



The DD Community Update

September 2009

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Transportation Work Group's Travel Meeting Talks About Complete Streets

August 13 was the Transportation Work Group's travel meeting at the Disability Network in Flint. Charlene Lizotte, creator and owner of All About Awareness, LLC was on hand to discuss sensitivity training for public transit drivers on how to properly interact with their riders who have disabilities.

Another topic discussed was that of complete streets. John Burt from the Disability Network discussed the advancements of this process and what it means for people with disabilities. Complete streets are important for safety and convenience of everyone, including people with mobility, vision, or cognitive disabilities. They involve attention to details at intersections, along pedestrian routes and at transit stops. Features of complete streets include: connected sidewalks, bike lanes, wide shoulders, crosswalks, and audible pedestrian signals for people with hearing disabilities.

Lansing recently passed a complete streets ordinance which promises more signs, sidewalks, and bike paths. Lansing will set aside 5% or about \$400,000 of state street maintenance funds to implement the plan. Lansing is the first area in Michigan to pass such an ordinance. East Lansing is already in the process of creating a similar plan, and Grand Ledge, Mason and St. Johns, and Delhi, Meridian and Watertown townships already have plans in place. If you are interested in getting complete streets in your community, start by attending your County Planning Commission meetings. It is important to be involved at these meetings because these are where decisions are made. Go to www.completestreets.org for more information.

Family Support Work Group One Day Seminar

The Council's Family Support Work Group is holding a free one-day informational seminar for families in Livingston, Lenawee and Washtenaw counties.

The seminar will be on October 21st from 9 am to 3 pm at the Washtenaw Intermediate School District on 1819 South Wagner Road in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

At the seminar, families attending can expect to:

- Learn the roles of the community mental health system, education system and medical system
- Learn about the Family Support Work Group and how you can get involved
- Receive information on person-centered planning, family-centered planning and self-determination
- Receive valuable resources on transition, life planning, recipient rights, Children's Waiver, and much more!
- Talk about issues that are important to you
- Network with other parents and caregivers

If you are a family in Livingston, Lenawee or Washtenaw county and wish to attend the seminar, please contact Tracy Vincent at 517-334-7342 or vincenttr@michigan.gov for a registration form.

You must RSVP by October 9, 2009! Space is limited to 50 people on a first come, first serve basis, so register now! A complimentary breakfast and lunch will be served.



Grant Awards

Four projects received DD Council grant funds in July for RICC-Endorsed Community Mini-Grants, one-year local projects, which may focus on any of the Council's goal areas. They are:

Internet Access to the Community

Patti Nowak

The Arc of Livingston

1044 Durant Drive

Howell, MI 48843

(517) 546-1228

pnowak@arclivingston.org

Monthly Television Show

Amy Hovey

Mid-Michigan Industries

2426 Parkway Drive

Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

(989) 386-7707

ahovey@mmionline.com

Financial Education for Everyone

Carolyn Brown

United Cerebral Palsy of Michigan

4970 Northwind Drive, Suite 102

East Lansing, MI 48823

(517) 203-1200

cbrown@ucpmichigan.org

Community Participation Initiative

Sheryl Fernandez

Washtenaw Association for Community Advocacy

1100 N. Main Street, Suite 205

Ann Arbor, MI 48104

(734) 662-1256

sfernandez@ameritech.net

The DD Council has also awarded a grant to The Arc Michigan for *Families and Individuals Planning Our Futures*. This two-year state-level project will provide workshops, information and tools for families who are providing care for a family member who has DD. The workshops will support families in planning for a family member's future, using person centered planning and the tools of self-determination. The contact person is:

Dohn Hoyle

The Arc Michigan

1325 S. Washington Avenue

Lansing, MI 48910

(517) 487-5426

dhoyle@arcmi.org

Bridges Software Glitch Alert!

Attention everyone receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI)! You may be at risk of improper termination from Medicaid due to the recent conversion to the new Department of Human Services computer software Bridges. There seems to be a glitch in the system. Some people have had notices mailed to them when they are terminated, but not everyone. Remember to open all of your mail and keep a close track of your benefits to ensure that you do not get kicked off.

If you do, **follow the instructions they send exactly and appeal within the time limit.** You must call and ask for your benefits to go “retroactive” so that they can be restored. You may want to consider contacting legal services or legal aid to help with this, or the attorney of your choice.

The site has a self-service feature that gives you access to the status of your benefits. Please check this regularly, at least once a week, to ensure your benefits are intact.

