



The DD Community Update

June 2009

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Welcome to Our New and Improved Newsletter!

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council is proud to reintroduce its monthly newsletter. We have renamed the newsletter *The DD (Developmental Disabilities) Community Update*. This newsletter aims to keep those with disabilities, their families, and advocates across the state up to date on the Michigan DD Council and its operations, as well as news about issues that are important to the disability community.

The monthly newsletter will include news as well as information on the many projects the Council is involved in. It will also include a summary of the meetings of all workgroups and committees in the council to keep everyone up-to-date.

If you are a council member, advocate, individual with a disability or a family member who would like to make a suggestion for the newsletter please e-mail Laura Robertson at robertsonl@michigan.gov or call at (517) 334- 7288. The Council welcomes all comments and suggestions. Please feel free to call or e-mail with suggestions on how you'd like this newsletter to be distributed and made available as well.



Our Community Includes Everyone!

Our Hopes Forum Gives Voice to Disability

In the beginning of 2009 United Cerebral Palsy of Michigan and the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition organized 6 Regional Public Forums, with a final forum set to take place June 11 in Marquette, Michigan. These forums are held to gather data and to identify critical challenges and possible solutions. The forums are held café-style, where there are guided conversations held in a round-table format. This allows people to move around and talk to different people to tell stories, discuss issues, explore challenges, and have fun in a relaxed setting. Capitol Research Services of East Lansing, MI will hold six focus groups after the forums to generate ideas and solutions to problems that were identified at the cafés. A strategy team will then set priorities and make recommendations to the Council.

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Our Hopes Forum Cont'd...

The last forum was held at the Tree Tops Resort in Gaylord, Michigan. There was an excellent turnout and many people who had never experienced a forum attended. These forums give voice to those with a disability, and there is nothing more constructive than hearing what issues are important from those who experience them first hand.

People with DD have goals just like everyone else, such as getting married, having children, and seeing new places. They face life issues just like everyone else as well, whether it be death in a family or health problems of friends.

At the forum, questions were asked of people with disabilities and their family on issues such as housing, employment, social support, recreation, transportation, and health issues. An example of a question asked is “what is the biggest issue surrounding you in your life because of your disability,” and then “what can you do to change or improve this issue.”

One disturbing issue that surfaced in the area of housing was the abuse of those with disabilities in group homes. One attendee reported that certain care-givers were “just plain mean” and that there were no set criteria for effective caregivers at these homes. Many reported the need for disability-specific caregivers, such as those who could use sign language for deaf group home members. Many that discussed housing reported that it was difficult to find housing they were comfortable with and where they did not have to worry about abuse.

Being independent is also an important goal in the lives of those with disabilities; many attendees expressed the desire to live on their own or separate from families.

Employment was also a big issue, and those with disabilities are feeling the effects of the bad economy as well, facing layoffs and

difficulty finding jobs.

It is difficult to find and get to a job for people with disabilities due to transportation issues. Many public transportation systems such as buses do not run on evenings or weekends. This is a problem for social activities as well.

Healthcare was an important issue, especially around the topic of caregivers. Many caregivers are not paid well and this does not attract the type of person that is suited to the work. Some caregivers view themselves as “babysitters” and do not treat those with disabilities with the respect they deserve.

It is hard for caregivers to be provided in rural areas as well, because they are not reimbursed for travel costs. The loss of Medicaid was a huge concern to attendees as well.

One commonality that was present in the forum was the need for more information on these issues to be readily available, such as information on housing.



DD Spotlight: Self-Determination

Self-determination is the idea that people with disabilities have the power to voice what they need in terms of the kind of life they want, the ability to choose and to have control over their lives. Self-determination is based on **4 principles**:

- **Freedom:** The ability for individuals, with chosen family and/or friends, to plan a life with necessary supports, rather than purchase a program
- **Authority:** The ability for a person with a disability to control a certain sum of dollars in order to purchase supports, with the backing of a social network or circle of friends
- **Support:** The arranging of resources and personnel (informal and formal) to assist a person with a disability to live a rich life in a community with associations and contributions
- **Responsibility:** The acceptance of a valued role in a person's community through employment, affiliations, spiritual development, and caring for others as well as accountability for spending public dollars in ways that are life-enhancing

Self-Determination is about choice and control.

Resource Fair/Council Meeting July 14th at Hawk Island Park

The Council is holding its July 14th meeting at Hawk Island County Park in Lansing, MI.

The goal of this meeting is to connect with individuals with DD and give them information on support services that are available throughout the state.

Organizations from across Michigan will be there to discuss numerous services.

