

CPL Bibliography

**259**

April 1990

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**“There Goes the Neighborhood . . . .”  
A Summary of Studies Addressing the Most  
Often Expressed Fears About the Effects of  
Group Homes on Neighborhoods in Which  
They Are Placed**

Community Residences Information Services Program

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**"There Goes the Neighborhood..."**  
**A Summary of Studies Addressing the Most**  
**Often Expressed Fears about the Effects**  
**Group Homes on Neighborhoods in Which**  
**They Are Placed**

**Community Residences Information Services Project**  
**White Plains, New York**

**April 1990**

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## About CRISP

The Community Residences Information Services Program (CRISP) is an affiliate of the State Communities Aid Association, a not-for-profit corporation. CRISP is funded through the Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health. Its purpose is to plan for the orderly development of community residences, build community support and acceptance for residential programs, and address both the needs and rights of disabled people and the legitimate concerns of the community. CRISP is an information and site clearinghouse which acts as a liaison between state, county and local governments, residential service providers and the community.

### STAFF:

Ruth Stern, Director  
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Margaret E. Normann, Special Consultant

## FOREWORD

The purpose of this document is to summarize the major research addressing the supervised residential care facilities on property values and quality of life in the neighborhood which they are placed. CRISP first addressed this issue in its 1983 publication, *Some Property Value Studies in Relation to Community Residences*, which reviewed 12 manuscripts dealing solely with the impact of group homes on property values. In 1986, CRISP expanded its original work with *There Goes the Neighborhood* which included 40 varying work studies, handbooks, law papers and scholarly research from all over the United States and

Not all of the studies addressed property values. Some dealt with such related concerns as quality of life and community control. Others discussed positive ways to neutralize or resolve conflicts. Although most of these studies focused on public reaction to residences for the mentally retarded or mental illness, other special populations were encompassed, including dependent and neglected children, the elderly, alcohol and drug abusers, teenagers in foster care, commitment and prison parolees.

In 1989, at the request of agencies and public officials, CRISP updated the 1986 publication to incorporate the important research that had been done in the intervening years. Sixteen new works are included. The studies summarized here are the major works available. All data contained in some may no longer be current, the findings are still relevant and worth noting. Each work sheds some unique light on community fears and responses.

Wherever possible, the words of the author of the original document are used; therefore, the punctuation marks are those of the author, not the editor. Each summary is broken down into **Methodology, Findings, and Conclusion**. For consistency and ease of reference, this format is maintained throughout, although it is more easily tailored to impact studies than to non-studies. In the non-studies, the breakout into the different categories may reflect the judgment of the editor and not the expressed intent of the author. The summaries are presented alphabetically without critical comment or evaluation. The editor reserves all commentary and recommendations until the "Last Word."

All reviewed works are on file at the CRISP office.

Margaret E. Normann, Editor

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Baron, Richard Charles (November 1978). **Community Opposition to the Mentally and the Strategies that Respond**. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Horizon House Institute Research and Development.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Research Paper - presented at the Fifth Annual Conference of International Association of Psycho-Social Rehabilitation Services.
- AREA OF STUDY:** General United States
- POPULATION:** Mentally ill
- PURPOSE:** To address the issues of community attitudes and opposition to the mentally ill, and develop strategies that respond to identified concerns.
- METHODOLOGY:** Horizon House Institute, with the support of the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and the Public Committee for the Humanities in Pennsylvania, undertook a statewide education project. They sponsored a series of eight community forums bringing together advocates and detractors of community care. Out of the debate generated from these forums, a documentary film was made entitled *These People* which focused on the problems of community opposition and fears. This film was shown throughout the state to stimulate local debate and discussion. A national exploration into the roots of community opposition and the strategies that can be responsive followed the state effort. A national conference was held in Washington, D.C. drawing almost 400 participants. It provided public educators, program administrators, consumers, advocates and community members from across the country the opportunity to exchange perceptions and develop strategies.
- FINDINGS:** Negative public response evolves from a cluster of attitudes and values surrounding three major issues:
- Fear - mentally ill persons are potentially dangerous and pose a threat;
  - Empathy - considerable media coverage of disorganized local service deliveries, exploitive boarding houses, and the plight of the homeless has led well-meaning people to believe mentally ill persons will be safer back in the hospital; and
  - Control - concern about declining property values and oversaturation of neighborhoods. These basic concerns can be addressed by various strategies: siting facilities, zoning legislation, public education, media use, vocational training, social programming. Each strategy can be implemented by either a "structural" technique (utilizing government powers and the courts to promote integration and encourage change despite prevailing attitudes) or a "collaborative" technique (involving communities in openly examining prevailing attitudes and neighborhood realities). No data exist on the efficacy of one strategy over another.

**CONCLUSION:**

A little public opposition is good, especially if it helps insure implementation of services. Utilizing the mentally ill as providers (emphasizing their image as competent individuals) and helping providers improve their own attitude are two strategies to be explored. "Stimulus" solutions have a powerful lure, but the balance of benefits seems to be on the side of collaboration.

Boeckh, John, Michael Dear, Ph.D. and S. Martin Taylor (1980). **Property Values Mental Health Facilities in Metropolitan Toronto.** Canadian Geographer, Vol. 24, 3:270.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study - supported by a grant from the Social Sciences Humanities Research Council of Canada.
- AREA OF STUDY:** Metropolitan Toronto
- POPULATION:** Mentally ill
- PURPOSE:** To provide a systematic assessment of the property value effects sample of mental health facilities in Metropolitan Toronto.
- METHODOLOGY:** Five facilities were selected in lower, middle and upper neighborhoods. A major concern in selection was that they be removed from other types of facilities that would be likely to affect the property market. Sales prices and sales activity for properties in the of the facilities were compared with those in control areas that had such facility. Data on transactions were collected quarterly for two years before and after the introduction of the facility. A 400 meter impact was defined with concentric "distance zones" each 100 meters deep that sales could be coded according to distance from the facility. Effects were examined in terms of sales activity, sales price and regression analyses. Other variables controlling sales price included lot size, number of rooms and location. Problems in making inferential interpretation of data were posed by: small number of studies undertaken, difficulty in defining area for analysis, scale of the facility, suitable control neighborhoods and discounting for data "noise" (keep variables constant while studying indicators).
- FINDINGS:** There was no exhibited evidence that sales activity was greater or less than in the control areas. There was no evidence of decline in sales prices in the studied areas. House prices tended to increase at a comparable rate to those in the control areas. The most important factors influencing sales price were characteristics of the housing unit themselves, particularly number of rooms.
- CONCLUSION:** Property market movement in the sample of Toronto neighborhoods is due mainly to traditional factors: neighborhood desirability and characteristics of the housing unit being sold. The introduction of a mental health facility has little effect on neighborhood property values.

Breslow, Stuart (November 1976). *The Effect of Siting Group Homes Surrounding Environs*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study/Field Survey
- AREA OF STUDY:** White Plains, New York
- POPULATION:** Developmentally and mentally disabled persons, ve  
dependent/neglected children and the elderly
- PURPOSE:** To determine if community residential facilities for socially, ph  
and mentally handicapped people disrupt, harm or endanger surr  
neighborhoods and hence detract from the neighborhood's val  
therapeutic setting. The two research themes are: the pot  
disruptive impact of the community based facility and its im  
neighborhood property values.
- METHODOLOGY:** A modified version of Dear's methodology (see page 10) was u  
Sixteen out of 31 residential care facilities were studied in four  
areas reflecting varying degrees of saturation. Two areas free  
major recent intrusion were used as control. The field surv  
conducted during the period July 12-23, 1976. The research dat  
drawn from the Planning Commission compendium of trans  
culled from the Real Estate Directory for the 1970-75 period, an  
the White Plains Real Estate Directory for 1964-69 and for  
Properties were studied for both frequency of transaction and ch  
property value.
- FINDINGS:** The results are inconclusive - both comparing the same area "befc  
after" the introduction of a community residence, and comparing  
and sample areas. One could deduce from the data that a com  
residence does not tend to depress, and in some cases can even  
appreciation of, property values. One could deduce a tendency to  
increased turnover. In both cases, further substantiation is nee  
bear out the findings.
- CONCLUSION:** Communities can absorb a limited number of residential care fac  
without measurable property/transaction effects, or negative imp  
surrounding properties.

Caulkins, Zack, John Noak and Bobby J. Wilkerson (December 1976). *The Impact of Residential Care Facilities in Decatur: A Study of Residential Care Facilities Located Within the City of Decatur*. Decatur, Illinois: Macon County Community Mental Health "708" Board.

**TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study/Telephone Survey

**AREA OF STUDY:** Decatur, Illinois

**POPULATION:** Geriatric, mentally handicapped, developmentally disabled

**PURPOSE:** To determine:

To what extent neighborhoods are impacted by residential care facilities

The attitudes and opinions of neighbors regarding such facilities;

How the attitudes of persons living near such facilities differ from those of other Decatur residents.

**METHODOLOGY:** Using a survey instrument patterned after the Knowles and Baba Gani Bay study (see page 33), telephone interviews were conducted with a random sample of 25 persons from each of the five neighborhoods studied (experimental groups) and with a random sample of 50 persons selected from the Decatur population at large (control group). Of the facilities in Decatur, the five that housed the largest concentrations of mentally ill and/or developmentally disabled adults were selected for study. The survey instrument sought to differentiate attitudes toward residential facilities in general, and those that might serve young children, adolescents and children, adults and ex-convicts or parolees.

**FINDINGS:** Two thirds of the total group sampled approved of locating residential facilities in residential neighborhoods. The rate of approval was significantly higher (70.1%) in the "experimental" areas near the facilities than it was in the "control" areas (61.9% in Decatur at large). The highest rate of acceptance for facilities serving specific populations was 73.8% for young children, followed by 69.2% for adults, and 61.7% for adolescent and teenage children. Only facilities designed to serve ex-convicts or parolees, with a 28% acceptance rate, were deemed inappropriate for residential neighborhoods by the majority of respondents.

**CONCLUSION:** Apparently, living near a residential care facility helps alleviate some of the concerns individuals have about them. Some persons who reported initial concerns about negative impact on their property values also reported that, to date, the facility had no such adverse effect.



City of Lansing Planning Department (October 1976). **The Influence of Halfway and Foster Care Facilities Upon Property Values.** Lansing, Michigan (October 1976)

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study
- AREA OF STUDY:** Lansing, Michigan
- POPULATION:** Mentally retarded, adult ex-offenders, youth offenders, re-  
alcoholics
- PURPOSE:** To ascertain what has happened to neighborhood property values previously established halfway house/foster care home facilities to make general projections concerning property values in the future proposed special use facilities.
- METHODOLOGY:** Five neighborhoods containing special use facilities serving a vast number of residents were selected as test areas. Each test area was matched with another area of the city having similar housing and demographic characteristics. These areas had no halfway house/foster care facility and thus acted as a control. Selling prices of homes in the test areas were compared to those in the control area. In both areas, sales prices in the period before the special use facility opened were compared to those in the period after its operation had begun. Sales information was obtained from the Greater Lansing Board of Realtors. Price comparisons were made by averaging the ratio of the sales price to the City Assessor's appraised value.
- FINDINGS:** In four of the five test areas, the average sales price ratio after establishment of the halfway house or foster care facility was found to be equal to or higher than the control neighborhood. In the one instance where the control area had a higher average sales price, the difference was not statistically significant. There was no evidence that the establishment of a special use facility had an effect on the number of homes sold.
- CONCLUSION:** There is strong evidence to contest the commonly held assumption that declining neighborhood property values would be the consequence of approving a special use permit for residential facilities.

Coleman, Allison R. (August 1989). **The Effect of Group Homes on Residential Property Values in Stamford, Connecticut.** Stamford, Connecticut: Stamford Community Services (August 1989).

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study
- AREA OF STUDY:** Stamford, Connecticut
- POPULATION:** Chronically mentally ill, mentally retarded adults, homeless far adolescent males, recovering alcoholics
- PURPOSE:** To evaluate the economic impact group homes in Stamford have on their surrounding neighborhoods
- METHODOLOGY:** Property sales were analyzed in neighborhoods surrounding eight home facilities and 23 neighborhoods without group homes. Consultation with brokers, the Stamford Board of Realtors, city planning and zoning officials and the assessor, data were gathered on a number of variables believed to influence property values. These included arms-length market value property transactions, one before and one after the date of the establishment of a group home. In non-group home areas, a comparable date was designated from which similar average appreciation rates could be calculated. Other variables include distance of the double sale property from the group home, its condition, age, tax district, lot size, zoning and whether it had been remodeled between sales. Census data were also gathered for median income, percentage of white, non-Hispanic population, age and occupancy. Data were calculated for 35 double sales in neighborhoods surrounding group homes and 163 double sales in areas without group homes, and analyzed using multiple regression analysis.
- FINDINGS:** Based on an econometric theory of property appreciation, the regression showed that:
- Neighborhood property values are not significantly affected by the establishment of a group home; proximity to a group home does not affect the market value of the neighborhood properties; the number of beds in a group home was not a significant factor in determining final market value - only the number of rooms proved statistically significant in determining property values at the time of the second sale over and above the property value at the time of the first sale.
- CONCLUSION:** This study provides very strong evidence that the establishment and presence of a group home in a residential neighborhood have no significant effect on property appreciation rates.
- Although this study does not deal with the integrity of areas, or address the possible saturation effect that would result from the clustering of facilities in multi-family zoned neighborhoods or areas of public resistance, in proving that group homes do not have a statistically significant effect on neighborhood property values, it goes a long way toward answering the fears associated with the NIMBY (not in my backyard) problem.

