



The DD Community Update

November 2009

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The Michigan
Developmental Disabilities
Council

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michigan.gov/ddcouncil

Family Support Work Group's One Day Seminar

On October 21st the Family Support Work Group held a one-day informational seminar at the Washtenaw Intermediate School District in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The seminar was to provide families with information and resources on various topics, such as community supports, medical home, person-centered planning, self-determination, and transition services.

Angela Martin from the Developmental Disabilities Institute and Erin McMahon, Washtenaw Local Leader, presented on person-centered planning and self-determination. Erin is a hard-working young adult who is extremely involved in the community. She has participated in her local RICC and is a great example of self-determination in action.

William Hite and Jim Samsel presented on Project SEARCH, which is a high school transition program that provides skill training and work experience for young adults with developmental disabilities. Project SEARCH began in 1996 and has over 140 sites in 42 states with both private and public employers. For more information, contact William Hite at 734-242-4799 ext. 2000 or hite@misd.k12.mi.us. Wally LeBlanc from Livingston Educational Service Agency presented on transition focusing from high school to post-secondary education and highlighted what helps transitions flow smoothly.

Jennifer Greening was there to offer her book, called "Opening Doors, Opening Lives: Creating awareness of advocacy, inclusion, and education for our children with special needs." Jennifer is a parent of a child with disabilities and an educator who advocates for inclusive opportunities for her child and other students.

For more information, visit www.jennifergreeningbooks.com. Jennifer will also be at the Developmental Disabilities Institute at Wayne State University for a speaking engagement and book signing. The event is on December 3, 2009 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Purdy/Kresge Library, 5244 Cass Avenue, Detroit, MI.

Health Care Reform

On November 7th, the House of Representatives passed the Affordable Health Care for America Act of 2009 (H.R. 3962). The bill contains several provisions that are important to people with disabilities, including:

- Pre-existing conditions and annual and lifetime coverage caps will be eliminated. For those currently unable to get insurance because of a pre-existing condition, the bill would require a high risk pool to cover this population before insurance reforms are implemented.
- Long Term Care: The House voted to support the Community First Choice Option which gives states the option to receive more federal matching funds to support individuals with disabilities who live in the community. Also, the House bill includes the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports, or CLASS act, which would create a long-term care insurance program that workers could buy into.
- Insurance plans would be required to cover rehabilitation and habilitation services, durable medical equipment, vision and hearing services and behavioral therapy. Mental health coverage would also be expanded for individuals covered by large group plans.
- The federal government would increase funding for Medicaid, while expanding eligibility for the program and increasing reimbursement rates to doctors.
- Disability would be added to the list of health disparities so that research can be done in regards to the accessibility of health care to this population. Standards will also be created for accessible medical equipment like exam tables and x-ray machines.

Following the House vote, President Obama called on the Senate to move its version of health care reform quickly.

(The Capitol Insider, www.lifewithoutlimits.org)

(www.disabilityscoop.com)

Preparing for Winter—Weatherize Your Home

With winter steadily approaching, it's time to start thinking about weatherizing your home. Weatherizing helps lower fuel costs and makes your home more efficient. This saves a lot of money on energy bills. Here are some ways to make your home ready for winter:

- Have your furnace cleaned and checked regularly. Replace the filter in your furnace monthly. This way, your furnace will use less energy.
- Keep windows and doors closed tightly to prevent loss of heated air. Use weather-stripping around doors to prevent cold air from entering the home and caulk windows. This prevents drafts of cold air from entering your home.
- If you have a fireplace, make sure the damper is closed when not in use to prevent cold air from entering your home through the chimney.
- Consider buying a programmable thermostat which will automatically adjust the temperature in your home while you are asleep or away. This can save you up to \$100 a year.
- Replace screens in windows with storm windows. If you do not have storm windows, you can purchase plastic sheeting at home improvement stores. This is taped to the window and then shrunk with a hair dryer, creating a tight seal around the window and "shrink-wrapping" it. This prevents cold air from entering.
- Remove window air-conditioners, or cover them tightly.

The Michigan Department of Human Services offers a Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). The program provides free home energy conservation services to low-income home owners and renters. Those who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) automatically qualify for this program.

