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Lots of options exist besides institutions

Regarding the June 19 Iowa View "Help Iowans With Disabilities Live Independently": A basic understanding of civil rights leads to the conclusion that state schools warehousing people with developmental disabilities have outlasted their questionable utility.

They are a shameful relic of failed public policy and outdated attitudes toward people with disabilities. Even with newly signed legislation to improve conditions, the conditions of the institutions will remain deplorable and will also continue to be the most glaring example of badly spent money.

The facts remain. Institutions warehousing people with disabilities across the country are the focus of failed inspections, horrendous findings that detail substandard care, class-action lawsuits and decertifications.

There are many other existing and proposed initiatives that support de-institutionalization - the Americans with Disabilities Act, the New Freedom Initiatives, Olmstead Plans, The Lifespan Respite Care Act, Expanding the Promise for Individuals with Autism Act, Pathways to Independence Act, the Family and Workplace Balancing Act, to name a few.

The institutional bias is not reflective of American attitudes. People want to stay in their homes and communities, regardless of disability at any age.

- Robert Stack, president and CEO, Community Options Inc., Princeton, New Jersey