Dear, Michael, Ph.D. (1977). Impact of Mental Health Facilities on Property Community Mental Health Journal. Vol. 13, No. 2:150.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study/Field Survey
- AREA OF STUDY:** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- POPULATION:** Mentally ill
- PURPOSE:** To determine if there has been a recognizable impact on proper and turnover in the area of relatively small-scale outpatient facilities for the mentally ill. If so, can it be attributable to the mental health facilities?
- METHODOLOGY:** Twelve satellite mental health facilities were selected in the Philadelphia area. The sample was designed to be representative of a wide range of such facilities found within the city. To determine if there were any negative effects on property values, property transactions were analyzed before and after the facility opened. Data sources were the Philadelphia Real Estate Directory, 1972-1973 and the List of Sales and Mortgages. Each property was classified according to its proximity and distance from a facility. Data were examined on sales price and transaction rate before and after the opening of each facility. Negative impact on the facility would register as an increase in the number of transactions and a decrease in their absolute value.
- FINDINGS:** In eight out of 12 cases there was some increased number of transactions before or after the introduction of the facility. In four of the eight cases, however, an added assumption must be made to link market trends to the facility. In general, the market in the vicinity of the facilities was particularly active and the overall transactions were few, which is indicative of lack of demand in these areas. In regard to the value of transactions, the anticipated decline did not materialize; in fact, in a majority of markets in the vicinity of the facilities appeared strengthening.
- CONCLUSION:** Due to data limitations, the results of this study are inconclusive. Presented propositions to be further tested when a fuller data set becomes available and a comparative analysis can be undertaken. For this study, at least, there was no evidence of either consistent upgrading or downgrading of property values in the vicinity of outpatient mental health facilities.

Department of Housing and Community Development (1988). **The Effects of Subsidized and Affordable Housing on Property Values: A Survey of Research.** Sta. California.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Summary of Studies
- AREA OF STUDY:** General United States
- POPULATION:** Low income and handicapped
- PURPOSE:** To determine the effect of subsidized, specialized and manufactured housing on property values.
- METHODOLOGY:** The monograph lists and summarizes a total of 15 published papers most published within the past ten years. The listing is not presumed to be complete, but does include all known and readily available material on this subject, according to the authors. Eleven deal with the effects of subsidized housing, three with the effects of manufactured housing and one with a group home for the handicapped.
- FINDINGS:** Of the 15 publications, 14 reached the conclusion that there are significant negative effects from locating subsidized, special-purpose manufactured housing near market-rate developments. Some, however, report positive property value effects after locating subsidized units in a neighborhood.
- Only one study by Guy, Hysom and Ruth, describing a situation in Fairfax County, Virginia, found evidence that subsidized housing had an adverse effect on the values of adjacent non-subsidized housing.
- Although few of the studies attempted to deal with more than one socioeconomic variable, those that did opined that few, if any, impacts exist due to socio-economic or ethnic differences.
- CONCLUSION:** Public perceptions and attitudes are still unpredictable and sometimes resentful. Planners, decision-makers, realtors, developers and city advocates can be leaders in resisting the myths that impede the development of affordable housing. Only through a cooperative, rational approach can we solve our housing problems.

Developmental Disabilities Program (July 1982). An Analysis of Minnesota Property Values of Community Intermediate Care Facilities for Mentally Retarded. Analysis Series: Issues Related to Welsh v. Noot/No. 11. St. Paul, Minnesota.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study/Literature Review
- AREA OF STUDY:** Minnesota
- POPULATION:** Mentally retarded
- PURPOSE:** To determine the effect group homes for mentally retarded people actually had on property values in their neighborhoods.
- METHODOLOGY:** A random sample of 34 homes with six or fewer residents was selected from a complete list of group homes for the mentally retarded, compiled from the Minnesota Department of Public Welfare licensing records. Only those for which a comparable control neighborhood could be located were included in the analysis. The final sample of 14 homes was evenly divided between homes located in the Twin Cities area and homes located in the remainder of the state. The investigator marked out a block area around each home and noted the exterior condition of the house. A control block with similar housing was then selected. Assessed value was obtained from the local tax assessor's office for the year preceding and the year following the establishment of the home. All property transactions and their sale prices for the two year period were recorded. All results were subjected to statistical tests.
- FINDINGS:** There was no significant difference between the increased assessed values for control blocks and group home blocks. The 75 property transactions recorded during the year preceding and following establishment of a group home were almost evenly divided: 48% in group home blocks, 52% in control block, 49% in the year before the home was established, 51% after.
- CONCLUSION:** Changes in property values are not related to the presence of a home on the block, nor do the number and timing of property transactions in a neighborhood have anything to do with the establishment of a home.

Dolan, Lawrence W. and Julian Wolpert (November 1982). **Long Term Neighbor Property Impacts of Group Homes for Mentally Retarded People**. Princeton, Jersey: Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study
- AREA OF STUDY:** New York State
- POPULATION:** Mentally retarded
- PURPOSE:** To update the 1978 Wolpert study (see page 86); to examine property sales in the five year period subsequent to the siting of the previously sampled group homes to determine if they had any appreciable impact on neighboring property values over the longer term.
- METHODOLOGY:** The investigators analyzed market prices and turnover rates for properties neighboring 32 of the original 42 group homes in the 1978 study in each of the original ten communities. Data were collected and analyzed before and after establishment of the group home for the group home and for a set of matched control sites. A significant variable was distance from the group home as measured by the number of houses away from the group home or its control. A "windshield survey" of the group homes and other properties on the same block provided an assessment of the condition of the homes relative to their neighbors.
- FINDINGS:** Degree of proximity to either group homes or control homes had no significant effect on property value changes. Factors other than establishment of the group homes were responsible for property value changes. The turnover rates in the group home and the control areas were virtually the same; nor were they significantly different for the closest ten properties than for those in the second and third distance rings. Over the five year period following establishment of the group homes, no disruption occurred in real estate trends. The "windshield survey" indicated that very few of the 32 homes were conspicuous. There was no relationship discovered between conspicuousness of group homes and property impacts or turnover rates. The group homes were generally well maintained, and their condition consistent with condition of adjacent buildings.
- CONCLUSION:** Group homes have no long term negative effects on neighboring property or on turnover rates. For the most part, group homes maintain low visibility, keep up buildings and grounds adequately and have no property value impacts on neighbors. Furthermore, neighborhoods with established group homes have not been targeted for more.

Farber, Stephen (December 1986). Market Segmentation and the Effects of Homes for the Handicapped on Residential Property Values. Urban Studies, p 25.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study
- AREA OF STUDY:** Shreveport - Bossier City, Louisiana, Metropolitan Area.
- POPULATION:** Mentally retarded/emotionally disturbed.
- PURPOSE:** To determine whether the opening of group homes for mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed persons has any effects on neighborhood property values.
- METHODOLOGY:** Single-family neighborhoods within the study area were divided into high and below average socio-economic markets. Nine group homes for mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed persons were identified in these neighborhoods. Once the homes were identified their characteristics were analyzed, actual house sales for an area within a radius of approximately three blocks (1,200 ft.) surrounding each home were researched, using a multiple listing service. Observations were made at least 24 months before and after the opening of the group home, whenever possible. The sample included 127 house sales over a period from 1979 to 1983. The sales were grouped by year and a regression analysis used to determine the effects of different income levels, price levels, price increases and length of time on the market were used as measures of market effect.
- FINDINGS:** There was no observable, statistically significant price effect on homes opening in high income areas. There was a positive price effect in lower income areas: property values increased near the group home relative to homes on the same block further away. The further from the group home, the more this positive price effect decreased. In higher income areas, there was some increase in time-on-the-market for houses up for sale, but this time increase diminished with distance from the group home.
- CONCLUSION:** Group homes have no statistically significant effect on prices in high socio-economic areas but may cause some increases in time-on-the-market before being sold. In below average socio-economic areas where housing markets are weak, they cause an observable, significant positive effect.

Gale, Dennis E., Ph.D. (October 1987). **Group Homes for Persons with Mental Retardation in the District of Columbia: Effects on Single-Family House Sales and Sales Prices.** Washington, D.C.: Center for Washington Area Studies, George Washington University.

**TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study

**AREA OF STUDY:** District of Columbia

**POPULATION:** Mentally retarded

**PURPOSE:** To determine whether there were any consistent and measurable shifts in housing sales or sale prices associated with the opening of group homes.

**METHODOLOGY:** A list of group homes for citizens with mental retardation in the District of Columbia was obtained from the D.C. Association for Retarded Citizens. Eighty-five facilities were identified, dispersed throughout every ward in the city. Only group homes located in single-family structures and duplexes were examined. Opening dates were noted. Information on residential property sales was taken from the Municipal Automated Geographic Information System (MAGIS). Data were obtained on the number of single family house sales per year in the vicinity of each group home, and on the annual mean sales price of the properties. The immediate vicinity of each group home was defined as the city square on which it was located. Sales and mean sales prices for each square were compared for one year before and after each group home was opened. The hypothesis was that a consistent pattern of increases in number of sales and/or a consistent pattern of decreases in mean sales price would provide strong evidence that group homes might be having a significant negative impact on neighborhood stability.

Further, a series of "portraits" of group homes were drawn to see how they fit into the community.

**FINDINGS:** The number of house sales in one calendar year before and after opening of 50 group homes declined in 15 neighborhoods, rose in 15 neighborhoods and remained the same in 13 others. However, increases or decreases in sales may amount to a few properties in some neighborhoods and could be due to factors other than group homes. Overall changes in dwelling sales from one year before to one year after group homes opened were not statistically significant. This was tested by a variety of other statistical analyses.

Of the 21 neighborhoods studied, 2/3 experienced a rise in mean sales price, the remainder a decline. Of the seven where prices fell, four were in the Northwest, one in the Northeast and two in the Southeast. The test was computed to see if changes in prices after group home opening were significantly different from those before opening. They were not.

The "portraits" revealed that group homes are located on quiet residential streets with mature trees and well kept yards, and that no group home was distinguished by an unusual number of vehicles parked or persons gathered outside.



**CONCLUSION:**

There are simply no grounds for the charge that group homes for citizens with mental retardation are related to rising trends in the sale of homes.

There is no evidence that the presence of group homes is associated with changes in mean sales prices for neighboring houses.

Group homes for citizens with mental retardation are good neighbors. They fit comfortably into the community and they are responsibly managed.

Gardner, Patty, George Pfaff and Suzanne Irwin (1982). **Community Acceptance of Group Homes in Ohio**. Columbus, Ohio: The Association for the Developmentally Disabled.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Community Attitude Survey/Literature Review
- AREA OF STUDY:** Ohio
- POPULATION:** Developmentally disabled
- PURPOSE:** To test the effectiveness of the Association for the Developmentally Disabled (ADD) Community Education Model, and to add unanswered questions about neighborhood attitudes and approaches.
- METHODOLOGY:** Three different survey techniques and questionnaires were used. Group Home Operator's Questionnaire was designed to gather information in person from 24 group home operators concerning the facility community acceptance. A Neighbor's Questionnaire was distributed door to door and retrieved the next day with a 73% response rate. Supporter's Questionnaire was distributed by mail to supporters of group homes; there was no follow-up and only a 15% return. The group homes selected were classified as being in either a farming, town/suburb, city, suburb or urban center. All were licensed by the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities between June 1976 and February 1, 1980. Anyone living within one block or equivalent was considered to be a neighbor. Eight general "issues" identified in the literature review were found to significantly affect community acceptance of group homes. In the Neighbor's survey, one issue directly addresses the concern: "Group Homes will lower the value of property" by making the following statements:
- Usually group homes lower property values;
  - Most people would be reluctant to buy a home on a block where a group home is located;
  - Adaptive renovations (fire escapes, wheelchair ramps) detract from the appearance of the neighborhood.
- Respondents were asked to answer from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."
- FINDINGS:** Despite all the studies indicating group homes do not adversely affect the worth of real estate, people are concerned about the issue of property value. Neighbors living close to a group home are not, however, overly concerned that the required renovations of these facilities will adversely affect the appearance of the home.
- CONCLUSION:** Group home operators moving into a residential neighborhood must address the issue of property value or invite substantial opposition. The issue of property value not only causes negative feelings but often increases the possibility of litigation against group home development.

General Accounting Office (August 1983). **An Analysis of Zoning and Other Practices Affecting the Establishment of Group Homes for the Mentally Disabled**. Gaithersburg, Maryland: U.S. General Accounting Office.

- TYPE OF WORK:** National Survey - random stratified sample, including case studies and interviews with officials
- AREA OF STUDY:** Nationwide. Case studies in Alabama, California, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas
- POPULATION:** Mentally disabled
- PURPOSE:** To determine the effects that zoning and other land-use policies have on efforts to establish small group homes, develop and help mentally disabled people in institutions return to the community
- METHODOLOGY:** Five data collection instruments were used. The first three were questionnaires mailed to group home sponsors, local zoning officials and state program directors for the mentally disabled. A fourth served as an outline to conduct case studies and the fifth was a field instrument to validate selected items on the group home sponsors' questionnaire. Survey questionnaires were sent to mental health directors in 49 states, to 702 group home operators and 246 zoning officials in a total of 99 mental health service areas. Forty-five states, 535 group homes and 142 zoning jurisdictions (of the 188 that had group homes) responded.
- FINDINGS:** In metropolitan residential areas, zoning and related land-use requirements caused problems but were generally not the major obstacles to group home placement. Only 18% of group home sponsors reported experiencing great difficulty because of zoning, permitting and licensing requirements. Inadequate funding and the inability to find locations or facilities suitable for clients hindered the development of group homes more than zoning problems. Most group homes were established in residential zones (about 86%); 82% of those sponsors said they were able to establish their facility in the residential zone without too much difficulty. Group homes, measured by such factors as community compliance and facility features which differentiated them from surrounding projects, had little effect on communities.
- CONCLUSION:** State initiative (28 had enacted pre-emptive laws for the establishment of group homes) has helped to facilitate group home development, but more systematic planning is needed. Systematic planning for funding and locating group homes by the various levels of government should continue to encourage private sector participation in group home development. The federal government should work with state and local governments to promote long-range planning.

