



---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

---

**East Central Regional Human Rights Authority  
Collins Square/DD Homes  
Report of Findings  
Case #18-060-9009**

The East Central Human Rights Authority (HRA) of the Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission voted to pursue an investigation of Collins Square in Bradley, IL after receiving the following complaints of possible rights violations:

**Complaints:**

- 1. Provider screened consumer for admission, examined records, and had set up a trial visit. The provider cancelled the trial visit and any further consideration of a placement with no explanation to the consumer or guardian other than provider "decided to cancel."**

If the allegations are substantiated, they would violate protections under the Illinois Administrative Code (77 Il Admin Code 350.3730 and 350.620), the ID/DD Community Care Act (210 ILCS 47/2-201.5) and provider policies.

**Investigation**

The HRA proceeded with the investigation after having received written authorization from the consumer's guardian. To pursue the matter, the HRA visited the facility and interviewed program representatives, interviewed the consumer's Independent Service Coordinator and the issues were discussed at the July 2018 HRA board meeting with the program's Executive Director. Relevant practices, policies and sections of the consumer's record were reviewed.

Collins Square facility is owned by a company called DD Homes and also has a marketing title of Pinnacle Opportunities. These entities are one in the same for the purpose of our investigation.

**Interviews:**

On July 19, 2018 at 3:00pm the Executive Director for Collins Square attended the regularly scheduled Human Rights Authority Board meeting. (It should be noted that this Executive Director is no longer in the position with Collins Square). During the meeting, the director stated that the consumer had previously resided at Collins Square and was hospitalized for a medical issue that required surgery. After surgery, the consumer required more intensive treatment and was discharged to a skilled nursing facility to recuperate and, therefore, was discharged from

Collins Square. DD Homes then received a referral for the consumer in fall 2017 and was aware that the consumer wished to be placed back at the Collins Square facility. The Executive Director stated that he had gone to the consumer's current skilled nursing facility and assessed him for admission and scheduled a time for the consumer to visit Collins Square for a trial visit. Before the date of the trial visit, the Executive Director was contacted by DD Homes administration and told that the consumer would not be a "good fit" for the facility and, therefore, the trial visit had been cancelled. After the Executive Director was informed of the decision, the director notified the Independent Service Coordinator (ISC). When the HRA asked why the consumer was "not a good fit" the director stated that he was not given any further information and the HRA would need to discuss this decision with DD Homes administration.

On August 22, 2018 at 1:30pm, the HRA met with staff members, including: Director of Operations, Training Coordinator, and Regional Nurse. The meeting occurred at 22 Heritage Dr. in Bourbonnais, IL. The meeting began with introductions, a review of HRA procedures, and a review of the allegations being addressed in this investigation.

The staff provided some general information about Collins Square. Collins Square is one of many facilities owned by DD Homes and is an Intermediate Care Facility (ICF/DD) with 16 beds. This facility provides homes for medically complex consumers with a developmental disability diagnosis. Staff report that the home does have available beds at this time but that the provider seeks out consumers that are the "right fit" for their facilities rather than filling beds. Collins Square normally has no available beds. The provider estimates that they receive around 4 referrals a month and are able to help the majority of the consumers by offering ICF and Community Integrated Living Arrangements (CILA) home services across the state.

Staff explained the referral process for their facilities. DD Homes receives a referral packet from an ISC. The packet is sent to DD Home's headquarters in Jacksonville, IL. The information is tracked and sent on to the Regional Nurse and Training Coordinator for review. If the consumer meets the eligibility criteria established by DD Homes, the application is forwarded to the Area Administrator to schedule trial visits. If the consumers do not meet the criteria, the referral is discarded. The next step is generally conducted by the Area Administrator who meets with the consumer in their current residence and completes a screening to determine if DD Homes is capable of meeting the consumer's needs and which facility would be the best fit. Next, the consumer is invited to visit the facility site and then the admission process is started. Collins Square staff stated that there is no documentation of the process from referral to admission and that they are not required to document until after the admission process has been initiated. They also confirmed that since their admission process does not begin until the consumer is moving into the home, then there is no appeal or grievance process available. Staff reported that they have discretion to pursue whatever referrals they want and do not provide an explanation of their decision to everyone that applies, but they do try and provide services or recommendations of other services in the community to all consumers that are referred.

