



The DD Community Update

October 2009

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The Michigan
Developmental Disabilities
Council

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RICC Regional Coordinator Trainings

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council held three regional trainings for its Transportation and Public Policy Coordinators. These coordinators are members of their local Regional Interagency Consumer Committee (RICC), and they work with the Council to identify and resolve issues surrounding transportation and public policy. These trainings were designed to better inform the RICC coordinators about their position's duties and responsibilities. They also provided skill-building activities related to communication with legislators and understanding transportation funding.

The trainings were held in Escanaba, Gaylord, and Lansing. Other topics included identifying resources available to the RICC, reinforcing teleconference guidelines, and talking about advocacy strategies. The trainings also included informational skits. If you are interested in joining a RICC, or would like more information, please contact Terry Hunt at huntt@michigan.gov or call at (517) 334-7301.



Diane Kempen demonstrates how local transit authorities are funded by the federal government



Don Trout demonstrates how to speak with your legislator in the Public Policy role-playing skit.

Mt. Pleasant Center Is Officially Closed!

On October 10, 2009, the Mt. Pleasant Center was officially closed. The Mount Pleasant Center was an intermediate care facility for people with developmental disabilities that was operated by the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH).

Closing the center was a two-and-a-half year long process that involved MDCH and local Community Mental Health Boards. The Wayne State University Developmental Disabilities Institute also assisted with following up on the community placements process.

This was a huge accomplishment for Michigan, because it marked the closing of the last state-run institution for people with developmental disabilities. The goal is to have all people with developmental disabilities fully integrated in their communities, rather than in institutions. Being included in community life is essential to the well being of everyone.

“In the Mount Pleasant Initiative, residents were offered options other than traditional institutional placements. The State did not simply close the facility in a two-week period, residents of the Mount Pleasant Center were evaluated and assessed based on their Person Centered Plan, and serious efforts were made to find appropriate community-based services,” Elmer Cerano from Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service (MPAS) stated.



Connections for Community Leadership's Developing Leaders Network— Call for Nominations!

Are you an up and coming leader in the disability rights movement? Do you know a person with a disability who is an emerging leader? If so, now is the time to nominate yourself or someone you know for Connections for Community Leadership's (CCL) Developing Leaders Network!

The CCL Developing Leaders Network will be a place where you, as a developing leader with a disability, can come together with others to share your struggles and successes in your leadership development journey. And your work will help shape future Michigan leadership development programs!

Nominations are due October 30, 2009, so act fast!

CCL staff will review nominations and select a limited number of individuals to participate in the Developing Leaders Network. For more information, contact Melinda Haus-Johnson or Theresa Squires at (866) 532-2669 (toll-free) or email leadership@prosynergy.org. Please contact them to receive a nomination form.

All meetings run from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Michigan Disability Rights Coalition, 3498 East Lake Lansing Road, Ste 100 East Lansing, MI 48823. There are four meetings per year.

If you need assistance with travel costs, please check with your local RICC or other organizations, such as a Center for Independent Living, your local ARC chapter, or your Community Mental Health Service agency. For more information on RICC funding, contact Terry Hunt at (517) 334-7301. If you cannot get help from your RICC, contact CCL at (866) 532-2669 or leadership@prosynergy.org.



Hearing Assistive Technology Webinar

On November 13th Michigan Disability Rights Coalition will be hosting a Hearing Assistive Technology Webinar from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm. The presenter is Elizabeth Kobylak who is a Hearing Technology Resource Specialist with the Michigan Hearing Loss Association.

This webinar **free** and available through invitation only. To receive an invitation, please email mdrc@prosynergy.org and ask to attend the HAT Webinar.

Autism Studies

Two new government studies suggest that autism spectrum disorders are becoming more common in children in the USA. One of the studies, published in the journal *Pediatrics* by researchers at the Health Resources and Services Administration, found that one in every 91 children ages 3 to 17 in 2007 had an autism spectrum disorder. Previous estimates put the number at 1 in 150. However, it is not clear how much of the increase is a result of more frequent and earlier diagnoses and how much is a result of a real rise in the disorders.

On a similar note, researchers at Harvard University and Children's Hospital Boston are conducting an autism study using \$4.5 million from a federal stimulus package. They will use the genomes of at least 85 people diagnosed with autism to try to identify the genetic basis for some cases of autism. The study's first part will focus on 85 people with autism who have a recessive form of the disease and are linked by common ancestry.