Glubiak, Peter G. (Fall 1983). **Local Zoning and Residential Care Facilities: Conflicts and Solutions**. Louisville, Kentucky: University of Louisville.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Law Paper (for a seminar on land use controls)
- AREA OF STUDY:** General
- POPULATION:** Formerly institutionalized
- PURPOSE:** To investigate the conflict between federal and state policy advocacy and community-based Residential Care Facility (RCF) housing vs. local zoning ordinances that respond to the fears of local residents concerned about the stability of neighborhoods and community well-being.
- METHODOLOGY:** A review of judicial and legislative action throughout the country, citing pertinent existing studies.
- FINDINGS:** This paper contains a section on the NIMBY (not in my back yard) syndrome, listing neighborhood apprehensions as: fear of drug reduction in property values; fear of an increase in crime or drug traffic; uneasiness over the "differentness" of the potential neighbors; longstanding misconceptions about the "insane" or retarded. It deals with the broad generalization of RCFs and the local response to various "sub-classes" - homeless children, drug abusers, the retarded or mentally ill; and identifies different legislative, judicial and local zoning responses in different states. The author notes that, although the fear of declining property value does not appear to have been substantiated, "character of the neighborhood and maintenance of a customary quality of life" is a matter of legal significance, supported by the Supreme Court in Village of Belle Terre v. Borras.
- CONCLUSION:** The consensus is that the solution to conflicting policies and interests is in legislation at the state level. The status of local ordinances vis a vis state constitutions is a key consideration in passage and affirmation of state legislation which preempts local ordinance. In drafting such legislation, states must have local input, allow for public education and address neighborhood fears.

Goodale, Tom and Sherry Wickware (June 1979). **Group Homes and Property Values in Residential Areas.** Plan Canada, Vol. 19, No. 2:154.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study
- AREA OF STUDY:** Ottawa, Canada, Metropolitan Area
- POPULATION:** Dependent and neglected children and adult special populations including ex-offenders, former drug addicts, physically/mentally handicapped persons
- PURPOSE:** To determine the effect of group homes on property values in residential zones.
- METHODOLOGY:** Of the 54 group homes in the greater Ottawa area, the 38 in residential zones were selected for study. Each home was visited to determine if appearance or maintenance standards might have influenced the adjacent properties. The five indicators studied were: the number of real estate transactions for the years prior, during and after establishment of the group home; comparison of selling prices for the same period; rate of appreciation of property values; the number of days the property was listed before sale; and the actual selling price as a percent of the asking price by the owner. Property transactions were listed as Precinct (houses in the most immediate area), Block (houses in the same block in the Proximate area) and Street (properties on adjacent blocks in the same street to a limit of 100 in the house numbering system). The study utilized the distance decay principle which states that the greater the distance from a presumed source of influence, the less the effect. Data was compiled for a ten year, two month period: January through February 28, 1978.
- FINDINGS:** Only group homes for children were found in the most residential zones (R-1 through R-4). Adult homes were in less residential zones. Of the 163 possible selling price comparisons, in 101 cases the property in a distance category closer to the group home sold for more than property further away. In 62 cases, the reverse was true. The percent of the list price received varied little by sponsoring population served or proximity to the group home, but days listed varied considerably. Difference in number of days before sale seemed attributable to characteristics of the zone rather than the group home population.
- CONCLUSION:** Group homes for adults tend not to be located in the most residential zones. Property values and marketability of homes are adversely affected by the presence of group homes. This conclusion must be tempered by the relatively small sampling analyzed, and that there was insufficient data to make any conclusion about degrees of effect afforded by different populations. If a liability result from the establishment of a group home, effort should be expended to determine its importance and to isolate causal variables. Whether well-founded or not, concerns of neighbors must be considered and effectively addressed.

Hopperton, Robert J. (1980). A State Legislative Strategy for Ending Exclusionary Zoning of Community Homes. Urban Law Annual, Vol. 19:47.

**TYPE OF WORK:** Law Paper

**AREA OF STUDY:** Ohio

**POPULATION:** Developmentally disabled

**PURPOSE:** To discuss the strategy used to achieve adoption of state zoning legislation in Ohio (a constitutional home rule state) and recommend a strategy that can be effectively used to achieve the same results in other states.

**METHODOLOGY:** A review of: the basic goals of (and barriers to) normalization; litigation; local and state legislative reforms; public statements; strategy considerations; and negotiations necessary to enact a state zoning statute for developmentally disabled persons.

**FINDINGS:** Legislative efforts often put laudable policy goals against each other: protection of the environment vs. jobs; energy independence vs. control of inflation; in this case - normalization and the right of individuals to live in the least restrictive environment vs. local control over zoning. An effective advocate must have a clear understanding of his opponent's policy goals and must show why his laudable goal should supersede those of his opponents. Effective lobbying on behalf of community health requires a sound strategy based on detached and dispassionate assessment of the probable constitutional, legal and political barriers.

**CONCLUSION:** Strategies based on a "good guys/bad guys" approach, deriving motivation from emotion rather than well thought out plans and sound preparation, are likely to fail.

Hopperton, Robert J. (November 1975). *Zoning for Community Homes: A Handbook for Local Legislative Change*. Columbus, Ohio: Law Reform Project, Ohio University.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Law Reform Project Handbook
- AREA OF STUDY:** Ohio
- POPULATION:** Mentally retarded/developmentally disabled
- PURPOSE:** To provide a guide to local legislative change in order to obtain favorable zoning treatment for community homes serving developmentally disabled and mentally retarded.
- METHODOLOGY:** The handbook provides assistance on policy, legal and procedural that will be useful to advocates of legislative change. A companion handbook was prepared for municipal officials which includes the recommended zoning treatments, as well as discussion of technical questions. It analyzes present zoning ordinances, answers basic and drafting questions and identifies key legal issues.
- FINDINGS:** The author recommends that group homes be established as a "special exception" (or conditional use) in residential zones, governed by principles that they will comply with all fire, building, health and safety codes, be licensed by an appropriate agency and be dispersed to avoid over concentration of facilities in any one neighborhood. He includes a model ordinance and a check list of action designed to build a base of support for proposed amendments.
- CONCLUSION:** Community-based residential facilities for the mentally retarded and developmentally disabled have social value. Attempts to create favorable zoning treatment and legislative change in order to develop them require a substantial commitment of time and energy; a thorough understanding of the policy and legal questions involved; and a knowledgeable, step-by-step approach to all procedural requirements.

Human Services Research Institute (March 1988). **Becoming a Neighbor: An Examination of the Placement of People with Mental Retardation in Connecticut Communities**. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

**TYPE OF WORK:** Comprehensive research study using various instruments.

**AREA OF STUDY:** State of Connecticut

**POPULATION:** Mentally retarded

**PURPOSE:** To determine: the impact of deinstitutionalization on communities in which people with mental retardation reside, and the factors which influence community acceptance; the extent to which community support services and day programs are available and accessible; how and to what extent the Department of Mental Retardation assures the quality of community support services and day programs for the persons with mental retardation who reside in community residential facilities.

**METHODOLOGY:** Six major activities were undertaken:

- 1) A comprehensive review of existing literature on the relationship between community residences and communities in which they are located.
- 2) A description of the formal system of planning, residential development and quality assurance.
- 3) Case studies of six Connecticut communities where people with mental retardation have been relocated from institutions.
- 4) Content analysis of media relating to deinstitutionalization and community development.
- 5) A retrospective study of 12 individual placements in community-based residences in the six selected communities.
- 6) A phone survey of providers located in non-urban areas to elicit any special problems they have in accessing services for their residents.

**FINDINGS:** This is a detailed and comprehensive study, and a full summary of findings and recommendations is not possible within the framework of this format. Some of the findings are:

The literature review revealed with startling consistency that group homes have no impact on property values, selling time or program turnover rates, and no adverse effect on the "character" of the neighborhood or crime rate. Replication of these findings was deemed necessary.

In site planning, care should be taken, by coordinating the development efforts of various providers, to assure that numbers of sites are not suddenly developed in a single community.



In the media, the public was getting a variety of mixed messages about people with mental retardation and the development of community residences. On the one hand they saw that group homes were general, controversial and possibly expensive, and that there are people with mental retardation living in the community who could be a threat to the community. On the other hand, the newspapers did not say that community residences are a well established part of the communities and they provide benefits to the people living in them. Further, the media was fairly clear in documenting many of the problems associated with institutional services.

In service delivery, many questions were raised and recommendations were made in this report reflecting a residential system in transition from one based on segregated custodial facilities to one based in neighborhoods around the state. Such a transition - especially hastened by litigation and court oversight - is complex and tends to sharpen disagreements about the most appropriate mode of service delivery. Mid-course corrections are now required. The test is whether the corrections are made in a timely and systematic fashion.

**CONCLUSION:**

A firm programmatic foundation has been laid in the community and the basic needs of people are being met. Still, there are areas where additional attention is required. Such "fine tuning" is an integral part of any evolving system.

Iglhaut, Daniel M. (October 1988). **The Impact of Group Homes on Resident Property Values.** The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Prince George's County Government.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study
- AREA OF STUDY:** Prince George's County, Maryland
- POPULATION:** Mentally ill, developmentally disabled, troubled youth
- METHODOLOGY:** The study analyzes sales data associated with 54 group homes located in a wide variety of neighborhoods throughout the county: 52 neighborhoods with single-family detached houses, two in or adjacent to townhouse developments. The pretest/post-test measure of resident sales activity in the neighborhood of the group home was used. Six indicators evaluated included: 1) Number of sales before and after occupancy of the group home; 2) Mean sales price before and after occupancy; 3) Sales price as a percentage of list price; and, 4) Appreciation and depreciation of homes selling before occupancy and reselling after occupancy. Sales data were taken from a 4-5 block radius around group homes. Sources of sales data were the Prince George's County Board of Realtors Multiple Listing Services (MLS) and the Lusk Sales Directories for January, 1980 through March, 1988. The MLS provides both the sales price as well as the list price, but it covers only sales for the past 18 months and was available for only 13 houses. Sales information from neighborhoods that do not have a group home was used as a control for neighborhoods covered by MLS. Sales data were compared to county baselines provided by the Prince George's County Board of Realtors.
- FINDINGS:** Group home neighborhoods had appreciation rates that were, on average, higher than the county rates, and there was not a significant change in turnover. There were no correlations between sales data and distance from the group home, number of months that sales occur before and after occupancy, location in the county or population served.
- CONCLUSION:** Given the many factors that influence neighborhood property sales, a definitive conclusion that group homes affect property values positively or negatively cannot be established by this study. However, there was not a significant change in turnover after occupancy, which suggests continued neighborhood stability.

Jaffe, Martin and Thomas P. Smith (October 1986). **Siting Group Homes for Developmentally Disabled Persons**. American Planning Association, Planning A Service Report Number 397.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Comprehensive Research
- AREA OF STUDY:** General United States
- POPULATION:** Developmentally disabled
- PURPOSE:** To report on research literature, current zoning practices and recent decisions; to examine the siting in residential neighborhoods of group homes for persons with developmental disabilities; and to develop zoning provisions to better regulate them.
- METHODOLOGY:** Chapters in this report cover: A Review of Recent Literature; State and Local Policies; The Legal Framework; The Proper Zoning Treatment of Group Homes; Model Zoning and Fair Housing Provisions. There is a comprehensive annotated bibliography. Evidence and examples were taken from all over the country.
- FINDINGS:** This is a comprehensive report. Some of the findings include:
- The single most important siting factor was a safe neighborhood followed by neighborhood stability, a high percentage of single-family residences to facilitate normalization processes, and proximity to transportation and community support services.
- The placement of persons with developmental disabilities into group homes in residential neighborhoods has become a nationwide issue. Many states have acted to limit local discretion on the establishment of group homes where local zoning boards have rejected proposals for group homes with exclusionary zoning. The legal battles concerning legislative interpretation and constitutional due process fought in the federal courts, have proven inconclusive in furthering the rights of developmentally disabled individuals to community placement. The focus of examination of the legal issues surrounding community residence siting must shift to the zoning skirmishes being fought in the courts.
- There is very little interaction between community residences and the surrounding community, group home residents made little use of community resources, and there was little interaction with neighborhood residents. This suggests that opponents' fears that they or their families would be exposed to deviancy are largely unfounded.
- CONCLUSION:** The proper zoning response, given contradictory evidence, is not to address the issue at all within local zoning, but through licensing provisions and federal reimbursement guidelines.
- Deviant or antisocial behavior exhibited by residents of a community facility should be handled either through the legal system or

istratively through transfer of the individual back from the comm facility into the institution. Local governments may choose to add amendment to their municipal code or fair housing statute that pre private deed or lease restrictions prohibiting small group homes single-family residential areas.

Kanter, Arlene S. (October 1984). **Recent Zoning Cases Uphold Establishment of Group Homes for the Mentally Disabled.** Clearinghouse Review. Washington: Mental Health Law Project, Vol. 18:515.

**TYPE OF WORK:** Mental Health Law Project Paper

**AREA OF STUDY:** General

**POPULATION:** Mentally disabled

**PURPOSE:** To address a major obstacle in the development of group community residences as evidenced by the enactment and application of exclusionary zoning laws.