Michigan Offers a Helping Hand

Last week Governor Granholm unveiled a one-stop resource for Michigan citizens experiencing financial strain and hardship. This latest website is www.michigan.gov/helpinghand and it helps citizens find the resources and support they need.

The topics covered on the site are jobs and training, unemployment benefits, health care, family support, and housing help. It can help you find a free or low cost health center near you, file for unemployment benefits, receive cash assistance, pay for childcare, and find information to prevent foreclosure on your home.

You can also locate other local services and assistance by calling your local United Way—just dial 211. A list of call centers can also be located at:

<http://www.uwmich.org/2-1-1/2-1-1-call-centers/>



Emergency Preparedness— Swine Flu

There has been a lot of concern about the recent outbreak of the H1N1 virus, better known as “swine flu.” While cases have become less common during the summer, it is expected that an increase of cases will be seen this fall when children return to school.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), two thirds of the 36 children to die of swine flu since it was identified in April had epilepsy, cerebral palsy or other neurodevelopmental conditions. In a previous flu season, only one third of children with similar conditions died (from the Associated Press). This may mean that swine flu can be more dangerous to people with other underlying medical conditions.

A vaccine will be available sometime in the fall for swine flu, but in the meantime please take these steps to help prevent getting and spreading the virus:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Wash your hands often, and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid contact with sick people
- If you become sick, stay at home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone
- Consider forming a family emergency plan, including storing a supply of food, medicine, and other essential supplies. There is more information on emergency planning for a pandemic at: <http://pandemicflu.gov/individual/checklist.html>
- Stay informed! Health officials will provide information as it becomes available. Visit the CDC’s website at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> for updates.
- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.



Health care reform

As the healthcare reform debate continues, it is important to stay informed and up to date on the latest information. It is also important to not give in to scare tactics and words that politicians may use to turn away citizens from the truth. One of these scare tactics is the use of the term “Death Panels.” Staying informed and up to date on the reform debate is the best way to avoid getting misinformation.

At the Kaiser Family Foundation’s website, you can find a side by side comparison of the Senate and House healthcare reform proposals. It is located at http://www.kff.org/healthreform/upload/healthreform_tri_full.pdf. The Senate HELP Committee’s proposal is called the Affordable Health Choices Act, and the House Tri-Committee’s proposal is called America’s Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009 (H.R. 3200).

Both proposals will require all individuals to have health insurance, and if they choose not to they pay a certain tax penalty. There are some exceptions to this for each proposal, such as financial hardship or religious objections. Both proposals will also require employers to provide health insurance and contribute a certain percentage of the premium cost.

Both proposals have also detailed expanding Medicaid to all individuals, and both have sections on prevention and wellness. The idea behind prevention and wellness is that if the healthcare system promotes health and provides programs and grants for preventing illness we will have a healthier nation overall.

Both proposals also have a long-term care section in which community living supports and services are outlined.

Another good resource on the Kaiser Family Foundation’s site is a glossary of key terms in health reform. This is helpful as the language in the proposals can often be confusing.

This is located at <http://www.kff.org/healthreform/7909.cfm>.

Southeast Michigan's Disability Expo

There will be a Disability Expo in Southeast Michigan at the Detroit Cobo Hall Center on Friday, October 16th from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

There will be vendors, exhibits and workshops on assistive technology, transportation, recreation/leisure, home, community, and education. There is free admission and free rooftop parking.

For more information please call Denise Barnes at 313-846-2240, extension 264.

Did You Know?

From census.org:

Over 1.1 million people in Michigan were uninsured in 2008, a 1.3 increase from the previous year. That same year, the number of uninsured children in America, 7.3 million, was the lowest it has been since 1987.

Source: lsj.com

MSU Uses Grant for Cerebral Palsy Study

MSU received a \$1.9 million grant and is using it to finance a study on the in-utero causes of cerebral palsy. Researchers will be studying blood samples routinely taken from Michigan newborns in the last 23 years. Blood samples of 200 healthy subjects and 200 subjects with cerebral palsy will be studied as part of the research.

The study will examine the role of thyroid hormone levels, infection and blood clotting in cerebral palsy. The universities of Minnesota and Michigan are also participating, along with Helen DeVos Children's and Mary Free Bed Hospitals in Grand Rapids.

Assistive Technology Informational Fair!

October 1st is the Tri-County Office on Aging's Assistive Technology & Options at Home informational fair. The fair will be from 11 am to 3 pm at the Grace United Methodist Church on 1900 Boston Blvd, in Lansing.

