

**Testimony of Senator David G. Argall (R-Schuylkill/Berks)**  
**Hamburg State Center**  
**Department of Human Services Public Hearing**  
**January 30, 2017 | 1:00 p.m.**  
**Hamburg Borough Building**  
**61 North Third Street**  
**Hamburg, PA 19526**

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Thank you to the Department of Human Services for holding this important local public hearing, as required by law.

Hamburg State Center has been a part of this community for over a century. The Center originally opened in 1914 to treat those with tuberculosis. Due to the advancement of medicine, the Center closed in 1959. It was re-opened in 1960 and has served people with intellectual disabilities ever since.

My primary concern lies with the patients and their families. These patients have called Hamburg State Center home for a long time – some over 50 years.

Every patient and their family must be heard through a very deliberative process.

This cannot be a rush to judgement for the patients. It cannot be a rush to judgement for the employees, either.

Finally, the department must consider the impact to the local government. To shut down a facility of this magnitude will undoubtedly alter municipal budgets and future planning. The local government officials need to be well-informed of every step along the way for many reasons including budgetary planning, municipal services and infrastructure upgrades.

This cannot be a rushed process. The department needs to assure each and every family member that their loved one will receive an appropriate placement and make sure that our most vulnerable residents have no loss of care during the transition.

We all share a common goal and that is to do what is best for the patients, their families and employees here at Hamburg State Center while being good fiscal stewards of the taxpayers' dollars.

I am here today mostly to listen, but I do have a few questions to submit to the department in writing. I'm asking for a prompt response to each of these questions:

1. I understand that many state centers very similar to the Hamburg State Center have been closed in the past 30 years. What were the primary factors that encouraged the department to keep this center open?
2. What were the primary factors that encouraged the department to close Hamburg this year, rather than the other remaining centers?

3. Of the state centers that have closed, how have each of those sites been utilized? Was state funding utilized to re-purpose those sites?
4. What is the timeline, month by month, for the proposed 18-24 month transition for the existing residents and current employees?

Thank you. I look forward to the department's response.