You can learn what disability advocacy is all about, find up-to-date resources about services for people with disabilities, or enjoy the many activities planned for the day.

The council is also using this time to recognize its many volunteers and their hard work at improving the lives of those with developmental disabilities in Michigan.

There will be food, fun and activities for everyone that attends, but spots are limited so if you'd like to register the deadline is Monday,

June 29th.

Registration is limited to 250 persons, so hurry and register now!

For a registration form, contact

Mitzi Allen—(517) 334-7240 or sharp@michigan.gov

There is a \$10 lunch deposit required that is returned at the meeting and will only be deposited if you do not come to the meeting. There is no rain date.



Legislative News: Anti-Bias Crime Bill to be Sent to Senate

Michigan is continuing the struggle to make a difference in improving hate crime legislation and redefining the definitions of bias-motivated or “hate crimes.”

On May 13th the House approved the legislation that could make stricter penalties for crimes that were motivated by a person’s disability, sexual orientation or veteran status.

The bill has passed in the House and will hopefully move on to the Senate. Similar legislation passed in the House last year, but not the Senate.

The DD Council will also take this

to the federal level by writing a letter to the U.S. Senate on the federal hate crimes bill which passed in the House. The Council has already written a letter of support to our Michigan State Representative in regards to the Anti-Bias crime legislation.

This legislation helps to uphold one of our values of the DD Council, which is that our community includes everyone and that people with disabilities are valued members in our community. Hate crimes towards those with disabilities will not be tolerated and should be dealt with using proper punishments.



Health Promotion For People with Disabilities

May 14th was the Health Promotion Annual Meeting at the James B Henry Center for Executive Development in East Lansing, MI. The Health Promotion for People with Disabilities presented their Michigan Strategic State Plan for 2008-2011.

Many speakers were on hand to report on the data and action plans of the Strategic State Plan.

Certain issues were discussed such as the correlation between morbidity and mental health. People with mental health issues and developmental disabilities are shown to have a lower life expectancy.

Another issue brought to light was that people with mental health issues and certain developmental disabilities aren’t credited for understanding the difference between physical illness and a mental health problem.

Peter DeGuire from MDCH spoke about and gave valuable data on caregivers and their effectiveness and characteristics.

If you’d like an electronic copy of the Strategic State Plan, please email:

Laura Robertson

Robertsonl@michigan.gov



Elections Bring in New Council of RICC Chairs

The new Council of RICC Chairs (CRC) has been chosen!

The purpose of the CRC is to provide the support and opportunity for the RICCs to communicate, share information and network.

CRC officers include a chairperson, a co-chairperson, and a secretary.

Each RICC had one vote in the election. The CRC Officers that were elected are:

Sheryl Kuenzer as Chairperson

Sheryl is the chairperson for the Manistee RICC and worked to revitalize RICC activity in the area three years ago.

Daniel Burke as Co-chairperson

Daniel serves on the Board of Directors for the ARC in Shiawassee and also on the board of New Directions, a drop-in center at the Shiawassee County Community

Mental Health. He has also served as the chairperson for a transportation advocacy coalition.

Todd Belanger as Secretary

Todd has been the co-chairperson for the Grand Traverse RICC since 2007 and has been with the RICC since 2006. His hobbies are chatting on the internet, riding his three-wheel bicycle and playing football and basketball.

***RICC—
“Regional
Interagency
Consumer
Committee”
Advocacy at
the local,
grassroots
level!***

Michigan Health Policy Forum Highlights Obama’s Improvements

May 4th was the Spring Michigan Health Policy forum at the James B. Henry Center for Executive Development in East Lansing. The forum was an update on President Obama’s first 100 days and what his decisions mean for Michigan. Obama stated to Congress on Tuesday, February 24th that “We have done more to advance the cause of health care reform in the last thirty days than we have in the last decade.”

One step Obama made towards health reform was signing the Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) of 2009 into law. This

law provides health insurance coverage for 11 million children. Obama also provided a \$634 billion down payment for health reform over the next 10 years.

Obama also signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 into law. This is the largest investment increase in America’s roads, bridges and mass transit in 50 years, which will improve transportation for all people including those with disabilities. This was also the most significant increase in tax cuts for low to moderate income households ever.

The estimated benefit for Michigan

the ARRA provides is \$18 billion. This will create or save 109,000 jobs over the next two years.

For those with disabilities that rely on Medicaid, the ARRA is also a light in the dark. It will boost funding for Medicaid by \$2.27 billion, provide over \$11.2 million for Michigan Health Clinics, and \$6.4 million for Michigan hospitals that serve large numbers of low-income patients.