**METHODOLOGY:** This is a footnoted review and analysis of exclusionary zoning ordinances, constitutional challenges and pertinent court decisions.

**FINDINGS:** People seeking to establish community residences for the mentally disabled have had to turn to the courts to battle the use of exclusionary zoning laws as a means of preventing such development. Throughout the country have generally responded favorably to constitutional challenges to local zoning laws brought by opponents of community residences. In New York State, applying a heightened standard of judicial scrutiny, the New York courts have been unwilling to conclude that a community's interest in preserving the nature or character of a neighborhood is sufficient to justify a restriction of the right of the mentally disabled people to reside in that community. The courts in recent years have interpreted the "single family dwelling" requirement in local zoning ordinances to include rather than exclude group homes, since they do not operate for profit and the residents participate in household tasks such as cooking and other household chores and decisions as a family. Courts are further influenced in many states by the existence of a statute or policy of caring for disabled persons.

**CONCLUSION:** If the goal of serving mentally disabled persons outside of institutions is to be realized, all states will have to adopt statutes specifying that all citizens have the right to live in the community, and communities must learn about the needs of mentally ill and retarded people and begin to accept their presence.

Knowles, Eric S. and Ronald K. Baba (June 1973). **The Social Impact of Group Homes: A Study of Small Residential Service Programs in First Residential Areas.** Green Bay, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study, prepared for the Green Bay Plan Commission
- AREA OF STUDY:** Green Bay, Wisconsin
- POPULATION:** Disadvantaged children and children with severe medical problems, teenagers under court commitment, convicts on work or study programs
- PURPOSE:** To provide the Green Bay Plan Commission with pertinent information about group homes, their social impact, their effects on property values, the climate of public opinion concerning them and a summary of zoning regulations used by other cities to govern them.
- METHODOLOGY:** Interviews were conducted with a random sample of residents in the neighborhood of the group homes to determine their knowledge and opinion of the group home in their area in particular, and their feelings about group homes in residential areas in general. Data on turnover values of purchased homes in the vicinity of the group home were obtained from the city assessor's office. Planning agencies in over 25,000 in Wisconsin and Minnesota were contacted concerning their zoning laws covering group homes.
- FINDINGS:** Approximately half of the residents within the first block of a group home are aware of its presence. The percentage decreases the further away from the home they live. About 20% of the immediate neighbors expressed disapproval of the home, but this rate decreased rapidly in the first block. By the third block away, virtually all of the people who knew of the group home felt positively about it. Almost half of the residents who knew of a group home obtained their information through informal communications with friends and neighbors. The news media provided information to a quarter of the respondents. In respect to property values, only one home was appropriate for study.
- CONCLUSION:** There appeared to be no drastic change in the number of houses sold. The ratio between purchase price and assessed value for those that were sold was so variable, and the number of transactions was so small, no conclusion could be drawn. If approval of a group home be taken as a positive impact and disapproval as a negative impact, the study would indicate that group homes have a positive impact on approximately 30% of neighborhood residents, a negative impact on approximately 20%, and no impact on over half of the neighbors who do not know the group home exists.

Kressel, Laurence (September 1981). Exclusionary Zoning: The Unseen Threat. Directions for Mental Health Services: Issues in Community Residential Care, No. 11: Budson, Editor. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Position Paper
- AREA OF STUDY:** General United States
- POPULATION:** Mentally disabled
- PURPOSE:** To review local systems of land use controls in order to devise strategies for breaking down unreasonable zoning barriers, and the legislators and federal and state courts can provide forums to exclusionary zoning.
- METHODOLOGY:** This paper provides an analysis of the zoning system - governing principles, substantive restrictions, permit issuance, zoning ordinance adoption procedure and the zoning status of residential care facilities followed by judicial review of cases challenging the constitutionality of restrictive zoning, federal court litigation, state court litigation, interpretation of local law, the theory of sovereign immunity, legislative reform.
- FINDINGS:** The courts have generally ruled favorably in residential care facility zoning cases, but the process has delayed their development and is expensive for both sides. More comprehensive legislative reform is needed to facilitate the siting of group homes in a manner that integrates them into a normalized setting without saturating an area and developing a "de facto social service district." There is also a need to educate and sensitize elected officials, educators, media representatives, planners, lawyers and the general citizenry to the negative social impacts of exclusionary land use policies.
- CONCLUSION:** Carefully drafted preemptive state legislation may be a necessary response to the social rejection of the mentally disabled that has been the root of local exclusionary zoning. Such statutes are likely to be challenged and will not foreclose costly litigation. State mental health officials, with staff and program already depleted by budget cuts, may be unprepared for their new statutory responsibilities as moderators of the deinstitutionalization conflict.

Lauber, Daniel (August 1981). *Impacts of Group Homes on the Surrounding Neighborhood: An Evaluation of Research*. Evanston, Ill: Planning/Communications.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Evaluation of existing research
- AREA OF STUDY:** General
- POPULATION:** Developmentally disabled, mentally ill, alcohol and drug abusers, pre-parolees
- PURPOSE:** To provide a factual basis for discussing the effects group homes have on the value of neighboring properties and on safety in the neighborhood.
- METHODOLOGY:** This report reviews nine existing impact studies, and provides an evaluative analysis of the findings. Eight of the studies examine the effects of group homes on property values; two include evaluations of the effects these homes have on crime in the neighborhood; and two include some evaluation of opinions of the neighbors. Five of the studies deal specifically with group homes for the developmentally disabled; the remaining four deal with populations often viewed as "objectionable" - alcohol and drug abusers, prison pre-parolees and the mentally ill. All studies used variations of a basic methodology and were conducted by professors or doctoral students knowledgeable in statistics.
- FINDINGS:** All nine studies uniformly reported that group homes have had no effect on property values, selling prices or rates of turnover, nor have they had any effect on local crime. In fact, residents of group homes and developmentally disabled persons have a much lower crime rate than the general population. Establishing a group home does not increase traffic volume or parking demand in the area of the home. Generally, group homes looked just like other homes on the block and often were better maintained than neighboring properties.
- CONCLUSION:** With this data, municipal officials faced with planning for group homes can make more fully informed decisions based on documentation rather than speculation.



Lauber, Daniel (September 1986). **Impacts on the Surrounding Neighborhood of Homes for Persons with Developmental Disabilities.** Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities, Springfield, Illinois.

**TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study

**AREA OF STUDY:** Illinois

**POPULATION:** Developmentally disabled

**PURPOSE:** To determine what effect, if any, group homes for persons with developmental disabilities have on property values, stability and the surrounding neighborhood.

**METHODOLOGY:** The study tracked the sales of 2,261 residential properties in the immediate neighborhoods surrounding 14 group home sites and 14 control neighborhoods. The homes were selected from high-density urban neighborhoods, suburban municipalities, and two sites in rural municipalities in a rural county with no town larger than 25,000. The mean sales prices of all residential ownership property sales within a one-block area of each group home were compared for two years before and two years after the home opened. Control neighborhoods were selected in the same city in areas virtually identical to the group home neighborhood. Sales data came from the Multiple Listing Service and the Realty Sales Guide published quarterly by the Law Bulletin Publishing Company.

It further tracked, over a three year period, the activities of over 1,000 persons with developmental disabilities who live in Illinois community residences to identify any criminal activities in which they may have participated. This was a mail survey of all operators of community residences for persons with developmental disabilities to determine the crime rate at which residents were engaged in criminal activities. A follow-up telephone survey of a random sample of 10 percent of the operators revealed that every one had consulted agency records to complete the survey forms.

**FINDINGS:** The data conclusively showed that:

Group homes do not affect the value of residential property in the surrounding neighborhood, nor do they affect the stability of the surrounding neighborhood.

The crime rate for persons with developmental disabilities who live in Illinois group homes is substantially lower than the crime rate for the general Illinois population. These group home residents pose no threat to safety in the neighborhood.

These studies compare with those of more than 20 other studies on the impact of group homes.

**CONCLUSION:** Group homes do not adversely affect the surrounding community.

Lauber, Daniel and Frank S. Bangs, Jr. (March 1974). **Zoning for Family and Group Facilities**. Chicago, Illinois: Planning Advisory Service.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Handbook
- AREA OF STUDY:** General
- POPULATION:** Formerly institutionalized
- PURPOSE:** To present a rational and legal means to regulate the location of family and group care facilities in a manner compatible with both their need and those of the community in which they locate.
- METHODOLOGY:** This volume contains chapters entitled: The Nature of Family and Group Care Facilities; Current Zoning Treatment; Court Decisions; Recommended Zoning Treatment. There are multiple sub-headings dealing with definitions, descriptions, attitudes, licensing procedures, regulatory obstacles, etc. Information has been included and footnoted from an extensive bibliography and research from all over the country.
- FINDINGS:** The ineffectiveness of large institutions in rehabilitating patients is recognized. Group care facilities are being established throughout the country. They serve a variety of functions. The community base for such facilities is essential for the successful treatment of their residents. The community serves as a role model to assist normalization and the transition back into society, yet community response to these facilities has been to frustrate their establishment. Zoning laws have generally supported community fears and concerns.
- CONCLUSION:** Zoning laws should not be used as a device to exclude group care facilities from residential neighborhoods. The zoning ordinance should establish reasonable conditions related to parking, signing, and concentration of these facilities in a neighborhood. The various permitting agencies should jointly develop public information methods to dispel public fears and assure residents that no excessive concentration of facilities will occur.

League of Women Voters of Seattle (April 1984). Yes - But in My Neighborhood?  
Community-Based Residential Facilities in Seattle.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Case Studies
- AREA OF STUDY:** Seattle, Washington
- POPULATION:** Mentally retarded, mentally ill, abused spouse, ex-offenders, h  
impaired, low income and emergency shelters
- PURPOSE:** To look at the zoning requirements, perceived attitudes  
community, and the advantages and disadvantages of community  
residential facilities in the siting process.
- METHODOLOGY:** Community-based residential facilities in the Seattle area were sur  
including an emergency shelter, battered women shelter, congrega  
facility for the mentally ill and a work release facility. Particularly  
was the course of the applicant facility through the planning and  
process, the community reaction to the facility, and the benefits  
facility to the clients. A questionnaire was sent to agencies, neigh  
those agencies and community councils in the agencies' neighbor  
asking what advice they had for an agency needing a zoning cha  
establish a community-based facility.
- FINDINGS:** The findings in this report were site specific and not generalized.  
included: Hearings requested by a community can delay a project u  
year and create expenses for the city. The Uniform Building Cod  
Life Safety Codes imposed very restrictive requirements on resid  
for the developmentally disabled, regardless of the degree of capabi  
the residents, which had two effects: increasing the cost c  
renovation or construction markedly, and forcing agencies to build  
buildings that house more people in order to reasonably finance  
projects.
- The community questionnaire cited the importance of good comm  
relations and suggested getting the community involved from  
beginning, involving churches and civic groups, and holding  
publicized meetings. Ongoing information about the program, prov  
channels for community concerns, having an advisory board and ho  
periodic open houses were also deemed important.
- CONCLUSION:** An agency must try to understand the politics of the neighborhood v  
it wants to move. If there is a community council, this may be the  
place it makes contact with the neighborhood. The community co  
can play an active and valuable role in informing and educating  
neighborhood. The agency should also understand the history o  
zoning laws as they are presently written, and be aware that the pro  
can be long and expensive.

Levy, Paul R., Ph.D. (1985). Coexistence Implies Reciprocity. The Commun Imperative.

**TYPE OF WORK:** Position Paper - Institute for the Study of Civic Values

**AREA OF STUDY:** General United States

**POPULATION:** Mentally ill

**PURPOSE:** To review the systemic crisis that has affected nearly all aspects contemporary American society; to seek to understand the divisiveness caused by mental health treatment facilities in the broader political and social context; and to propose strategies for coexistence.

**METHODOLOGY:** This paper discusses the issue of community response to the placing of facilities for the mentally incapacitated in residential areas within the historical perspectives of class, ideological origins, great issues of American history, home rule and "The State as Parent."

**FINDINGS:** The opposition to siting of mental health facilities must be viewed in the context of:

Other public ventures, including the demolition of neighborhoods and relocation of residents to make way for public housing projects and interstate highways;

The broad undercurrents of "Social Darwinism" in America that often blame the poor or the mentally ill for their own infirmities;

The national experience of urban blight and deterioration;

Class and racial tensions between black and white, rich and poor;

The general sense of social breakdown and loss of control over our lives. Many individuals have adopted a generalized mistrust of the intentions and effects of public policies.

**CONCLUSION:** To develop strategies for co-existence, mental health professionals must get off their "enlightened horses," and put an end to one-sided talk about "educating the community." Education is a two-way process. Successful professionals must:

Recognize it is the fundamental right and obligation of a neighborhood to shape the conditions of its common life;

Be prepared to negotiate the placement of any facility with the neighborhood itself;

Understand that there are extremely varied types of neighborhoods with different values and needs;

Seek out the natural neighborhood leaders to win their respect and support;

Learn about local needs and offer what they can to address those needs.