Visit <http://www.michigan.gov/heatingassistance> for more information on weatherization and the WAP program, or call (517) 373-8896.

H1N1 Update—Vaccines Available for High-Risk Populations

As vaccines for H1N1, or “swine flu” become available, it is important to identify your own individual risk for this flu virus. The following groups have been identified as high-risk by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Children under 2 years old
- Individuals with neurological conditions such as epilepsy, cerebral palsy, intellectual disability or developmental delay
- People who have problems with immune functioning, heart disease, or their endocrine system, or those who have conditions like diabetes or a metabolic disorder.

If you're at high-risk, you'll need to take quick action if you get the flu. Talk with your doctor before any symptoms are present to create a plan just in case.

If you're in one of the high-risk categories, you may want to consider getting an H1N1 vaccination. The vaccine is safe and effective, and high-risk individuals are among the first group of people eligible for it.

Contact your doctor or local health department for information on where to receive the H1N1 vaccine in your area. Your local newspaper may have information on where to get shots as well. You can also visit www.flu.gov for more information on H1N1 and the seasonal flu.

If you do get the flu, get in touch with your doctor right away if you're at high risk and develop symptoms of swine flu. Symptoms include: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, chills, fatigue, diarrhea or vomiting.

As of October 3, 2009, 99% of circulating influenza viruses in the US were the H1N1 influenza. Based on current data, approximately 70% of persons hospitalized with 2009 H1N1 influenza have had a recognized high risk condition.
(cdc.gov/h1n1flu)

Hate Crime Bill Signed into Law

On October 28th, 2009 President Barack Obama signed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act. This act expands the 1969 United States federal hate-crime law to include crimes motivated by a victim's actual or perceived gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.

President Obama stated, "No one in America should be forced to look over their shoulder because of who they are or because they live with a disability." (www.whitehouse.gov).

Several disability and criminology studies have indicated a high crime rate against people with disabilities. However, disability-based hate crimes are often mislabeled as "abuse" instead of a crime. This results to a low reporting of crimes based on disability. Even very serious crimes—including rape, assault, and vandalism—are too-frequently labeled "abuse." (civilrights.org)

The bill is focused on enhancing the resources of state and local law enforcement to prevent and prosecute hate crimes. The bill also authorizes the Attorney General to make grants to state and local law enforcement agencies that have incurred extraordinary expenses associated with the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes. (www.speaker.gov)

Did You Know?

The Swine Flu, or H1N1 vaccine, is made exactly the same way as the seasonal flu vaccine is made. Had H1N1 showed up much earlier, it is very likely that it would have been included with the seasonal vaccine. Just like the seasonal vaccine, it has been clinically tested and approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The swine flu vaccination is strictly voluntary. It also does not contain squalene, which can be put into a vaccine to help produce a stronger immune response. The swine flu is considered a pandemic, not necessarily because it is unusually deadly, but because it is unusually widespread. (factcheck.org, flu.gov/myths)

2010 Outstanding Advocate Awards Nominations

The time has come for the 2010 Outstanding Advocate Awards nominations to begin. These awards highlight the contributions of the individuals or groups that have improved the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in 2010. Help us make the 2010 awards a success by nominating the person, group, or RICC you know has done outstanding work in the Council's goal areas of: employment, housing, transportation, education, public policy, health, and family support.

People without disabilities are eligible to be nominated in all categories except the Young Leader category. You may not nominate yourself for any award. DD Council staff and current council members are not eligible for nomination, but can nominate others. The award categories are: Young Leader Award, Unsung Advocate Award, RICC That Makes a Difference, Diversity Outreach Award, Trailblazer Grantee Award, and Champion Award.

For a nomination packet and descriptions of the award categories, please visit the council's website at www.michigan.gov/ddcouncil. The materials are under the "2010 Outstanding Advocate Award Nominations" tab. You can also contact the council office at 517-334-7240 to have them mailed to you.

The nomination packet must be postmarked by Thursday, December 17, 2009. If you need help completing the nomination forms please call by Tuesday, December 1, 2009. Submit the applications electronically to sharp@michigan.gov or mail to:

Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council

Attn: Awards Committee

1033 S. Washington Ave

Lansing, MI 48910.