These steps towards health reform are encouraging to everyone, but will likely improve the lives of those with DD significantly in years to come.

Oral Health Concerns and Resources for Low Cost/Free Dental Care

Andrew Snyder from NASHP did a policy briefing on a study of four groups of Medicaid enrollees. This briefing, called “Increasing Access to Dental Care in Medicaid: Targeted Programs for Four Populations” he highlights the issues facing people with developmental disabilities in regards to dental care.

He stated that people with developmental disabilities suffer from dental problems more than non-disabled people. They have an even harder time locating dental care even with Medicaid. Now that dental coverage through Medicaid has been cut, it will be even harder to find quality oral health care. People who have more severe disabilities cannot always express that they are having dental problems, and caregivers may not make a connection between this and behavioral problems, such as not eating or fighting.

Our RICCs are currently working to send letters to legislatures on the impact the recent dental cuts have made. Because of the recent dental care cuts to Medicaid, this section of the newsletter is to help provide information on where to find free or low cost dental care across Michigan.

The Michigan Oral Health Program Directory : http://www.michigan.gov/documents/directory_29654_7.pdf

<http://www.fcomi.org/index.htm> is an excellent website which allows you to search by county for free clinics of Michigan.

At <http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/> you can search for a health center by putting in your address, and results of clinics in your area will be listed. These are federally funded health care centers where you pay what you can afford based on income, and no insurance is necessary.

In Ingham County the Care Free Medical and Dental Clinics offer primary health and dental care to those without insurance. Two locations are in Lansing (517-887-5922) and Mason (517-244-0120). Their website is <http://www.carefreemedical.com/>

From the Michigan Dental Association’s webpage, a list of clinics across Michigan can be found at this website:

<http://www.smilemichigan.com/Portals/o/PDFs/Community%20Programs/Statewide.pdf>

Other Resources:

Michigan Department of Community Health Dental Treatment Fund for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, Lansing: (517) 335-8388 (must be referred by community mental health agency).

Kellogg Community College Department of Dental Hygiene Education, Battle Creek:
<http://www.kellogg.cc.mi.us> (616) 965-3931, ext. 2300



Grant Awards

Four projects received awards of DD Council Grant funds to carry out Minority Family Support to improve educational outcomes. The projects began in May and June 2009.

Three of the awards are for local demonstrations of family support services. These demonstrations help families by finding educational services available and encouraging them to be active participants in their student's education.

One award is for a cross-project evaluation of the three demonstration projects. This evaluation will provide valuable information so that the project can improve operations, evaluate outcomes, and assist the council in comparing the effects of different approaches in different communities.

The Award Recipients are:

For the Cross-Project Evaluation: Wayne State University, Center for Urban Studies: Charo Hulleza, Co-Project Director. Contact Information: (313) 577-8831, chulleza@wayne.edu

For the Demonstrations: The ARC Kent County, Tammy Finn. Contact: tammy@arckent.org. Community Connections of SW Michigan, Kathy Ellis, Margo Pierce. Contact: (269) 925-6422, kellies@miconnect.org. Wayne State University, Developmental Disabilities Institute, Julia Hernandez. Contact: (313) 577-5819 aw9906@wayne.edu.

The DD Council has also awarded a grant to the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition (MDRC) for *Including Our Neighbors*. This five-year state-level project will fund and provide technical assistance to at least 18 neighborhood-level community building initiatives across Michigan. MDRC will be working with United Cerebral Palsy Michigan and Delta Strategy on this project. The project is scheduled to start October 1, 2009.

Contact: Aimee Sterk, MDRC (517) 333-2477, aimee@prosynergy.org

Diversity Committee Broadens Scope of Focus

The Multicultural Committee has received approval to change its name to the Diversity Committee. The name change was prompted because the committee wanted to include a broader set of people rather than focusing on ethnic or racial issues. They believed that the previous name was self-limiting.

Diversity encompasses all characteristics: race, gender, age, sexual orientation, and ethnicity as well as physical and mental disability.

This committee is dedicated to dealing with diversity issues related to these characteristics.

If you are interested in the Diversity

Committee please contact Mitzi Allen at sharp@michigan.gov or (517) 334-7240. The meetings are held monthly at the DD Council building and are also available through teleconference.

Ramp It! Project Encourages Accessibility at the Capitol

The steps leading up to the speaker's platform at the State Capitol Building in Lansing are not accessible to those with disabilities who cannot climb them.