(Sources: www.usatoday.com, www.latimes.com)



Health Care Report

The National Council on Disability (NCD) released a report called “The Current State of Health Care for People with Disabilities.” The 2007 NCD study focused on health care disparities people with disabilities experience. They hope this study will provide information and recommendations that will help make healthcare more fair and equal for people with disabilities.

The study’s key findings include:

- People with disabilities experience significant health disparities and barriers to health care compared to people without disabilities
- People with disabilities often lack either health insurance or coverage for necessary services
- Most federally funded health disparities research does not recognize and include people with disabilities as a disparity population
- The lack of training on disability competency issues for health care practitioners is one of the most significant barriers preventing people with disabilities from receiving appropriate health care
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has had limited impact on how health care is delivered for people with disabilities.

For the complete report visit www.ncd.gov.

Did You Know?

For the first time in four months unemployment among people with disabilities dropped slightly in September, to 16.2 percent. The Department of Labor began tracking employment for people with disabilities in October 2008. The data covers people with disabilities ages 16-64 who do not live in institutions. The first employment report specific to this population was made available in February 2009. Monthly reports can be viewed at www.bls.gov/cps/cpsdisability.htm.

Disability Employment Awareness Month

Congress has designated each October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). This month is an opportunity to pay tribute to the accomplishments of men and women with disabilities in the nation's workforce.

Each year, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announces a new theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The 2009 theme is "Expectations + Opportunity = Full Participation." This year's theme emphasizes the vision of the DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP): a world in which people with disabilities have unlimited employment opportunities. People with disabilities offer a wide-variety of skills and abilities to employers. With both opportunities and choices available, people with disabilities will have the ability to be included in the workforce, and to contribute to the economy and build the communities we all live in.

ODEP is an agency within the Department of Labor that addresses policies that impact the employment of people with disabilities. ODEP provides national leadership to increase employment opportunities for adults and youth with disabilities and works to eliminate barriers to employment. It provides policy analysis, technical assistance, and education and outreach to employers, employees, and the disability community. It has awarded several grants to develop innovative programs and provide technical assistance to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities. (www.dol.gov/odep)

In President Obama's proclamation on National Disability Employment Awareness Month, he states, "I call on all Americans to celebrate the contributions of individuals with disabilities to our workplaces and communities, and to promote the employment of individuals with disabilities to create a better, more inclusive America, one in which every person is rightly recognized for his or her abilities and accomplishments."

Looking for employment resources? Visit <http://www.disability.gov/employment> for employment information and online resources for job searching and training. Other resources: www.michigan.gov/disability resources, michiganworks.org.

Emergency Preparedness— Safe Home Heating Tips

Now that fall is here, cold weather means that the home heating season has begun. Winter increases the potential for house fires and other threats such as carbon monoxide, but they can be prevented by taking a few simple precautions.

Fire Safety:

- Use only portable heating equipment that is approved for indoor use.
- Keep combustible materials, including furniture, drapes, and carpeting at least three feet away from the heat source. NEVER drape clothes over a space heater to dry.
- Always keep an eye on heating equipment. Never leave children alone in the room where a space heater is running. Turn it off when you are unable to closely monitor it.
- Be careful not to overload electrical circuits.
- Make sure you have a working smoke detector in every room. Check the detector monthly by pressing the test button and change batteries often.
- Make an escape plan that shows two ways out of every room in your home and practice the plan so you're prepared if a fire occurs.

Carbon Monoxide Safety:

- Install a carbon monoxide detector in your home and check it regularly to make sure the battery is working.
- Make sure your heating system is kept clean and properly vented; have worn or defective parts replaced.
- Don't heat your home with a gas stove or oven.
- Do not use any gas-powered appliance or charcoal grill indoors.
- The most common symptom of carbon monoxide poisoning is headache. However, symptoms may also include dizziness, chest pain, nausea, and vomiting. In severe cases, people can become increasingly irritable, agitated and confused, eventually becoming lethargic and lapsing into unconsciousness.

If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, call **911**, and get the victim to fresh air immediately, and open windows.

Source: www.disabilitypreparedness.gov



Upcoming Events

October 16th

10 a.m.—3 p.m.

Disabilities Expo, Cobo Hall Center,
Detroit

October 31st

Happy Halloween!



October 21st

11 a.m.—3 p.m.