DD Homes staff stated that this consumer's referral was presented to the team for review and it was determined that they could not meet the high level of medical need. The staff are familiar with the consumer's medical history from a previous placement in their facility. They reported that the consumer was in and out of the hospital when he resided in their home and denied him

based on history rather than current functioning. The HRA asked about the consumer's screening and staff reported they did not visit the consumer's residence to screen the consumer for placement. The HRA explained the Executive Director had stated, during the July HRA meeting, that he had visited the facility where the consumer resides and completed a screening and a trial visit had been scheduled for the consumer to tour the Collins Square home. The staff were unaware of the visits and the Executive Director was no longer employed by DD Homes and is unavailable for questioning. In addition, the Area Administrator for that region is also no longer employed by DD Homes and is unavailable for questioning.

The HRA presented the DD Homes staff with an email from the Regional Nurse to the Executive Director. The email from the Regional nurse stated "it was never specifically mentioned that medical needs for (the consumer) could not be met. I simply indicated he would not be an appropriate fit for our homes. We discussed the history of (the consumer's) time with us and if you recall there is no reason to consider him in our setting simply for a more convenient address". The HRA asked for clarification. Staff stated that the consumer was denied because of high level of medical need and that is why the consumer is not an appropriate fit for the home. No further explanation of the email could be given.

The HRA reviewed the provider's Admissions Policy No 6.09 titled "Policy of Admission for Services" and "Screening Criteria and Admission Process for Homes Serving 16 or fewer individuals" with the staff. The Policy provides the Criteria for Acceptance as well as the Pre-Evaluation Screening steps. Staff stated that this policy is taken directly from the law and becomes applicable to all consumers who are being admitted to their facilities. DD Homes believes that the admission process starts when the consumer moves in and does not apply to consumers that are being screened for services and, therefore, no documentation is completed at any time prior to move in.

The HRA also interviewed the consumer's Independent Service Coordinator (ISC). ISC confirmed that the process for placement is somewhat informal. The ISC provides a referral packet with the information available, the provider visits the consumer and screens them for appropriateness of placement, and, if they are appropriate, a trial visit to the facility is scheduled. ISC stated that no trial visits are scheduled until the provider screens the consumer to avoid any unnecessary disruption until they are certain that an appropriate placement can be made. In some circumstances there are multiple sites visited in one day and other times the consumers will visit one facility and then return to visit other facilities later if needed.

The ISC confirmed that a referral packet was sent to DD Homes on 10/19/17. The provider confirmed that they had received the information and that a visit to the consumer's current placement for screening was scheduled. The screening was completed at the consumer's residence on 11/8/17 by DD Homes administration. During the screening, the provider confirmed that the consumer was appropriate for placement in one of their facilities. On 11/9/17 the ISC had a telephone conference with the consumer's guardian and the other providers assisting with the consumer's case and confirmed that the guardian would like to proceed with placement in a DD Homes facility. The provider emailed again on 11/20/17, stating "I was calling you to inform you that a meeting was held this morning to discuss the upcoming visit for (the consumer). The facility nurses as well as the regional nurse trainer expressed concerns that we will not be able to

meet (the consumer's) needs at a medical level." No further information was provided to the ISC despite the request for further explanation. In this case, the provider had confirmed that the consumer was appropriate for their facilities and had moved on to the next phase. The ISC stated that when DD Homes administration stopped the trial visit without further explanation it caused a huge disruption for the consumer because he had been informed that an appropriate placement had been located and then taken away without explanation. It should be noted that DD Homes' policy indicates that the acceptance is determined after a trial visit is completed, however, according to ISC, this practice can be harmful to a consumer who attends a trial visit (or multiple trial visits) and is then denied.

### **Records Reviews:**

DD Homes provided the HRA with the following records on July 19, 2018:

- The ISC referral packet for the consumer showing that the consumer is looking for an ICF/DD setting with 16 beds or fewer. This packet includes updated medical information and a current comprehensive summary completed by the facility where the consumer resides.
- DD Homes email between ISC and DD Homes administration dated 11/9/17 stating that ISC had met with the family after the screening was completed and that the consumer and guardian were happy that things were progressing. The email also confirmed that the consumer would be open to sharing a room, and that the guardian would be contacting the DD Homes administrator for further information about the trial site visit process. The ISC requested that when the dates and locations of visits were scheduled, that the ISC be notified to assist with any needs the family may have in transporting the consumer. An email dated 11/20/17 from DD Homes administration to the ISC states that the facility nurses and regional nurse trainer expressed concerns that they will not be able to meet the consumer's needs at a medical level and that they will not be moving forward with the visit next week as planned.
- DD Homes email between the administrator and the Regional Nurse that states "it was never specifically mentioned that medical needs for (the consumer) could not be met. I simply indicated he would not be an appropriate fit for our homes. We discussed the history of (the consumer's) time with us and if you recall there is no reason to consider him in our setting simply for a more convenient address." The email goes on to say, "If the screening process has been initiated and subsequently paused, my recommendation is to reiterate the conclusion that our team feels strongly we should not admit this person therefore there is no reason to do a visit."
- A "Policy of Admission for Services" and "Screening Criteria and Admission Process for Homes Serving 16 or fewer individuals" was provided. The Policy No 6.09 states the Criteria for Acceptance as well as the Pre-Evaluation Screening steps. It should be noted, that the policy states that the consumer's pre-evaluation screening will include several forms that are required to be completed including: an Initial Screen, Intake, Assessment, and Determination Summary, Medication Review, 24 hour Nursing Care Determination, Determination of Developmental Disability an Associated Treatment Needs, Identification of Services Needs, Authorization for Release of Information, Guardianship Screen, Presentation and Selection of Services Options, ICAP, Psychological Evaluation, Medical History, Physical Exam, Individual Service Plan, Nutritional Assessment,