Lindauer, Martin S. (August 1980). Pauline Tung and Frank O'Donnell. **The E Community Residences for the Mentally Retarded on Real Estate Values Neigh-borhoods in Which They Are Located.** Brockport, N.Y.: State University York at Brockport.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study
- AREA OF STUDY:** A medium-sized northeastern city and three adjoining towns
- POPULATION:** Mentally retarded
- PURPOSE:** To determine the effect of community residences for the n retarded on the prices of homes sold and the number of sales i neighborhoods.
- METHODOLOGY:** The neighborhoods of seven community residences established l 1967-80 were studied. Data were obtained for both the street affected and surrounding streets (blocks). The centralized r listing files of the real estate board for the area were examined as other public records and newspaper summaries of sales. The extended over the two year periods preceding and follow establishment of the community residence. Two control neighb comparable to two of the test neighborhoods were also include study.
- FINDINGS:** In the two group home neighborhoods for which control neight comparisons were possible, the "after" sales prices were nearly i for both sets of data. In one set, the increase in the community re neighborhood sales compared to its control was 33%. In gen upward trend in sales was found in all but one of the six neighbo There did appear to be an effect on the number of homes sold, a ' wave" occurring just before the community residences opened: ( all sales took place the year prior, 21% the year after). Further, r third of the before sales occurred three months prior to the openin residence, as compared to 14% after. About the same number of were put up for sale, then withdrawn from the market.
- CONCLUSION:** Community residences do not decrease the property values of he the neighborhoods in which they are located. Homes get sold v any special difficulty. Though increased selling may occur just | the establishment of the community residence, such increased does not occur afterwards, nor does it depress the selling price home.

Linowes, Lisa (November 1983). *The Effect of Group Care Facilities on Property Values*. Chicago, Illinois: American Planning Association PAS Memo.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Research Paper/Summary of Studies
- AREA OF STUDY:** General
- POPULATION:** Special populations: mentally retarded, physically handicapped, substance abusers, ex-offenders
- PURPOSE:** To determine if the presence of group care facilities in a community would cause an increase in criminal activities and if the area would become saturated with additional facilities, resulting in a decrease in property value.
- METHODOLOGY:** Impact studies from six areas: Washington, D.C.; Green Bay, Wisconsin; Lansing, Michigan; Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; New York State and Oakland, California (all included in this document) analyzed and discussed.
- FINDINGS:** With the exception of the Oakland, California (Wolch and Galster) study, none of the reports analyzed revealed any significant relationship between group care facilities and surrounding property values. No report reached this conclusion regardless of time period studied, research method used or population the facility served (battered women, drug offenders and mentally disturbed individuals). However, the Oakland study did indicate that group homes depressed property values.
- CONCLUSION:** Planners should recognize research findings and consider all reports when creating strategies to direct the establishment of group care facilities (spreading facilities evenly throughout residential communities), plan for how they can make social integration easier to achieve while reducing the threat of group homes to property owners. Careful planning for group homes should ensure that the character and quality of residential communities remain intact, in addition to serving the needs of deinstitutionalized programs.

Lippincott, Marcia K. (April 1979). "A Sanctuary for People": Strategies for Overcoming Zoning Restrictions on Community Homes for Retarded Persons. Stanford Law Review, Vol. 31:767.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Position Paper
- AREA OF STUDY:** General United States
- POPULATION:** Mentally retarded
- PURPOSE:** To develop strategies for overcoming zoning restrictions.
- METHODOLOGY:** This work contains sections entitled:
- Community Homes for the Retarded and Zoning Barriers Residential Location
  - Strategies for Resolving a Zoning Case: Advocacy Within the Zoning Structure; Qualifying the Group Home as a Single Residence, Obtaining a Conditional Permit, and Invoking Immunity from Local Zoning Regulations
  - Strategies for Long-Term Reform: Creating a New Zoning Structure; The Need for a Legislative Approach; The Proper Focus of Reform: Change on the Local Level vs. Change on the State Level
  - Necessary Elements of a State Zoning Statute and Enforcement of the Statute: Some Suggestions for Effective Lobbying.
- FINDINGS:** The distorted view many Americans have of retarded people combined with the present zoning structure to frustrate the development of community homes. Often under this structure, community residents succeed only after a lengthy and expensive legal struggle. Attitudinal prejudices which reinforce the segregation of the retarded will take a long time and a great deal of education to change.
- CONCLUSION:** Lawyers must take immediate steps to gain for retarded clients the benefits of normal community living by both taking advantage of the opportunities the zoning system offers and by challenging and changing the system where those opportunities are denied.

Louisiana Center for The Public Interest (February 1981). **Impact of Group Homes on Property Values and the Surrounding Neighborhoods.** New Orleans, Louisiana

- TYPE OF WORK:** Review of existing research
- AREA OF STUDY:** General United States
- POPULATION:** Mentally handicapped
- PURPOSE:** To determine if group homes have a negative impact on the property values and the character of the neighborhoods in which they are placed.
- METHODOLOGY:** This work reviews the findings of the City of Lansing, Des Moines, and the Wolpert Studies (see pages 7, 10, and 86), and cites other studies that confirm the findings.
- FINDINGS:** The studies cited surveyed all types of facilities including mental homes, alcohol and drug centers, ex-offender halfway houses, and other facilities were in: upper, middle and low-income neighborhoods; single family, multiple family and apartment zones; white, black and mixed race communities. Although the establishment of group homes in a neighborhood often caused a storm of controversy, almost without exception they were quiet, integrated, well-maintained and inconspicuous on the block. There was no evidence of neighborhood saturation, incompatibility with neighborhood properties, visibly distressed residents, or decline in neighborhood character or property value.
- CONCLUSION:** Communities can absorb a limited number of group homes without saturation and without measurable property effects.



Lowinson, Joyce H., M.D., and John Langrod, M.A. (April 1975). **Neighborhood Treatment Centers - Opposition to Establishment: Problem in Community Medicine.** New York State Journal of Medicine, Vol. 75, No. 5:766.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Research Paper
- AREA OF STUDY:** Bronx, New York
- POPULATION:** Drug addicts
- PURPOSE:** To review the problems faced by various addiction treatment programs and their attempts to establish community-based facilities and to suggest effective ways of dealing with opposition.
- METHODOLOGY:** The authors reviewed pertinent professional literature and newspaper articles that provided immediate and up-to-date accounts of public attitudes.
- FINDINGS:**
- The authors isolated the following major reasons for resistance to treatment centers:
    - Fear of an influx of addicts into the community;
    - Fear of a decrease in neighborhood property values;
    - Denial of the existence of any addiction problem in the community;
    - Philosophical opposition to a specific treatment modality. Black individuals, for example, resist methadone maintenance as a form of genocide or social control.
    - Opposition generally takes the form of: picketing and harassing patients; threats of economic use of zoning regulations; and injunctions to prevent programs from opening.
    - Community relations, public education and working with community leaders interested in seeing the clinic open are key factors in overcoming opposition. However, extensive advanced public notice of intent to open a clinic is not mandatory or recommended. The authors quote the R.R. Lapierre and the G. Nash study that indicate prejudiced individuals will more readily accept a *fait accompli* and a popular place, even though they may express lingering resentment that they were not notified in advance.
- CONCLUSION:**
- To counteract escalating resistance to a program, those who will benefit from it must exert overt pressure for its establishment.
  - The director of the clinic must be sensitive to the fears and anxieties unique to the community and mobilize forces favorable to reducing them.
  - After establishment, the program must serve the community through the treatment of people who actually live in that community and through hiring local personnel when possible.

Lubin, Robert A., Ph.D., Allen A. Schwartz, Ph.D., Warren B. Zigman, M.Phil. and Matt Janicki, Ph.D. (1982). Community Acceptance of Residential Programs for Developmentally Disabled Persons, Applied Research in Mental Retardation, (3,191-2

- TYPE OF WORK:** Mail Survey
- AREA OF STUDY:** New York State
- POPULATION:** Developmentally disabled
- PURPOSE:** To investigate changes in the levels of community acceptance of residential programs after they are established, sources of program support and opposition, and strategies used to overcome opposition.
- METHODOLOGY:** The subjects were the 459 state-certified community residences for developmentally retarded/developmentally disabled persons operating in New York State in 1980. The survey was mailed in August, 1980 to the residence in New York, along with a cover letter from the Commissioner of the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities: stamped, self-addressed envelope. It was to be filled out by the program director or residence manager. Residences that did not respond within 60 days of the initial mailing received a follow-up letter, then follow-up telephone calls were made to those who had not responded by Dec 1980. All residences that responded by February 1981 were included.
- FINDINGS:** Three hundred thirty-one, or 72% of the community residences responded - 99 state operated and 232 privately operated. Forty percent were judged to have had community acceptance prior to opening, whereas 79% felt acceptance by the community at the time of the survey. Community residences that experienced high levels of acceptance prior to opening almost always retained that community support. Even in cases of declining acceptance, support decreased to indifference, not opposition. For those originally opposed by the community, only 4.1% still experienced opposition. Neither sponsor agency nor population density was found to relate to either present or current acceptance. Neighbors were judged to be the primary source of support - and of opposition. Most often cited reasons for opposition were: fear of lowered real estate values; concern for the adverse effect on neighborhood character; and worry about undesirable individuals in the community.
- Operators noted the most common way to deal with opposition was to "meet with complaining neighbors," followed by "hold an open house" and "seek support of community leaders." Only 3.6% indicated they ignored opposition.
- Community acceptance was predominant and improved over time. These findings cannot be generalized to all communities as attitudes were not measured in those communities that blocked the opening of public facilities.

**CONCLUSION:**

Findings suggest there are marked, consistent positive changes in community attitudes after programs are established. In many programs originally opposed are accepted by the community. Both new and existing residence programs should continue their efforts to reduce opposition and encourage community acceptance of development for disabled neighbors.

Lubin, Robert A., Ph.D., Matthew P. Janicki, Ph.D., Warren Zigman, M.Phil. and R. R. (February 1982). **The Likelihood of Police Contacts with Developmentally Disabled Persons in Community Residences.** Living Alternatives Research Project.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Mail Survey
- AREA OF STUDY:** New York State
- POPULATION:** Developmentally disabled
- PURPOSE:** To evaluate the extent and context of police interactions with community residence occupants.
- METHODOLOGY:** A survey questionnaire was sent out to all 499 community residence New York State. Of the 368 that responded, 93 (or 25.3%) reported or more residents had some interaction with the police. A random sample of 35 of these 93 residences was contacted by phone and requested to participate in the investigation. The respondents answered a series of questions concerning: the total number of residents involved with the police; the specific incident or behavior problem which precipitated the police contact; whether the request for police intervention was initiated by the residence staff or neighbors; and whether behavior problems reoccurred or contributed to institutionalization.
- FINDINGS:** In the random sample of 35 residences, 45 developmentally disabled persons were reported to have been involved with the police because of problem behaviors. Extrapolating from the 93 residences that reported interaction with the police, some 120 persons - of the approximately 3,700 residing in the respondent programs, or three out of every 100 may be expected to be involved with the police in a given year. Most police contacts were precipitated by a wide variety of problem behaviors. Of the 45 reported incidents, 31 (or 68%) involved antisocial behavior. Assaultive behavior was the most common precipitating event, accounting for 24% of all incidents. The remaining incidents involved verbal abuse, being victim of a crime, or running away. The estimated arrest rate for developmentally disabled adults is only three per 1,000. It is only one per 1,000 adults (16 and over) for the non-developmentally disabled population (New York State Crime and Justice Annual Reports, Noted).
- CONCLUSION:** Neighbors' fears concerning antisocial behaviors of community residence occupants are likely unfounded. Developmentally disabled occupants of community residences are rarely involved with the police. Even less frequently are problem behaviors the cause of the interaction. Considering the arrest rates, it is probably safer to be the neighbor of a community residence.

Mambort, Terence T., Elvia B. Thomas and Rebecca G. Few (March 1981). **Comm Acceptance: A Realistic Approach.** Montgomery County, Ohio: Montgomery C Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities in conjunction with Philip M Appraiser and Dr. Herman Torge, Research Consultant. Office of Educational Services: Uni of Dayton.

**TYPE OF WORK:** Opinion Survey, Property Sales Study

**AREA OF STUDY:** Montgomery County, Ohio

**POPULATION:** Mentally retarded

**PURPOSE:** To identify the impact of seven residential programs for the retar property values in their neighborhoods and to address the attitu community people towards individuals with handicaps.

**METHODOLOGY:** For the property sales study: The housing market in the neighbor each of seven group homes was studied for the two years prior location and after the home was purchased. The appraiser wis determine whether adverse community reaction would result in selling, and whether the homes near the group homes would suffer of value when sold compared with houses several blocks d Average time on the market and significant difference in sales pri percentage of list price were used as indicators.

For the opinion survey: A questionnaire was developed wi Montgomery County Board of Mental Retardation. The survey: conducted in nine neighborhoods with group homes. Using the hc a hub, forms were distributed throughout the area. Four additiona were also surveyed. They were similar to the other areas in all except they had no group home.

**FINDINGS:** Despite neighborhood fears that their property would suffer due to deterioration of the neighborhood, there v evidence to substantiate any effect on property values due to the lo of the group home in any of the neighborhoods. In several neighborhood reaction was negative and very vocal at the outset. case, the opposition was so strong several of the nearby homes immediately placed on the market and sold at lower than market The situation corrected itself after a year and the housing market re to normal. An analysis of the group home locations indicated the homes were compatible with neighborhood properties and often maintained; their neighborhoods had the same increase in market as other similar neighborhoods and had no higher rate of turnove adjacent properties did not experience property value declines.

The opinion survey got a 42% return and indicated that, respondents, 89.5% felt that persons with mental retardation ha same civil and human rights as others, 77% living near group l think the mentally retarded have the right to live in a neighbc setting, 75% think the group home is a better setting the institutional setting for individuals with retardation. However, onl of those living nearby thought the group home had not affectex property values.

