Dear Illinois Residents:

Seniors and people with disabilities of all ages should have the opportunity to live in community-integrated settings. Planning for individuals with long-term care needs should include diligent consideration of community-based options. My administration has worked steadfastly to implement that vision and I am proud of the reforms we have accomplished to date.

I signed the Illinois Disabilities Service Act because I knew that although the State of Illinois has worked hard to create community-based services for seniors and people with disabilities, the demand for a wider array of these services—including outpatient and residential options—requires further effort. Specifically, the act dictates that the state, through a Disabilities Services Advisory Committee (DSAC), develop and implement a plan to provide individuals with the option of moving into a community setting when appropriate.

I envision a DSAC implementation plan that is based on the following clear and bold tenets.

- Every effort will be made to maximize opportunities for individuals to transition to more independent functioning and integrated community living.
- Aligns system access points to support a wider array of options and greater access to both community outpatient and residential care.
- The state should continue with the implementation of the cross-disability database in order to identify individuals whose services and care-settings could be modified to better meet their needs.
- Benchmarks will be used to track progress in matching consumer needs with appropriate service levels and care settings.
• To fund these new initiatives, Illinois will a.) maximize capacity to leverage federal funding, including Medicaid waivers, b.) examine a money follows the person pilot as a possible dovetail to the current goal of a fee-for-service model, and c.) analyze methods for decreasing costs so that further resources can be invested in community care.

• The DSAC plan will be developed and implemented in concert with other aligned state policy initiatives such as the Older Adult Services Act and the Comprehensive Housing Plan.

From these tenets, I anticipate that committee members will craft and begin to implement a plan that offers more choice to seniors and people with disabilities of all ages in Illinois. Thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Rod Blagojevich
Governor