

# **THE STARK COUNTY BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE DD-1543 June 28, 2016

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## **Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities Approves Adult Services Transition Timeline Board Delays Date for Privatization of Adult Services to July 2018 after Community Input**

CANTON, OHIO – In keeping with a federal mandate, the Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities trustees today voted to approve the agency’s transition of all adult program services to private providers effective July 1, 2018. Recent federal rules by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services mandate that agencies nationwide can no longer provide both case management and Medicaid waiver services, such adult day services, supported employment and adult transportation.

While agencies must comply by 2024, a Stark DD task force initially recommended the Board accelerate this timeline and complete the privatization of services in January of 2018 instead of 2024, to reduce the disruptive effects of a lengthy transition. After considerable input from focus groups and from public hearings, the Board agreed to delay the transition to July 2018 to allow individuals served and agency employees two full years to plan for the change.

“We know this is a challenging transition and we heard loud and clear that the people we serve, their families and our employees want more time to make this move, so we agreed to extend the timeline” said Stark DD President Daniel Sutter. “We want to thank everyone who participated on our task force, in our focus groups and who came to our public hearings to share their input.”

Those affected by the mandate include:

- 609 people currently served at the Lester Higgins and West Stark Adult Centers who have two years to decide if they wish to remain at those

facilities where The Workshops, Inc. (TWi) currently provides adult programs, or to choose another private provider.

- 162 employees who work in Stark DD adult services and transportation. TWi has expressed interest in hiring current Stark DD employees based upon need and at their discretion in order to provide continuity of care.

The Board also directed Stark DD Superintendent Bill Green to work with the Stark County Educators and Professional Trainers Association and the Support Staff Association – the unions representing affected employees – on a financial incentive package and a possible sick time payout plan to encourage employees to continue working with Stark DD until the closure date in order to ensure the continuity of services.

“Our mission to connect individuals with disabilities and their families with the services they need will not change, and we intend to be there every step of the way to help everyone make this required transition go as smoothly as possible over the next two years” said Daniel Sutter. “We also sincerely thank our employees for their dedication and professionalism. Many of them have provided services for decades – they are enthusiastic and passionate about their work and about our mission. They’ve worked hard and they have earned and deserve our assistance with this transition.”

In other action, the Board voted to approve the agency’s 2017 preliminary budget.

For more information about Stark DD, visit the website at: [www.starkdd.org](http://www.starkdd.org).

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