**CONCLUSION:**

The residential facilities for the retarded had no adverse effects on the communities, indicated that the overall programs are well run and communities are "nice neighborhoods to live in." Providers have responsibility to the community in which they are going to develop a program. They must gather accurate information to correct misconceptions, alleviate fears and build a data base that can be shared and distributed.

Muhlin, Gregory L., Ph.D., M.S. and A. E. Dreyfuss (January 1984). **Community Reaction to Residential Mental Health Facilities in Westchester County.** Scarsdale, New York: Social Area Research, Inc. and the New York State Psychiatric Institute.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Telephone Survey/Attitude Study
- AREA OF STUDY:** Westchester County, New York
- POPULATION:** Former mental patients, former drug abusers, developmentally disabled children and adults
- PURPOSE:** To assess the impact of proximity to psychiatric facilities on attitudes towards the mentally ill, and to determine the degree of perceived community burden associated with the presence of such facilities in relation to other community problems.
- METHODOLOGY:** Six pairs of areas were selected for sampling. Within the pairs, one included a facility serving chronically ill psychiatric patients, and the other, usually adjacent to the facility area, contained no health or mental health facility of any kind. Only areas with a single facility were selected. Ninety respondents who live adjacent to, on the same street as, or around a psychiatric facility (15 from each test area), and 90 respondents in the matched control areas (15 from each area) were interviewed to determine their perceptions of neighborhood characteristics, awareness of facilities, and attitudes towards them.

The instrument was a ten-minute telephone survey with a multiple choice response format. Questions covered the respondent's perceptions of neighborhood assets and problems in the neighborhood, extent of respondent involvement in the community, perceived desirability of having different kinds of health and social services in the area, and specific inquiries about any known psychiatric facility and the respondent's attitudes towards its presence.

The respondents - 38 males and 142 females from a wide range of ethnic, religious and educational backgrounds - ranged in age from 18 to 88, with the mean age of 50.2.

**FINDINGS:** Attitudes were not determined by distance from the facility, and there were no systematic differences in responses between neighborhoods containing different facility types. Regarding community problems, there were no significant mean differences between respondents in facility and control areas, between those aware and unaware of the presence of a facility, or between those who objected to the facility and those who did not.

Concerning neighborhood services, only drug abuse treatment programs elicited opposition from a majority of residents. Slightly less than half thought a group home for former mental patients inappropriate in their neighborhood. Although half of the survey respondents were close to a psychiatric facility because of their immediate proximity to a psychiatric facility, 44% were totally unaware of any such program in their neighborhood.

**CONCLUSION:**

The cumulative results suggest that community facilities do not necessarily constitute a personal or community burden as far as neighbors are concerned. They may support the strategy of scattered rather than clustered, facility sites which may be more easily integrated into the neighborhood.



Pace University, The Edwin G. Michaelian Institute for Sub/Urban Governance (June 1982)  
**Group Homes for Mentally Disabled People: Impact on Property Values in Westchester County, New York.** Commissioned by the Community Residences Information Services Program in collaboration with the Westchester County Board of Realtors.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study
- AREA OF STUDY:** Westchester County, New York
- POPULATION:** Mentally disabled
- PURPOSE:** To study the effects of group home placement on property values follow up the 1978 Wolpert study and 1982 Dolan and Wolpert study
- METHODOLOGY:** Both the 1978 Wolpert study and the 1982 Dolan and Wolpert study drew from a sample of group homes throughout New York State. In the 1978 study, three Westchester County homes, all in Yonkers, were included. In the 1982 study, group homes were drawn from Westchester County only. Using the original Wolpert study as a guide, 17 homes were selected. The three-part study methodology implemented that addressed the following questions:
1. Are group homes physically distinguishable from homes in the immediate neighborhood?
  2. Do homes in the immediate neighborhood of the group home sell at a greater rate than homes at a control site (a general neighborhood but at least 7 blocks from the group home)?
  3. Are appreciation rates affected by the proximity of neighboring properties to a group home?

For Question 1, two "naive" Pace University graduate students (one of which home was the group home) were sent to neighborhoods and a list of seven to ten houses to evaluate on an exterior maintenance score. Mean scores for the group homes were calculated and compared to the control sites using a t-test for non-correlated samples.

For Question 2, recorded sales for homes one and two doors directly across the street from, and backing on the property, were compared to home sales at a control site. (A home in the same area which most resembled the group home was designated the control site). Data from the Westchester County Board of Realtors were used and sales occurring up to 36 months after the establishment of the group home were recorded.

For Question 3, a bivariate regression analysis was conducted with from the Westchester County Board of Realtors. Paper and elect records were searched for homes within a half-mile radius of the home which had been sold twice since the establishment of the home. A double sale was necessary to calculate monthly appreciation dollars. For each double sale, the distance (in yards) from the home was determined. Regression analysis was used to determine relationship between the two variables.

**FINDINGS:**

The findings of this 1988 study in Westchester County were the same as the 1978 and 1982 studies of sample homes throughout New York. Group homes have not had a negative impact on neighborhood property values. Economic forces other than the presence of a group home account for property appreciation rates. There was no "panic selling" when a group home was established in a Westchester neighborhood. Turnover rates at both control and experimental sites were low and not significant. There were no observable physical differences between group home and neighboring homes.

**CONCLUSION:**

1. Group homes for mentally disabled people are physically distinguishable from other homes in the immediate neighborhood.
2. Houses in the immediate neighborhood of group homes do not sell at a greater rate than houses in a comparable neighborhood without group homes.
3. Property values are not affected by proximity to group homes.

Padavan, Senator Frank (May 1986). *After Eight Years: An analysis of the use, and effectiveness of the 1978 New York State Site Selection Law governing community residences for the mentally disabled.* New York State Senate Committee on Mental Hygiene and Addiction Control.

**TYPE OF WORK:** Comprehensive Report and Analysis

**AREA OF STUDY:** New York State

**POPULATION:** Mentally disabled

**PURPOSE:** To determine the effectiveness of the 1978 NYS Site Selection Law, to examine the progress in, and the effects of, the development of community-based residences for mentally disabled persons.

**METHODOLOGY:** Data reviewed included: The intent and process of the 1978 legislation, legal challenges and proposed amendments, community residence growth under the Site Selection Law, and the effects of community-based residences on neighborhoods.

**FINDINGS:** The law has not served to avoid litigation, but those challenges that occurred have generally sustained and strengthened the law. A few court proceedings have only once questioned a commissioner's determination on the appropriateness of a community residence site. Providers have far avoided sites open to the legal challenge of saturation, and they have consistently backed state deinstitutionalization policy.

There has been a sharp upturn in development of residences for the mentally retarded since 1978-79. Communities are considering sites more rapidly and approving a larger number of submitted sites. Between 1979-85, the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities opened 960 community residences, with approximately 100 hearings and decisions by the Commissioner. The Office of Mental Health has seen an increase from 308 community residence beds in 1978 to 4,100 at the time of the report, with 25 Commissioner's hearings cited in the report reviewed in this volume (Dolan and Wolpert, Suffolk County Council, Inc. and Lindauer, Tung and O'Donnell). The report found no adverse effect on surrounding property values.

**CONCLUSION:** The experience of the past eight years, combined with wide research, confirms that community residences, once established, do not affect property values or neighborhood safety and stability, and opposition subsides over time. Nonetheless, occasional local heeds continue to highlight the drama of a community fearing the worst.

This "expectation gap" can be further narrowed by the educational efforts of schools, agencies and advocacy groups, along with the consistent practice of the Site Selection Law.

Perske, Martha and Robert (1980). **New Life in the Neighborhood: How Persons Retardation or Other Disabilities Can Help Make a Good Community Better**. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press.

**TYPE OF WORK:** Opinion Paper/Handbook

**AREA OF STUDY:** General

**POPULATION:** Mentally retarded

**PURPOSE:** To clarify historical misconceptions about retardation and to help develop a true understanding of the needs and capabilities of people with retardation as neighbors.

**METHODOLOGY:** The work provides an overview of old attitudes and stereotypes, definitions, the dangers of labeling, normalization principles, neighborhood fears and acceptance, zoning strategies. Chapter 15 is exclusively with the question of property values and cites the Wood Study (see page 86).

**FINDINGS:** This is an advocacy document. It cites positive solutions to neighborhood problems, and ends with examples of ways group home residents have contributed to their communities and become productive citizens and good helping neighbors.

**CONCLUSION:** The more advanced a civilization becomes, the more it will understand value and relate to its members who have severe handicapped conditions.

Piasecki, Joseph R. (November 1975). **Community Response to Residential Services for the Psycho-Socially Disabled: Preliminary Results of a National Survey**. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Horizon House Institute for Research and Development.

- TYPE OF WORK:** National Survey
- AREA OF STUDY:** United States
- POPULATION:** All disability groups
- PURPOSE:** To record and review the relationships of host communities to residential programs; to determine the origins of resistance, the significance of opposition in terms of its potential impact on a program, and strategies employed by service providers to combat this opposition; to discover the correlation between the amount of public resistance and the population to be served.
- METHODOLOGY:** No specifics of methodology are included in this report. This national survey of community-based residential facilities. There were 472 respondents. Two hypotheses tested were: homes for client care that had violated community norms (offenders) would be less favored than non-offenders; and facilities placed in residential zones, regardless of type of client, will experience greater opposition than facilities in non-residential zones.
- FINDINGS:** The data showed that:
- 34% of the respondents met initial community opposition; 75% of those said the opposition was moderate or strong;
  - Facilities located in residential zones received significantly more opposition. In most cases, the source of opposition was individual neighbors;
  - For every program that is established and continues to operate, there has been, on the average, another that has been prohibited or closed because of community opposition. This opposition can cause lengthy, costly delays in openings.
  - 77 facilities reported some difficulties with zoning regulations, and 28% reported the necessity to obtain a zoning variance.
  - Facilities for adult offenders or delinquent children encountered substantially greater initial opposition than facilities for the mentally disabled or substance abusers.
  - Government sponsored facilities receive more opposition than privately sponsored facilities; however, government agencies are more likely to serve offenders and less likely to involve neighbors in decision-making or advisory boards.
  - The most common strategy in dealing with public resistance was to schedule meetings with opponents, followed by holding an open house.

then media campaigns and the involvement of community representatives.

**CONCLUSION:**

Community opposition is a complex phenomenon with multiple correlates. There is a dearth of quantitative studies which address specifics of this opposition.

Research Group, The (June 1985). **The Impact of Community Residences on Property Values in the Westfield Massachusetts Area.** Northampton, Massachusetts.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study
- AREA OF STUDY:** Westfield, Massachusetts
- POPULATION:** Mentally ill, mentally retarded
- PURPOSE:** To determine the effects that a group home for the mentally ill or mentally retarded has on property turnover and values in its neighborhood.
- METHODOLOGY:** The study compared like neighborhoods with similar local population types and housing characteristics. Some contained, some do not contain, a group home for the mentally ill or mentally retarded.
- FINDINGS:** Analysis of property turnover showed no significant differences within or between neighborhoods. The presence of a group home did not result in property flight from the neighborhood. There was an insufficient number of properties in the neighborhood to analyze the effects on property values.
- CONCLUSION:** Group homes for the mentally ill or mentally retarded do not have an adverse effect on the neighborhoods in which they are placed.

Ryan, Carey S. and Ann Coyne (October 1985). **Effects of Group Homes Neighborhood Property Values.** Mental Retardation. Vol. 23:5:241.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study
- AREA OF STUDY:** Eastern Nebraska
- POPULATION:** Mentally retarded
- PURPOSE:** To determine the effect that group homes have on property values.
- METHODOLOGY:** Thirteen group homes located in two of the five counties served by Eastern Nebraska Community Office of Retardation (ENCOR) were selected for this study. Criteria for their selection included: 24 hour coverage; occupancy by two or more clients; location in the target counties; location in a primarily non-rental neighborhood. Transactions for 525 homes sold within 1200 feet of each group home were studied. Data were collected for one year before and up to three years after opening of each group home. Each house was determined to be in zone (1, 2 or 3) depending on its distance (under 400, 400 -800, or 800 - 1200 feet) from the group home. Turnover rates were calculated for each zone. Sales price/list price percentages were individually calculated for each transaction.
- FINDINGS:**
- Market time:** There was no statistically significant difference in number of days that houses were on the market. This held true for independent variables: distance from the group home and sale before or after occupancy of the home.
- Turnover rate:** Turnover after the establishment of the group home was significantly lower than turnover before. While this most likely represents a slowdown in the housing market, it also indicates presence of a group home does not increase turnover.
- List price/sale price:** After group home establishment, there was a greater increase in list and sales price in zone 3, furthest away from the group home in four out of the 13 areas. However, there was no significant difference in sales/list ratio, thus homeowners were still getting the same percentage of their asking price, regardless of distance from the group home. For some reason, probably unrelated to the presence of the group home, there were a few exceptionally high sales in zone 3 in these four areas. Overall the list and sales prices increased in every zone after the group homes were established.
- CONCLUSION:** The findings lend support to the notion that group homes do not adversely affect neighborhood property values. Indeed, turnover rate appeared to be lower, sales and list prices significantly increased, and group homes were established. It appears that neighborhood fear that lowered property values are unfounded.



Ryan, Joseph E., D.P.A. and Ruth Stern, M.P.A. (January 1988), revised June  
**Appearance Matters: A Survey of Group Home Exterior Maintenance in  
Westchester County, New York.** White Plains, New York: Westchester  
Department of Community Mental Health and Community Residences Information System  
Program (CRISP).

