U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20410-0001

THE SECRETARY

July 9, 2007

Dear Executive Director:

As you know, part of the President's New Freedom Initiative is the Money Follows the Person (MFP) Rebalancing Initiative. The MFP Rebalancing Initiative, which was included in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, seeks to increase housing choices for seniors and people with disabilities by offering greater control over access to Medicaid-funded long-term care services. Seniors and people with disabilities now have the choice to receive services in their own home, whereas, previously, such services had been available only in congregate care settings. The MFP Rebalancing Initiative enables more people to continue to live in their own homes with supportive services and encourages people living in institutional facilities, such as nursing homes, to return to independent, community-based settings.

In my letter to you of October 5, 2006, I encouraged you to set local preferences for the use of Public Housing units, Housing Choice Vouchers, and Mainstream Vouchers to promote the MFP Rebalancing Initiative. Further, I recommended coordination with state Medicaid offices, as well as aging and disability agencies administering Medicaid programs, to achieve this objective. This letter is a follow-up to that correspondence.

As you carry out your ongoing efforts to implement the MFP Rebalancing Initiative, consider engaging your local protection and advocacy agency, independent living centers, and other community-based organizations serving people with disabilities. These agencies play a critical role by advocating integrated housing opportunities for seniors and people with disabilities, and encouraging effective *Olmstead* coordination at the state and local levels. Do not overlook this valuable expertise as you explore various methods, such as establishing local preferences, ensuring access to waitlists, and modifying your application process, to accommodate people who may benefit from the MFP Rebalancing Initiative.

As I travel the country, I would like to highlight all of the efforts that your agency has made to promote community-based housing options for people with disabilities and your success in implementing the MFP Rebalancing Initiative. Please submit in writing, by August 31, 2007, details about how your agency is implementing strategies to carry out the MFP Rebalancing Initiative. Please forward your submission to:

Mr. Milan Ozdinec
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Housing and Voucher Programs
Office of Public and Indian Housing
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 Seventh Street, SW, Room 4204
Washington, DC 20410

The Department strongly supports greater housing choice for seniors and people with disabilities. By expanding the availability of accessible, affordable, integrated housing options, we can, collectively, make this endeavor successful. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Alphonso Jackson