



*The Protection and Advocacy System for South Carolina*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT: Gloria M. Prevost, 803.782.0639 (extension 213); [prevost@pandasc.org](mailto:prevost@pandasc.org)**

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### **P&A LAWSUIT SEEKS RECORDS OF RESIDENTS IN DDSN FACILITIES**

**Columbia, SC—February 22, 2010**—Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc. (P&A) has sued the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN) to require the agency to allow P&A to inspect health records of residents of some community facilities. The complaint alleges that DDSN is preventing P&A from reviewing records of medication administration and other treatment in community training homes (CTH). The homes are operated by county disability boards and private providers under DDSN supervision.

P&A is authorized by state law to conduct unannounced visits to inspect living conditions in the facilities, including review of plans of care for the residents. Gloria Prevost, executive director of P&A, stated, "Residents of CTHs deserve the same external review and oversight as residents of community residential care facilities, which P&A has inspected for 20 years. The residents may be at risk of harm from improper administration of medication or other treatment. P&A must be able to review whether they are receiving appropriate services and plans of care."

DDSN, one of the state's largest agencies, serves people with intellectual and related disabilities, autism, and head and spinal cord injuries in residential and home-based programs. The agency has been the subject of controversy, with the Governor's recent removal of Susan Lait from the DDSN Commission after she served less than a year and a critical Legislative Audit Council report in December 2008.

"P&A has tried unsuccessfully to negotiate with DDSN to resolve our access to these records. P&A is committed to carrying out the General Assembly's mandate to protect people with disabilities wherever they live," Prevost said.

For more information about P&A please visit <http://www.pandasc.org>

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