Additional notes: Only one individual or group may be nominated per form. A nominee can only be nominated in one category. All nominations go through a review process of the awards sub-committee. Both the award winner and the nominator will be notified.

SEAM Education Trainings

Wayne State University and the Developmental Disabilities Institute are hosting three free special education trainings for families of children with special needs who reside in Southwest Detroit. The trainings are being conducted by SEAM, Supporting Educational Achievement for Minorities.

The trainings will be at Power, Hope & Grace Bible Church, 6495 West Warren, Detroit, MI 48210. They are on Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Dates: November 18, 2009 Individual Education Plan (IEP)
December 9, 2009 Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
January 13, 2010 Transition

If you are interested in attending, please contact Julia Hernandez at (313) 577-5819. Space is limited, so please RSVP.

These training sessions are for English speaking families only. Training sessions for Latino/Spanish speaking families will be held on a later date in 2010.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP is a federally-funded program that helps families with their home energy bills. It helps families stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer, reducing the risk of health and safety problems such as illness, fire, or eviction. The LIHEAP program in your community determines if your household's income qualifies for the program. In Michigan, the LIHEAP grant is used for the Home Heating Credit, State Emergency Relief (SER), and the Weatherization Assistance Programs (WAP). Michigan's LIHEAP office is located in Lansing:

Ms. Barbara Anders
Director, Adult and Family Services
Grand Tower Suite 1306
P.O. Box 30037
Lansing, MI 48909
Phone: 517-335-6358
Email: andersb@michigan.gov
Public Inquiries: 1-800-292-5650

Upcoming Events

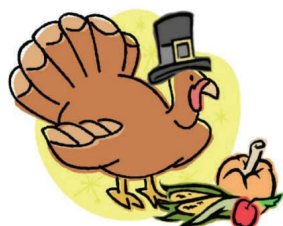
November 13th

1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Hearing Assistive Technology
Webinar, MDRC

November 26th

Happy Thanksgiving!



December 3rd

Jennifer Greening's speaking engagement and book signing,
"Opening Doors, Opening Lives."

Wayne State University, Detroit

7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

www.jennifergreeningbooks.com

December 17th, 2009

Nominations for the 2010 Outstanding Advocate Awards due

Ask DNR Television Program

"Ask DNR" (Department of Natural Resources) is a television show produced on WNMU-TV Channel 13 in Marquette, Michigan. It is aired on all public television stations throughout the Upper Peninsula and Northeastern Wisconsin. The next show will be aired December 3rd, 2009, from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. It will also replay December 4th at noon. The topics for the show will be winter recreation and a wrap-up of deer hunting season.

The show is designed to be a question and answer program for those interested in outdoor recreation. Viewers can email questions they would like answered to Debbie Munson Badini at munsonbadinid@michigan.gov. All questions are answered, even if calls are made to viewers after the program concludes.

Summary Of Committee/Workgroup Minutes

Following is a summary of the latest approved Committee and Workgroup minutes as of November:

Education Work Group—October 2009

Theresa Squires was appointed by Andre Robinson as co-chair to the workgroup. Sandee Koski will continue as co-chair in a supporting role. The group agreed to change the meeting time to later in the day, so that students with disabilities and RICC members will be able to attend. The meeting times are now 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The group completed both sets of talking points, focusing on inclusive education and seclusion and restraint. The 2009-2010 work plan was finalized.

Transportation Workgroup— September 2009

The Front Line Transportation Conference will be held in Bay City on September 11-13th. About 20-30 consumer advocates will be attending.

Complete streets was discussed. Establishing a complete streets policy in your community ensures that transportation planners and engineers consistently design and operate the entire roadway with all users in mind. Go to www.completestreets.org if you are interested in learning how to get started. Glen Ashley moved to recommend the Council support complete streets, Paul Palmer seconded.

Work plan: more work was done on the revised work plan. Changes will be incorporated.