**TYPE OF WORK:** Windshield Survey

**AREA OF STUDY:** Westchester County, New York

**POPULATION:** Mentally retarded/developmentally disabled

**PURPOSE:** To determine whether: community residences for mentally retarded  
developmentally disabled persons are visually distinguishable from  
houses in the neighborhoods; there is a difference in the quality of  
exterior maintenance between state-operated and voluntary-operated  
community residences, and if there are differences, identify the causes  
for them; agencies operating more than one residential program have  
more maintenance deficiencies than single site operators; and whether  
certain maintenance problems are recurrent.

To make recommendations to sponsoring agencies to correct identified  
exterior maintenance problems.

**METHODOLOGY:**

Five assessments by two observers were made over a two year  
summer, fall and spring 1984-86. The measuring instrument was  
divided into two scales. The first was a subjective appraisal based on  
appearance of the community residence compared to the rest of the  
neighborhood using a three point evaluation that noted below average,  
average and above average. The second was a more objective  
measurement of specific areas of maintenance, including lawn, landscape  
paint, roof, windows and driveways. All observations were based on  
what could be seen from the street. Fifty-two community residences  
were studied. Apartments and a campus complex of ten community  
residences were not included.

**FINDINGS:**

Group homes were generally maintained on a par with neighborhood  
properties, and were usually indistinguishable from other houses in the  
block.

There appeared to be no major difference in the quality of maintenance  
between state and voluntary operators - state facilities tended to be  
par with the neighborhood, voluntary agencies more at the extreme  
above and below the neighborhood average. Many of the unsatisfactory  
ratings were earned by a few facilities - six residences accounted for  
51%, of the 45 low ratings.

Lawn maintenance, landscaping, storage of trash and staff parking  
the most often noted problems.

**CONCLUSION:**

The maintenance of community residences in Westchester County is  
generally very good. The few facilities below par have problems  
and should be immediately remedied. Community residences in  
maintained neighborhoods may require additional resources to keep

property on a par with neighboring homes. Management practice maintenance budgets of the highest and lowest rated comm residences should be examined and compared to establish leve financial supports necessary to underwrite effective maintenance res

**FOLLOW-UP:**

A follow-up study using the same observers, facilities, methodolog collection instruments was conducted on May 4 and 5, 1988. findings indicated that, in general, from the original study: the con of lawns had deteriorated while landscaping improved; handling of and debris improved at all facilities, as did the "parking lot" effect c properties. Overall, government facilities improved, while a declin noted for houses operated by the private sector.

Scott, Nancy J. and Robert A. (Spring 1980). The Impact of Housing Markets on Institutionalization. Administration in Mental Health, Vol. 7, 3:210.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Study of available rental housing
- AREA OF STUDY:** New Jersey
- POPULATION:** Previously institutionalized
- PURPOSE:** To discover how much room there is within the community to accommodate clients of deinstitutionalization programs; to determine where available space is located and what implications this information may have for assessing the feasibility of planned deinstitutionalization efforts in various communities throughout the state.
- METHODOLOGY:** U.S. Census reports for 1970 were used in order to obtain data on housing for all municipalities, as well as to refine the social, ethnic, and economic composition of neighborhoods. Attempts to estimate the degree of error between 1970 census figures and current market prices were made by checking the data against recent housing surveys for several counties. The report concerns itself only with rental housing since New Jersey, as a matter of policy, has opted not to invest capital in purchasing homes and buildings for deinstitutionalization programs.
- FINDINGS:** There is a serious housing shortage in New Jersey. Only 3.5% of the total market of rental housing is vacant. Much of the available housing is located in physically and socially deteriorated neighborhoods which would not be suitable environments in which to place those who suffer from mental impairments; 65% of all vacant-for-rent housing is in census tracts where there is a relatively high proportion of overcrowded housing; 82.1% are in areas where the proportion of single families is low; 69% are in census tracts with low median income; and 20% are in tracts with considerable (20%) population turnover each year.
- CONCLUSION:** There is not enough housing stock available in New Jersey to receive all of the people for whom community care programs exist or are planned.
- Each unit of suitable housing lost through community opposition diminishes by that amount the possibility of achieving the goal of deinstitutionalization.
- We must develop more sophisticated ways to locate housing and deal with community fears and opposition.
- There are absolute limits to how many deinstitutionalized individuals can be absorbed by a community.

Seltzer, Marsha M. (July 1984). *Correlates of Community Opposition to Community Residences for Mentally Retarded Persons*. American Journal of Mental Deficiency, 89, No. 1:1.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Community Survey
- AREA OF STUDY:** Boston and six surrounding communities
- POPULATION:** Mentally retarded
- PURPOSE:** To describe patterns of community support and resistance encountered by a sample of community residences; to identify correlates of public education and community support or opposition.
- METHODOLOGY:** Four research questions were examined:
- Are there differences in the extent of community opposition and support for community residences when public education was provided as compared to when it was not?
  - How do community residences that encountered opposition differ from those that did not?
  - How do community residences that received support differ from those that did not?
  - Are there differences in the extent of community opposition to support for residences whose administrators informed the community prior to the opening of the facility and those who informed the community after the facility had begun to operate?
- Forty-three community residences for the mentally retarded (86% of such facilities in operation in the area in 1980) were studied. The sample was assembled by obtaining official lists of residences from all agencies responsible. Seven facilities refused to cooperate.
- Data were collected by telephone interviews conducted by trained research assistants. The majority of information was provided by the executive or program director of the residence. There was no direct contact with neighbors, thus the data reflect staff members' perceptions of the degree of community opposition or support.
- FINDINGS:** Those residences that did not receive community support had significantly fewer staff and board members from the neighborhood.
- Support was significantly more likely in neighborhoods that contain a lower proportion of homeowners.
- Opposition was least likely to be encountered when the community became aware of the existence of the residence after it had already begun operation, and most likely when the community learned about it during the six month period before it opened.

Client characteristics appeared unrelated to the likelihood of encountering community opposition.

There was no relationship between community opposition and community support. Community support does not mean that opposition is absent. Opposition was higher when the value of the residence was higher.

**CONCLUSION:**

Opposition to community residences is widespread and warrants additional examination by researchers, practitioners and policy makers. It is costly in both dollars and professional energies needed to combat it and it jeopardizes the success of the integration of mentally ill persons into the neighborhood. Knowledge about better ways to reduce opposition is sorely needed.

Sigelman, Carol K., Ph.D., Cynthia L. Spanhel and Cathy D. Lorensen (January/February/1979). **Community Reactions to Deinstitutionalization: Crime, Property Values and Other Bugbears.** Journal of Rehabilitation: 52.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Literature Review
- AREA OF STUDY:** General
- POPULATION:** Formerly deinstitutionalized
- PURPOSE:** To confront with the best evidence available such allegations that community based programs for ex-mental patients will cause crime to soar, property values to plummet and the character of neighborhoods to change.
- METHODOLOGY:** The authors reviewed the findings of significant studies, survey research reports and papers.
- FINDINGS:** Research suggests that:
- Crime rates have not in fact risen in neighborhoods with residential facilities for the handicapped;
  - Residential facilities have no effect on property values or turnover;
  - Neighborhood activity patterns do not appear to have changed and resident/neighbor contacts are most often positive;
  - In most cases, community residences were accepted and neighbors became more positively disposed toward them over time.
- CONCLUSION:** Although solid evidence is in short supply, research findings tend to offer encouragement to rehabilitators and advocates working with community members to smooth the deinstitutionalization process.
- Intensive community education campaigns before a facility opens should not be the method of choice and in some cases may actually motivate community protest.

Suffolk Community Council, Inc. (August 1984). **The Impact of Community Residences Upon Neighborhood Property Values.** Smithtown, New York.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study
- AREA OF STUDY:** Suffolk County, New York
- POPULATION:** Psychiatric/developmentally disabled
- PURPOSE:** To determine the effect that the growing number of community residences may have upon neighborhood property values.
- METHODOLOGY:** A random sample of 20 homes was selected from Suffolk's total census at the time of the study. Those located in significantly commercial or industrial areas, or where there were large tracts of vacant land, were eliminated. The final sample consisted of seven community residences and seven control homes. These were matched with control homes. Sample residences and control homes were identified by census blocks (1980 census) and matched according to such data as: number and percent of single unit homes and multifamily homes; the mean dollar value of homes; percent of owner occupied and renter occupied homes; population size; age of residences; and racial composition.
- Researchers studied the following data, collected from the Multiple Listing Service: number of homes on the market; total number of sales within each area; sales price of each home; proximity of each study site; number of days on the market. Sales were analyzed for periods 18 months prior to and following the opening of each community residence. Statistical tests were performed in each community residence to determine if and how sales were influenced by the presence of community residences. Factors considered were: sales price of homes; number of days on the market; number of sales transactions; ratio of sales price to tax within the area of the community residences.
- FINDINGS:** In six of the seven areas tested, the number of sales remained the same or increased after the residence opened.
- The comparison of mean sale prices indicated that the establishment of a community residence did not cause a decline in the sale price of homes in the area.
- The sale price/tax ratio was proportionately equivalent before and after the group home was established. There was no significant change in the number of days on the market prior to and following the opening of the group home.
- CONCLUSION:** For each of the property value indicators analyzed, no adverse effect of the group home on surrounding property values were identified.

Teplin, Linda A., Ph.D. (May 1985). *The Criminality of the Mentally Ill: A Dangerous Misconception*. American Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 142:593.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Research Study
- AREA OF STUDY:** Northern city
- POPULATION:** Mentally ill
- PURPOSE:** To test the stereotype of the mentally ill person as dangerous, therefore more prone to commit crime.
- METHODOLOGY:** Existing research literature was reviewed. The practice of using arrest rate as the sole indicator of "crime" was challenged on several grounds as was the practice of using prior hospitalization as the sole indicator of mental disorder. For this report, police officers in a large northern city of over one million were observed in their everyday interactions with citizens for 2,200 hours over a 14 month period in 1980-81. Observations included the author and five clinical psychology graduate students. Observations were conducted all hours of the day. Evenings and weekends were oversampled to obtain a maximum of data in a minimum of time. The observers checked for the presence of mental disorder using a symptom checklist that included the characteristics of severe mental disorder: confusion/disorientation; withdrawal; unresponsiveness; paranoid, inappropriate or bizarre speech; and destructive behaviors. The focus was on identifying those suffering from the more severe forms of mental illness. Data recording was conducted by later coding the objective characteristics of the encounters according to an instrument specifically developed for this purpose. Overall, 1,072 police/citizen encounters involving 2,122 citizens were observed and coded. Data on 310 traffic citations involving 433 citizens was omitted from the analysis.
- FINDINGS:** Police encounters with mentally disordered persons were relatively rare. Of the 2,122 persons involved with police, only 85 (4%) exhibited serious signs of disorder.
- Mentally disordered persons were far less likely to be victims or complainants than non-mentally ill persons, but were twice as likely to be subjects of concern, and somewhat more likely to be suspects.
- Mentally ill persons did not commit serious crimes at a rate disproportionate to their numbers.
- CONCLUSION:** The pattern of crime among the mentally ill is substantially similar to that of the general population - at least in this large northern city.



Wagner, Christopher A., J.D. and Christine M. Mitchell, Ph.D. (August 1980). **Group Homes and Property Values: A Second Look**. Columbus, Ohio: Metropolitan Human Services Commission.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study
- AREA OF STUDY:** Franklin County (Metropolitan Columbus), Ohio
- POPULATION:** Developmentally disabled and mentally ill adults; neglected, dependent, and unruly male adolescents
- PURPOSE:** To update the August, 1979 Metropolitan Human Services Commission Study entitled "The Non-Effect of Group Home Neighborhood Residential Values in Franklin County" (page 80) utilizing date of occupancy rather than date of purchase as a pivotal event. Critics of the original study charged that a neighborhood would not become fully aware of the intended use of a parcel as a home until it was occupied by the residents, and only then would the effect of the home begin negatively to effect the property values.
- METHODOLOGY:** Five of the original eight homes were retested. Of the remaining three, two had used date of occupancy in the original study, and the third had been prevented from moving residents into the home after purchase. An additional Association for the Developmentally Disabled (ADD) home was added. Analysis of both the purchase and occupancy dates for the new home, and the occupancy dates for the five homes from the original study, resulted in almost 1,000 separate real estate transactions recorded. Combined with the 1979 study, over 2,000 transactions were studied. The two indicators were time on the market and sales price as a percentage of list price. Data were gathered for equivalent time periods before and after the date of occupancy. The findings were subjected to statistical analysis.
- FINDINGS:** For the five homes from the first study, three showed no statistically significant difference in the before and after measures for the two variables. For the other two, the measures after the date of occupancy were more positive than before for at least one of the indicators. For the new ADD home, there was a significant difference in the before and after price ratio - also positive.
- CONCLUSION:** In the two indicators used - time on the market and sales price as a percentage of list price - the presence of group homes made no statistically significant difference in the before and after measures of property values.