Family Support Work Group's
One Day Seminar— Ann Arbor,
Michigan

November 13th

1:30 pm—3:30 pm

Hearing Assistive Technology
Webinar, Michigan Disability
Rights Coalition

Capital Area Community Service's Low-Income Weatherization Program

Winter is approaching, and Capital Area Community Service has a program that helps low-income households prepare for winter. Weatherizing your home helps to lower fuel costs and makes your home more energy efficient. To apply for this free program, call the service center in your area:

City of Lansing: 1301 Rensen, Lansing (517) 393-7077

Rural Ingham: 407 N. Cedar St., Mason (517) 676-1065

Clinton County: 1001 S. Oakland St., St. Johns (989) 224-6702

Eaton County: 1370 N. Clinton Trail, Charlotte (517) 543-5465

Shiawassee County: 1845 Corunna Ave., Owosso (989) 723-3115

Summary Of Committee/Workgroup Minutes

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

Family Support Work Group: August 2009

The FSWG is having a one-day seminar on October 21st for families in Washtenaw, Livingston and Lenawee Counties.

Livingston County CMH has a project that they are training Peer Family Navigator Specialist and is working with DDI. Tracy will invite Elizabeth Janks from DDI to a future meeting to talk about the program.

The Ann Arbor CIL has advocacy for kids between 14-21 years old that teaches them the history of disability rights/how to contact their legislators. Something like this needs to be offered to parents.

The FSWG Work Plan was reviewed and discussed.

Transportation Workgroup– August 2009

Local Transportation Issues: Flint—ridership is down 1-3% on fixed and para-transit. A brochure is being created to address hygiene issues and how to get some assistance. The unemployment rate is about 27%. Lansing—the lift is not working on the CATA entertainment express (trolley). Lansing ADAPT is spearheading investigating and testing out the trolley.

Complete streets– John Burt from Disability Network gave a presentation on complete streets. Charlene Lizotte presented numerous role-playing scenarios showing the appropriate way to interact with riders with disabilities on public transit. There are many reports that public transit drivers are not sensitive to the needs and issues of people with disabilities.

Legislative update: Federal– Funding for the Federal Department of Transportation will run out before the end of the fiscal year. Twenty million dollars will be borrowed from the Department of Treasury's general fund to cover the shortfall.

State– The legislators are still working on a budget. The proposal for legislators to look into closing tax loopholes is gaining steam. The council is developing a strategy to minimize budget cuts that will affect people with disabilities in the upcoming year.

September 11-13 there will be a transportation conference called "Front Line Transportation Conference" in Bay City. The Transportation 101 grant will be holding their Transportation Conference in April 2010.

Minutes Continued...

Education Workgroup—September 2009

Seclusion and restraint: Mark reported that the coalition report is close to being ready. They don't have a solid commitment from a sponsor on the bill. Terry Hunt reported on the RICC teleconference, stating that there was concern about the issue but no personal stories. The RICCs can disseminate information on this, however.

Talking points—the group is developing two sets of talking points, one on general education and the other on seclusion and restraint. The focus will be on schools.

NACDD Policy statement—Tandy will compile all the comments submitted into one document and submit them together. Work plan—the 09-10 work plan was discussed. The group decided to shorten the work plan. In an effort to implement federal education performance measures Sandee will meet with Tedra to draft a more action oriented work plan.

Health Issues—August 2009

Health Care reform—The DD Council has not endorsed President Obama's plan. The Council has not endorsed any plan; we are supporting reform of our health care system. Pam Webb moved that the HIWG rely on Jacqui Day and Terry Hunt to draft a letter for Council approval to be sent to legislators and the President supporting health care reform.

2010 Work plan—members reviewed and revised the proposed draft of the 2010 HIWG work plan. Final revisions will be presented at the September meeting.

Talking points—RICCs have requested they receive talking points for the Legislative Event by November 1st. The deadline to submit talking points is October 1st.

Possible change of HIWG meeting time—due to a schedule conflict, a member of the HIWG has suggested the meeting time be changed to 10 am. No decision was made.

Olmstead Coalition—OSA applied for a mini-grant (disability resource center grant). DDC invited to participate. Local training will involve CIL, AAA, etc.

DCH Oral Health—The webinar about treating patients with special needs had over 400 people participate. More webinars will be coming in November. The Dental Directory, Treating Patients with Special Care Needs, has dentist listed that are not currently taking patients with special needs.

The Oral Health Needs survey 2009 has been completed and will be forwarded to HIWG.