Vocational Assessment, QIDP, Psycho, Social Worker, nurse other determined by the CST. The policy also states that prior to the date of admission, the administrator will obtain the results of the individual's criminal background check.

In addition, the HRA reviewed a 2017 HRA report Case # 17-060-9012 involving Collins Square substantiated allegations. In this public report, the HRA found that the facility had inadequate documentation for discharge and readmission and strongly suggested that the provider take more care in documentation.

### Conclusions

**Complaint: Provider screened consumer for admission, examined records, and had set up a trial visit. The provider cancelled the trial visit and any further consideration of a placement with no explanation to the consumer or guardian other than provider "decided to cancel."**

The Illinois Administrative Code (77 Il Admin Code 350.3730) states "b) Residents shall only be admitted who have had a comprehensive evaluation covering physical, emotional, social and cognitive factors, conducted by an appropriately constituted interdisciplinary team. c) No resident determined by professional evaluation to be in need of skilled level of nursing care shall be admitted to, or kept in, an Intermediate Care Facility, or Intermediate Care Facility for the Developmentally Disabled, or any distinct part of the facility designated and classified for intermediate care for the developmentally disabled" Section 350.620 states "a) The facility shall have written policies and procedures governing all services provided by the facility which shall be formulated with the involvement of the administrator. The policies shall be available to the staff, residents and the public. These written policies shall be followed in operating the facility and shall be reviewed at least annually. (B) b) These policies shall include: ... 5) A written statement concerning admission, transfer, and discharge of residents including categories of residents accepted and not accepted, residents that will be transferred or discharged, and other policies of the facility.

After completing the interviews, records reviews, and assessing applicable mandates, there is evidence to support the complaint. DD Home's policy for screening criteria and admission states that the consumer will have a pre-evaluation screening, then an overnight visit, and then an acceptance determination will be met and a contract between the individual and the home will be put in place thus starting the "admission process". In this case, DD Homes had reviewed the consumer's ISC referral and initiated the pre-screening process by going to the consumer's residence and completing an assessment on 11/8/18. After the pre-screening was completed, it had been determined that the consumer was appropriate for placement and trial visits had been scheduled. DD Homes then stopped the trial visits. Interviews and emails are contradictory as to why the pre-admission process was stopped. DD Homes stated that none of the screens listed in their policy screening criteria had been completed and there is no documentation of any interaction with the consumer other than the ISC referral packet. DD Homes reports that it does not keep any documentation prior to admission despite the fact that their policy indicates that several forms will be completed during pre-screening.

While the HRA agrees that the provider has discretion on which referrals they choose to pursue and screen, all screening efforts per the Administrative Code (77 II Admin Code 350.3730) and subsequent acceptance and denials should be documented properly to avoid biases and ensure compliance as outlined in the ID/DD Community Care Act (210 ILCS 47/2-201.5). In this case, proper documentation would have given the administration clear evidence as to what steps had been completed by the Executive Director and/or Area Administration before their departures as well as documented reasoning for any acceptance and/or denials.

Throughout the course of this investigation it was never made clear why the consumer was unable to be placed at Collins Square. The Executive Director that attended the HRA meeting stated that he was told the consumer was not a good fit. An email from staff to the Executive Director says that it was never “specifically stated” that his medical needs could not be met, “I simply indicated he would not be an appropriate fit for our homes:” and goes on to state that DD Homes does not consider consumers just for a “more convenient address”. Of note, an admission to Collins Square by this consumer represents a move to a smaller, less restrictive environment that is closer to his guardian as well as being a return to a home in which he had lived for several years and had established contacts. The staff present for the HRA site visit on 8/22/18 stated that the consumer was denied based on historical medical need rather than current functioning. Unfortunately, without any documentation and/or completed evaluations per their policy the outcome of the referral is still unclear.

