

Testimony: Availability of Adult Changing Stations Throughout the State

My name is Constance Battle. As a developmental pediatrician, I headed a 131-bed hospital for children with severe disabilities and medical illnesses in Washington, DC, for 26 years. Today, I am here as a mother of a daughter with severe physical disabilities, cerebral palsy, due to a birth injury.

Ursula cannot join community-based programs because there is not any place where she could be bathroomed over the duration of the day. This limitation has kept her out of a community-based program since last summer when the Arc New Horizons Program closed. Eleven of the 21 persons in her program at Arc were able to transition successfully to inclusive, community-based recreational/social crews. The remaining ten were unable to transition.

Who else needs adult changing stations besides persons like Ursula? Persons who are medically fragile, overweight, have behavioral challenges, physical impairment requiring wheelchair transportation (either the chair cannot be accommodated, or persons cannot be lifted out of the chair and changed or assisted to sit on the toilet, or be changed lying on their back and freshened up)? What other categories? persons who have extremely sensitive skin or various dermatologic permanent conditions. Also, some folks need to catharize themselves at specific intervals and need the privacy and environment to do so. Also, wounded veterans or persons who have an acute orthopedic injury with casts. Most anyone at some time or the other.

Can I become more clinical for a moment and mention how uncomfortable it is to need to use the bathroom or how uncomfortable it is to be wet for extended periods. Changing my daughter is comparable to changing a baby, only not with so good products as have been developed for babies.

Also, FYI, the normal range of urine produced by the kidney is 800 to 2000 ml/day with a normal intake of about 2 liters per day. The normal amount of urine produced each time one voids is about 250 to 500 ml, (1 to 2 cups) of urine, or about two liters/day over six to eight voiding episodes throughout the day. I will not explain about the other process of elimination. Only to say that normal, but unpleasant odors may further stigmatize persons with disabilities.

In summary, installing adult changing facilities would be a significant step toward inclusion of everyone.

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