



STMHMR is now 'Spindletop Center'

Effective Jan. 1, 2011, Spindletop MHMR (Mental Health, Mental Retardation) will become "**Spindletop Center.**" This change is in line with a trend of removing the letters "MR" from the names of community mental health centers due to the evolution of the way providers refer to mental retardation diagnoses. The name change comes on the heels of President Barack Obama's Oct. 5, 2010 signing of "Rosa's Law (S.2781)," a mandate that federal policy statutes must replace the term "mental retardation" with "intellectual disabilities."

"We're all familiar with the term IDD (intellectual and developmental disabilities) in our line of service," said Sally Walden, Spindletop's director of network services. "That is the preferred term for these diagnoses. Also, we needed a name that really reflected the incredibly broad range of programs we offer throughout the region. We believe 'Spindletop Center' is a broad enough name to encompass all that we do, plus any other services we might add."

Spindletop Center has been using the term (IDD) for some time already, so the name change is a natural outgrowth of that usage.

Rosa's Law was inspired by Rosa Marcellino, a child with Down syndrome whose family refused to accept the label "retarded" in reference to their daughter. At the state level, Texas Senator Judith Zaffirini (D-District 21) filed a "respectful language" bill similar to Rosa's Law in the 81st Legislative Session. Although the bill did not become law, Zaffirini intends to re-file the legislation when the next session convenes on Jan. 11.

Walden said, "We see taking 'mental retardation' out of our name as a reflection of how we view ourselves and our clients. The term was created with the best of intentions; it was meant to replace clinical labels like 'imbecile' that had turned into insults."

Walden continued, "Something similar has happened with MR. It takes just a little while for words that started as respectful terminology to get picked up by the culture and used as a schoolyard taunt. It's proper that we move to a term that is not only respectful, but also very accurate."

According to the website for the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (aidd.org):

"The term 'intellectual disability' is synonymous with the term 'mental retardation,' and is generally replacing it.

According to the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities, an estimated seven to eight million Americans of all ages experience intellectual disability. Intellectual disabilities affect about one in ten families in the United States.

An intellectual disability is a disability that involves significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills.

This disability originates before the age of 18 and encompasses a wide range of conditions, types, and levels. Intellectual disability is caused by factors that can be physical, genetic, and/or social."

For more information on the Spindletop Center, call 409-839-1000 or log onto www.spindletopmhm.org or

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--Sally Walden, Director of Network Services, Spindletop Center

Points of Interest

Do you have a program you want to highlight or tell the public about? Send info to Janna Fulbright at info@stmhm.org.