The fair is designed to offer information on assistive technologies that make living at home safer and more convenient. Assistive technology allows people with disabilities to be more independent in their homes and gives them the tools and options they need to remain at home.

Assistive technology can be anything from multimedia tools like DVDs and accessible websites to assistive listening devices and adaptive wheelchairs. It can also be accessible tools in buildings and bathrooms such as ramps, grab bars, and remote-controlled lighting.

There will be many vendors presenting their products and services. For more information please call Nancy Weber at (517) 887-8071.

The DD Community Update Needs *Your* Input!

In an effort to improve our audience and expand our outreach, the DD Council is updating its mailing database.

If you have received this newsletter, then you have been receiving it through either email or by hard copies and are currently on our mailing list. As we update this list, we will be sending a postcard to you, either by email or mail, whichever way you are receiving the newsletter now. Please fill out this postcard and send it back (free of charge), to let us know whether you wish to continue receiving this newsletter. With the postcard you can also change your preference on the way you receive it.

If we do not hear from you, we will assume that you no longer wish to receive the newsletter and will be taken off the mailing list. Thank you for your help and interest in the DD Council!

Please contact Laura Robertson at (517) 334-7288 or robertsonl@michigan.gov if you have any questions.

Summary Of Committee/Workgroup Minutes

Following is a summary of the latest approved Committee and Workgroup minutes as of September.

Transportation Work Group—July 2009

Federal: Funding for the Federal Department of Transportation will run out before the end of the fiscal year. 20 million dollars will be borrowed from the Department of Treasury's general fund to cover the shortfall.

State: The Senate is proposing cutting \$11 million from the public transit funding. Everyone is encouraged to write letters to their legislature telling them personal stories to prevent cuts.

Transit funding: New ideas to generate new funds for transit are being discussed. One way is to increase the gas tax, and the TWG is opposed to this. It will limit volunteer drivers, agency rides, direct care workers, etc.

The Lt Governor has a work group on streamlining state government. The goals of this are to enhance services to citizens, maximize technology, attract the next generation of talent, and have a government focused on core priorities.

The Our Hopes Forums are completed and the grantee is now compiling the information into reports to be submitted to the Council.

Health Issues Work Group –June 2009

Oral Health Project: The meeting with Senator John Gleason to discuss oral health will need to be rescheduled. Dentists throughout the state will have the opportunity to attend training to gain knowledge of how to care for their patients with disabilities and seniors. Continuing education credits are being offered for this course.

The Medical Services Administration (MSA) is proposing a change to make it harder for individuals in a nursing home to obtain a power wheelchair. The DD Council feels that where you are living should not be a distinguishing factor when determining someone's eligibility for a power wheelchair.

Oral Health Coalition: The coalition is working on advocacy for adult dental. A survey has been sent out to 6,500 dentists in Michigan inquiring about whether they care for patients with disabilities. Over a thousand surveys have been returned.

Long term care: The group is looking for a few more consumers to join and ways to get the message out about long term care.

Minutes Summaries Continued...

Education Work Group— August 2009

Minority Family Support to Improve Educational Outcomes: One of the sites has had its funding terminated, the Benton Harbor site. A new site has been added, Disability Connections in Muskegon.

Seclusion and restraint: MPAS is developing a Michigan report to show what has happened since Michigan passed a voluntary policy in December 2006. MPAS has collected information from 56 of 57 ISD's on their policies. Only Berrian County did not respond. 22 ISD's reported data on seclusion and restraint, with 3220 incidents reported, mostly seclusion.

RICC Teleconference—July 2009

Recruiting new members: Members from the teleconference discussed ideas they have used to attract new people. RICCs would like CMH involved with them so CMH can learn about the concerns of people with disabilities.

State: Legislators are still working to come up with a budget. A huge deficit may mean severe cuts to services.

Federal: The Hate Crime (SB 909) bill has passed in the House and is moving through the Senate. It has been added to another bill which could stall its passage. Congress is still working on a healthcare reform bill.

Regional meetings: Regional meetings are being planned for fall. They will focus on training RICC coordinators about their role and responsibilities.

Public Policy Committee—August 2009

Legislative Update:

Federal: The state has lost money they would have received from the federal government for transportation because the state lacked matching funds.

State: Legislators are still working on coming up with a budget. More cuts are on the table. The proposal for legislators to look into closing tax loopholes is gaining steam.

Health care reform: The DD Council has not endorsed any plan for health care reform. We are, however, supportive of health care reform in general and quality affordable healthcare for all Americans.