).*

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