

## Housing

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### ***Exercising Choice: An Evaluation of Equity in Developmental Disabilities Policy***

**Thursday 3:45 pm; Panel 3**

Michael Andrew Walton

**Abstract:** This presentation will explore public policy toward the housing and support of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The civil rights of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are often overlooked. Decisions concerning housing and the spending of Medicare and Medicaid waivers are often made on behalf of these individuals by family members and, in some cases, by the state with little opportunity for the affected individuals to voice a preference and participate in the decision-making process. Self-determination and choosing the people with whom one wants to live are fundamental civil rights. Nonprofit agencies that provide supported living assistance for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities offer an alternative to institutionalization. These agencies enable greater autonomy and independence, but do so at a greater cost, which necessitates community-based funding. As Medicaid restricts the use of waivers toward housing expenses, the availability of community-based services is extremely limited. This presentation will evaluate housing policy toward individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and will propose reforms to advance housing equity for this frequently overlooked segment of the population.