TF2 Report: The Let's Get Moving Coalition has asked the Council to consider endorsing the TF2 report. Diane Kempen and Paul Palmer will explore the TF2 report along with the Act 51 Committee Report from 2000, create a document showing comparisons/recommendations, and present it to the work group in October.

Legislative update: Federal: Congress has not finalized a Federal Budget.

State: Legislators are still working on the budget. An action alert was sent out to RICCs asking them to contact their legislator and tell them how cuts to services would affect their lives.

Teleconference rules were discussed. If issues arise contact Tandy Bidinger.

NACDD has created the first transportation position paper. The TWG has an opportunity to submit comments on the document.

Minutes Continued...

Public Policy Committee—September 2009

Work plan was finished and will be presented to the Council for final approval in November.

Legislative update: Federal: A letter in support of affordable health care was drafted and sent to the council for approval. It was approved and sent to the President and federal legislators.

The Community Choice Act gives states the option of using community support services to assist people in their homes so they don't have to be sent to a nursing home. A Community First option based on this act is being proposed in health care reform.

Senate bill HR3288 would support housing for people with disabilities. It will increase Section 8 affordable, accessible housing for people with disabilities.

State: Legislators are still working on Michigan's budget.

Legislative Event: The Legislative event is scheduled for February 9th, 2010 at the Radisson Hotel in Lansing. This year RICCs can bring up to 5 members to the event. Contact Terry Hunt if you are interested in joining the legislative event group. 517-334-7301 / huntt@michigan.gov.

RICC Teleconference—September 2009

Including Our Neighbors—This is a new project run by MDRC. Paul Miller is the lead person. It is an initiative to support neighborhood and community associations in becoming inclusive of people with disabilities, through education and community grants. RICC members can contact Paul at 517-333-2477 ext 314 or Theresa Squires at 517-333-2477 ext 326.

RICC Coordinator Trainings are being held in Escanaba, Gaylord, and Lansing. Updates to come.

2010 RICC Certification: The certifications are almost completed. A few need final review and approval. The state does not release any funds during the month of October. RICCs must plan accordingly and expect to see their certification money after November 1, 2009.

Legislative event talking points are being compiled. RICCs have requested to have them by November to have time to review them and practice talking with legislators.

Family Support Work Group—September 2009

Tedra Jackson gave an update on the Minority Family Support to Include Education Outcomes grant. There are three local projects and a cross-project evaluation. Continued...

Minutes Continued...

(Family Support Work Group Continued)

WSU-DDI, the Arc of Kent County, Disability Connections-Muskegon, and WSU Center for Urban Studies will be doing the evaluation.

Families and Individuals Planning for their Futures grant will start October 1st. The Arc Michigan was awarded this grant.

Tracy reviewed the list of project ideas from past meetings. They include: Educating foster care families on services, building from the Did You Know? Project, working with the 4Cs on inclusive child care/training and consultation for child care providers, etc.

Program Committee—October 2009

Grantee report—All Aboard! Transportation 101—Glenn Ashley— The project has been building transportation and advocacy skills. They are working with local organizations and local RICCs on transportation advocacy in their areas. They are also trying to address issues at the state level. There is information on the web at www.transportationallies.net.

The “Creating Change Together Advocacy Training Manual” was updated in conjunction with MDRC, and includes topics such as rules for running meetings, working with legislators, voting, working with the media, transportation funding and funding formulas, etc. The project has presented at the Michigan Municipal League Conference, and also to the House Subcommittee on Transportation. The project was also involved in two local transportation conferences in Detroit, Muskegon, and the U.P. The project is working in conjunction with planners of the spring 2010 MI Public Transit Association Conference, towards a partnership conference.

Health Issues Work Group—September 2009

Andrea reported on Smiles Across Michigan. The project visited two UP sites and collected surveys. Andrea visited local clinics, social security offices and other resources, but was not able to conduct screening due to local systems lack of interest.

Sheila described the state’s DD Dental fund. It has \$150,000 and this money is for services that Medicaid does not cover. The fund is exhausted within a few months and for the rest of the year people go unserved. Members asked the project to include this issue on its advocacy agenda.

Members discussed the Unnatural Causes DVD and recommended that the council purchase 4 copies—one for the RICC, one for the work group and two copies to loan.