Based on the findings above the East Central Human Rights Authority concludes that the consumer’s rights were violated and, therefore, the complaint is substantiated. The HRA makes the following **recommendations**:

- Update the agency’s policy 6.09 “Screening Criteria and Admission Process for Homes Serving 16 or fewer Individuals” to assure that any steps taken after a referral is selected through admission are appropriately documented and to ensure that biases are avoided as guaranteed in the ID/DD Community Care Act (210 ILCS 47/2-201.5)
- Update the agency’s policy 6.09 to ensure compliance with regulations (per Ill. Admin. Code tit. 77, § 350.620), and include a policy statement “...concerning admission, transfer, and discharge of residents including categories of residents accepted and not accepted, residents that will be transferred or discharged, and other policies of the facility.”
- Assure that any time a referral to DD Homes is pursued that the agency’s policy is followed to assure compliance with 77 II Admin Code 350.3730. Particularly that the required assessments indicated under the Pre-Evaluation Screening are completed and documented.
- Retrain applicable staff on the screening criteria and admission process, including how these steps will be appropriately documented.

The HRA also makes the following suggestions:

- The HRA finds that the provider’s lack of documentation is an ongoing problem (having implications in both this investigation and a previous investigation). The HRA **strongly**

**suggests** that DD Homes take time to review all their current documentation practices and consider more thorough documentation.

- Because there is no documentation of the consumer's pre-admission screening being properly completed, the HRA suggests that DD Homes review the consumer's referral packet and provide the consumer (and/or ISC) with a clear explanation as to how this referral will be handled (whether that be to proceed with admission screening as previously discussed or admission not accepted and why, including the category for not accepting).

---

## **RESPONSE**

**Notice: The following page(s) contain the provider response. Due to technical requirements, some provider responses appear verbatim in retyped format.**

---



**Pinnacle Opportunities, Inc.**  
**www.ddhomes.net**

April 29th, 2019

Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission  
East Central Regional Office  
2125 First Street  
Champaign, Illinois 61820  
Attn: Laura Hart, Chairperson

Re: Collins Square, HRA Case #17-060-9012

Dear Ms. Hart,

Based on the HRA report dated March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Pinnacle Opportunities, Inc. would like to submit the following required response to the recommendations regarding the substantiated complaint:

RECOMMENDATION FROM HRA: Update the agency's policy 6.09 "Screening Criteria and Admission Process for Homes Serving 16 or fewer Individuals" to assure that any steps taken after a referral is selected through admission are appropriately documented and to ensure that biases are avoided as guaranteed in the ID/DD Community Care Act (210 ILCS 47/2-201.5)

RESPONSE FROM PINNACLE OPPORTUNITIES: The policy has been updated to reflect the following addition: At any time during the referral/screening process, the program may terminate admission activities. The individual or their representative will be notified promptly by the administrator; this will be done in writing to ensure documentation.

RECOMMENDATION FROM HRA: Update the agency's policy 6.09 to ensure compliance with regulation and include a policy statement "...concerning admission, transfer, and discharge of residents including categories of resident accepted and not accepted, residents that will be transferred or discharged, and other policies of the facility."

RESPONSE FROM PINNACLE OPPORTUNITIES: The policy contains the admission criteria and has been updated to reflect the following addition: At any time during the referral/screening process, the program may terminate admission activities. The individual or their representative will be notified promptly by the administrator; this will be done in writing to ensure documentation. There is a separate policy regarding discharge and transfer, which has been provided to the HRA.

RECOMMENDATION FROM HRA: Assure that any time a referral to DD Homes is pursued that the agency's policy is followed to assure compliance with 77 Il Admin Code 350.3730. Particularly that the required assessments indicated under the Pre-Evaluation Screening are completed and documented.

RESPONSE FROM PINNACLE OPPORTUNITIES: The "Pre-Evaluation Screenings" listed in the policy include both documents that are gathered by the referring agency or provider and are generally provided to us at the time of the initial referral and assessments that are completed during trial visits prior to a determination regarding appropriateness is made. The addition of the following statement to the policy clarifies that not all must be completed when completing a review/screening: At any time during the referral/screening process, the program may terminate admission activities. The individual or their representative will be notified promptly by the administrator; this will be done in writing to ensure documentation.

RECOMMENDATION FROM HRA: Retrain applicable staff on the screening criteria and admission process, including how these steps will be appropriately documented.

RESPONSE FROM PINNACLE OPPORTUNITIES: The Executive Director, Administrator, and QIDP have been trained on the referral/screening criteria and the admission process, including documentation in writing.

In addition, Pinnacle Opportunities, Inc, will consider the suggestions listed at the conclusion of the report and appreciates the time the HRA members have invested in this case.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Ruff

Representative for Pinnacle Opportunities