Wagner, Christopher A., J.D. and Christine M. Mitchell, Ph.D. (August 1979). **The N Effect of Group Homes on Neighboring Residential Property Values in Franklin County.** Columbus, Ohio: Metropolitan Human Services Commission.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study
- AREA OF STUDY:** Franklin County, (metropolitan Columbus) Ohio
- POPULATION:** Developmentally disabled and mentally ill adults, neglected, dependent, unruly male adolescents.
- PURPOSE:** To provide the Metropolitan Human Services Commission and other units of government with information about the impact of group homes on property values in the neighborhoods in which they are located.
- METHODOLOGY:** The indicators were: sales price as a percentage of list price and time on the market. Eight homes were selected, representing as wide a variety of types as possible. The selected homes were dispersed geographically throughout Franklin County; six of the eight were located in middle upper class neighborhoods. No homes were selected from an area of Columbus experiencing a general decline. Multiple Listing Service was used for this study, along with the corresponding grid maps which divide the area. All transactions in the area of the identified group homes were recorded except commercial transactions and transactions where both list and sales price were below \$10,000. Data were gathered roughly six months before and after either the date of purchase or date of occupancy of the facility, referred to as the date of location.
- The study did not try to construct a control group for comparison, but used the more limited pre-test/post-test analysis. The standard t-test was used to ascertain the presence of a significant or true difference in average values.
- FINDINGS:** For each of the eight neighborhoods in which a group home was located there was no indication that the location of the group home influenced either positively or negatively the property values of the surrounding residential parcels.
- CONCLUSION:** The researchers deemed there were too many uncontrollable variables to be able to make any general conclusions; at best they might be able to draw inferences that group homes similar to the ones in the study might have similar effects on the neighborhood. There is no evidence to warrant conjecture of any effect on property values caused by the location of a group home in any of the areas tested. Although statistical generalizations can be drawn from this study, it provides no persuasive evidence to contest the widely held assumption that declining neighborhood property values would be a likely consequence of locating a group home in the community.

Wickware, Sherry and Tom Goodale (1980). Promoting and Resisting Group Homes: The Property Value Issue. Leisurability, Vol. 7, 4:24.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study
- AREA OF STUDY:** Ottawa metropolitan area
- POPULATION:** Formerly institutionalized
- PURPOSE:** To determine if there are adverse effects on the value of a properties in residential areas caused by the location of group homes
- METHODOLOGY:** Of the 94 group homes in the Ottawa metropolitan area, 38 low density residential areas were selected for study. Each site was visited to determine if the group home could be distinguished from a properties by its exterior condition or maintenance standards below that of the neighbors. "Proximate" homes - those most likely to be affected by the group homes because of their proximity to it, varied from 20 in high density areas to four in lowest density areas. The primary criterion of proximity was visual exposure to the group homes. Five different indicators of effects on property values were utilized: the property turnover; the selling price; the rate of property value appreciation; the time on the market and sales price as a percentage of list price of the areas of proximity.
- FINDINGS:** The "windshield survey" of the group homes indicated that in one instance was the exterior condition of the home below the standard of the neighborhood. In all other cases, the condition was equal to or better than the surrounding properties.
- According to the five indicators of possible adverse effects on property values, considering all five together, there was no evidence of adverse effects attributable to the establishment or presence of a group home in a residential zone.
- CONCLUSION:** Despite evidence to the contrary, claims of adverse effects will always be heard. Because there are so many variables affecting the real estate market, fighting this issue with such claimants may be difficult. Sponsors and planners might direct their efforts more productively to other issues including: adequate licensing and regulatory provisions; availability of local support services; avoidance of a concentration of group community residences in only certain residential areas or in certain zones; and developing a working relationship between group homes and neighborhood residents.

Wiener, Dirk, Ronald J. Anderson and John Nietupski (December 1982). **Impact of Community-Based Residential Facilities for Mentally Retarded Adults on Surrounding Property Values Using Realtor Analysis Methods.** Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, Vol. 17:278.

**TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study

**AREA OF STUDY:** Iowa

**POPULATION:** Mentally retarded

**PURPOSE:** To determine the impact of group homes for the mentally retarded on surrounding property values in two medium sized Iowa communities.

A "Comparable Market Analysis" procedure was used. The sales prices of "Subject Properties" (those that fall within a specified radius of a group home) sold within a specified time were compared with the sales price of "Comparable Properties" not in a group home neighborhood sold in the same time period. Three group home areas were studied, two in Community X, five in Community Y. All were located in residential non-downtown areas. For each "Subject Property," three "Comparable Properties" were selected. A mean value was calculated for each group of "Comparable Properties." An upper and lower property value range was established by adding and subtracting 3% of the mean price. "Subject Property" values were compared to this range to determine the effects of the presence of the group home.

**FINDINGS:** All group home properties studied were maintained well in terms of structural, landscaping and yard conditions.

In six out of the eight communities studied, "Subject Property" values were comparable to similar properties in non-group home neighborhoods. In the other two, the "Subject Property" values actually exceeded the established upper limit.

**CONCLUSION:** The results of this study strongly suggest that community residential facilities serving 7 to 12 mentally retarded residents do not have a negative effect on surrounding property values.

Wolch, Jennifer R. and Stuart A. Gabriel (March 1983). *Spillover Effects of Service Facilities in a Racially Segmented Housing Market*. Los Angeles, Ca University of Southern California, School of Urban Regional Planning.

- TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study
- AREA OF STUDY:** Oakland, California
- POPULATION:** Service-dependent populations
- PURPOSE:** To evaluate the spillover effects human service facilities on residential property values and the differential impacts in white and non-white areas of the city.
- METHODOLOGY:** Seventy-nine census tracts were included in the sample; 36 contained a non-white population of 50% or more (the non-white submarket). Human service facilities are listed by residential and non-residential. Variables include the types of services offered and the populations served. Three hundred seventy-three housing tracts were studied. Housing information, including sales price, street characteristics and lot size, were obtained from the Society of Real Estate Appraisers.
- FINDINGS:** Property value impacts vary widely by facility sub-type and housing submarket. Multi-purpose facilities for adults provide negative attitudes than those for children. Non-residential mental health centers have significant and substantial negative property effects on the white submarket. Non-residential child and youth centers have significant positive effects on property value. Multi-purpose facilities exert negative spillover throughout study areas, but the greater significance and proportionate impact in the ghetto. Residential facility impacts are significant at the 5% level only in the white submarkets.
- CONCLUSION:** Facility siting decisions should be based on an understanding of facility patterns and their effects. The distribution of and the reactions to human service facilities are not even across racial submarkets.
- The findings suggest a policy of strategic clustering of "noxious and salutary facilities" specific to each submarket to neutralize negative spillovers and encourage a more just distribution of human services.

Wolpert, Julian, Ph.D. (August 1978). **Group Homes for the Mentally Retarded: Investigation of Neighborhood Property Impacts.** Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University.

**TYPE OF WORK:** Impact Study

**AREA OF STUDY:** New York State

**POPULATION:** Mentally retarded

**PURPOSE:** To determine the impact of community residences for the retarded neighborhood property values. The earlier Dolan/Wolpert study (page 13) in White Plains had been deemed too restricted in scope to statewide significance.

The study was carried out from May through August, 1978. Forty community residences for mentally retarded people in 42 neighborhoods in ten New York cities were selected for study. A matched sample of neighborhoods without group homes was selected for comparison. Observation of the sites accompanied the collection of data. Property transactions were coded by their distance from the group home or control site. In all, 754 property transactions were analyzed in the vicinity of group homes and 826 in the control areas. Sales were recorded one year after the establishment of the group homes so that turnover could be analyzed.

**FINDINGS:** There was no evidence of neighborhood "saturation," i.e., overrepresentation within any given type of community or city.

Generally the group homes were compatible with their neighbors. Group home function was not conspicuous, and the home maintenance was generally better than surrounding properties.

Property values in communities with group homes have the same increase or decrease in market prices as in matched control areas.

Proximity to a group home did not significantly affect property values.

Immediately adjacent properties did not experience property value declines.

Establishment of the group homes did not generate a higher degree of neighborhood property turnover.

**CONCLUSION:** A siting plan which strives for an equitable and fair distribution of residential facilities for handicapped people will have no impact on communities.

## LAST WORD

Deinstitutionalization became Federal policy in 1963 when President John F. Kennedy first asserted the right of mentally disabled persons to live in their community in a less restrictive environment. The courts generally upheld this right, and the government supported the policy by giving financial incentives to community-based care over institutional care. In recent years, "The term deinstitutionalization is seen less frequently," according to the Human Services Research Institute (see p. 10). "Now the recurring term, the dominant issue, is community integration. The focus is no longer concentrating on how to get people out of large segregated facilities. The capability has been demonstrated. The focus of interest now is on assisting people with mental retardation to become full members of the communities in which they live. The Experience has proved the benefits of community living for people with disabilities, but many municipalities still resist the development of group homes for those in need of supervision.

This document has reviewed 56 varied works dealing with the effects of group homes and treatment facilities on the neighborhoods in which they are placed. CRIS reviewed pertinent works through the Westchester Library System, the Mental Health Law Center in Washington, D.C. and through private and governmental agencies. We question the methodology used in some studies, but we have included all those referred to because they did not eliminate any because they indicated that group homes had a negative impact on neighborhoods. We could not, in fact, find any studies that indicated a totally positive effect. Only the Wolch/Gabriel study suggests a negative impact in certain submarkets.

The research spans the United States from California to Massachusetts, from Minnesota and on into Canada. Sixteen of the studies are national in scope. The northeast leads with eighteen studies emanating from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. Thirteen of the studies generate from the midwest: Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Nebraska. Three are from the south, two from the west, two from the mid Atlantic states, one from the south and specifies only a northern city.

Twenty of the studies deal exclusively with facilities for the mentally retarded or developmentally disabled, five with the mentally ill and nine with facilities serving the general population. Twelve address both populations, plus another specific group such as the dependent and neglected children or ex-offenders. One study addresses drug offenders only; nine are concerned with formerly institutionalized or service-disabled populations in general.

Twenty-five of the 56 works are property impact studies, eleven are literature reviews, and ten are research projects. Ten are surveys on community reactions, public opinion or availability, five are opinion or position papers, three are informational handbooks, and two are law papers.

The documents all indicate that communities have great fears about persons in need of supervision living in their neighborhood. They generally feel more negative about "offenders" - people whose own actions have put them under supervision - than about those with disabling conditions, but they are anxious about all.

The greatest expressed fears are that the presence of group homes will cause property values to decline, neighborhood crime to increase, and the quality of life to deteriorate.

Communities also resent the intrusion of a higher level of government into community life. They experience a sense of powerlessness and frustration at the thought of losing control. Many have lost faith in their government and fear that promises made now about staff ratios and building maintenance will not be honored by future legislators.

Are these fears justified?

The weight of the accumulated evidence suggests **NO**. Every study examined by Wolch/Gabriel reports no concrete evidence to support negative attitudes. The presence of group homes in all the areas studied has **not** lowered property values or increased turnover, **not** increased crime, **not** changed the character of the neighborhood. Group homes have **not** deteriorated or become conspicuous institutional landmarks. Communities have come to accept them, and group home residents have benefitted from access to community life.

Yet fears still exist, and many neighborhoods targeted for group homes still resist development with legal, tactical and vocal vigor. Is CRISP suggesting that the summary of research and impact studies is immutable proof that their protests and actions are not justified? Not at all.

What the accumulated testimony indicates is that group homes for disabled persons do not **now** impose a negative impact on the community. They do not detract, studies show, largely because they are indistinguishable from their neighbors - which underscores the importance of property appearance.

This condition will continue only so long as the commitment to deinstitutionalization is reflected in governmental support and budget allocation. Proper building maintenance must not be sacrificed in times of fiscal constraints. Deterioration of the property could lower its value, evoke neighborhood resentment and erode support for the program.

Public scrutiny and sensitive agency concern for public reaction should be viewed as a positive factor. CRISP agrees with Richard Baron that a little opposition is good; it helps to assure quality of service and demands that providers live up to their promises. A far greater enemy than public suspicion would be public apathy. Abuse and neglect of our dependent populations could occur right in the community just as it did in the residential institutions.

Agencies must learn to take the energy manifested in public resistance and channel it toward the continued high standard of their program.



## ADDENDUM

### Breakdown of Studies by Date of Publication

1973

Knowles, Eric S. and Ronald K. Baba. **The Social Impact of Group Homes: A Study of Small Residential Service Programs in First Residential Areas.....**

1974

Lauber, Daniel and Frank S. Bangs, Jr. **Zoning for Family and Group Homes.....**

1975

Lowinson, Joyce H., M.D., and John Langrod., M.A. **Neighborhood Drug Treatment Centers - Opposition to Establishment: Problem in Community Medicine.....**

Hopperton, Robert J. **Zoning for Community Homes: A Handbook for Zoning Legislative Change.....**

Piasecki, Joseph R. **Community Response to Residential Services for the Socially Disabled: Preliminary Results of a National Survey.....**

1976

City of Lansing Planning Department. **The Influence of Halfway Houses and Care Facilities Upon Property Values.....**

Breslow, Stuart. **The Effect of Siting Group Homes on the Surrounding Environs.....**

Caulkins, Zack, John Noak and Bobby J. Wilkerson. **The Impact of Residential Care Facilities in Decatur: A Study of Residential Care Facilities Located Within the City of Decatur.....**

1977

Dear, Michael, Ph.D. **Impact of Mental Health Facilities on Property Values.....**

1978

Baron, Richard Charles. **Community Opposition to the Mentally Ill and the Services that Respond.....**

Wolpert, Julian, Ph.D. **Group Homes for the Mentally Retarded: An Investigation of Neighborhood Property Impacts.....**

1979

Sigelman, Carol K., Ph.D., Cynthia L. Spanhel and Cathy D. Lorenson. **Community Reactions to Deinstitutionalization: Crime, Property Values and Neighborhood Bugbears.....**

1979 (continued)

Lippincott, Marcia K. "A Sanctuary for People": Strategies for Overcoming Zoning Restrictions on Community Homes for Retarded Persons.....

Goodale, Tom and Sherry Wickware. Group Homes and Property Values in Residential Areas.....

Wagner, Christopher A., J.D. and Christine M. Mitchell, Ph.D. The Non-Effect of Group Homes on Neighboring Residential Property Values in Franklin County.....

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Scott, Nancy J. and Robert A. The Impact of Housing Markets on Deinstitutionalization.....

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