Disability Rights New Jersey Files Lawsuit Alleging Abuse in New Jersey Psychiatric Hospitals



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On February 20, 2024, Disability Rights New Jersey, a federally funded advocacy group for people with disabilities, filed a lawsuit against the New Jersey Department of Health and Department of Human Services and the State of New Jersey. The lawsuit alleges that individuals confined in New Jersey psychiatric hospitals are subjected to abusive conditions (including violence and sexual abuse) and inappropriately prolonged involuntary confinement (even though they no longer meet the requirements for confinement) due to a lack of mental health resources in the community. Disability Rights New Jersey alleges that these conditions violate these individuals' rights under the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Relief requested by Disability Rights New Jersey include: the establishment of a stakeholder advisory group that includes individuals with lived mental health experience to make ongoing recommendations, monetary penalties, and retention of a consultant to implement violence prevention policies and plans to ensure patients are moved to the least restrictive settings.

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For more information, contact:
Joseph M. Gorrell | 973.403.3112 | jgorrell@bracheichler.com
Cynthia J. Liba | 973.403.3106 | cliba@bracheichler.com