It is important that individuals with disabilities have the same opportunities to speak at public events, rallies, and lobby days that people without disabilities have.

The Ramp It! Project is asking the State of Michigan to provide a ramp that will allow access free of charge to those with disabilities. This insures that the freedom of speech is extended to all citizens of our community, not only those who can easily

climb the steps to the platform.

Help us raise awareness with your State Representatives, State Senators, the Governor and others! Write to them to affirm that accessibility is a constitutional right.

For more information contact:

Alicia Paterni
apaterni@camw.net
517-492-5551

Penny Gardner
Marydrpenny@yahoo.com
517-484-4512



“An optimistic and action orientated way of life will allow you to be a shining example of a ‘can-do’ person.”

*From Neeru Sharma's blog entry “How to Deal with Others Comments,” May 25, 2009
detnews.com*

Detroit News Disability Blog

For the internet-savvy, the Detroit News online newspaper offers an excellent voice for those with disabilities through its Disabilities Blog.

This feature is located under the “Opinion” section under “Blogs.” The URL is:

<http://apps.detnews.com/apps/blogs/disabilitiesblog/index.php>

Here columnists write about news for and about disabilities. The blog is written by people with various disabilities to give insight on the

issues concerning them in their daily lives.

The issues and topics covered are dating, entertainment, traveling, news, self-determination, and encouragement.



DDOT Makes Bus Traveling Easier With Signs

Over the next four months the Detroit Department of Transportation will be installing new bus signs that will make traveling easier for everyone, including people with developmental disabilities.

The system is implementing larger, color-coded city bus signs that have route information. The signs are 50% larger and have the route number, name, and a specific color that is assigned to that route.

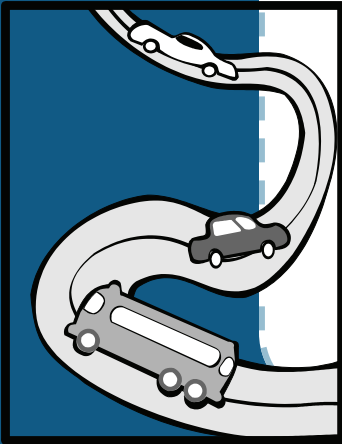
The new signs will also have phone number to the DDOT scheduling center where riders can call Monday through Friday from 6 am to 6 pm to talk with a customer service representative.

sentative.

There are three colors that let the rider know what direction the bus is going: purple for north or south, blue for east or west and green for downtown.

The bus signs will be funded through federal stimulus money and DDOT does not plan on raising the bus fare.

DDOT also provides color-coded maps of routes with which the colors and numbers on the signs will correspond. This will be the first system-wide upgrade since the late 1980's.



CATA to Improve Transportation Options in Lansing

A proposal to improve transportation along Michigan and Grand River Avenue is underway.

Through the 2009 U.S. Transportation Reauthorization Bill, U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers has asked for \$387 million, including \$110 million for public transportation improvements along the 7 mile route between the Capitol Building and the Meridian Mall in Okemos.

CATA hopes to begin the first phase of planning within 6 months. Officials will review conditions and compare options to evaluate the current

system's performance. Representatives from all three jurisdictions are working with CATA on its study.

This will hopefully improve travel options for those with disabilities in the downtown Lansing/Okemos area.



Upcoming Events

July 14th

DD Council meeting at Hawk Island Park

July 17 1–6 pm

July 18 9 am–3 pm

Michigan Partners for Freedom—Local Leaders Summit at Northwood University, Midland.

July 31st

9 am–12 pm

Pride and Power— Their Role in Leadership Seminar at the Hannah Community Center, East Lansing

Aug 13

10 am–12 pm

Transportation Workgroup Annual Traveling Meeting, Flint



Meet the DD Council's New Communication's Representative!

Laura Robertson has joined the DD Council staff as its new Communications Representative.

Laura is a recent Michigan State University graduate with a Bachelor's in Professional Writing. Last summer she did an internship with the fledgling non-profit organization called Capital Area Local First where she was a communications coordinator. The organization supports independent, locally-owned businesses in Lansing and the tri-county area.

She is a native Michigander and grew up in Livonia, Michigan where she also attended Schoolcraft College for an Associate's before transferring to MSU. Her hobbies are traveling, boating, and being outdoors in general.

Laura looks forward to working with the Council and all of its partners in the years to come to help make a difference in the disability community.

Summary Of Committee/Workgroup Minutes

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

Family Support Workgroup—April 2009

The ARC of Michigan received a grant from the Michigan Department of Education for training and technical assistance for the family involvement grant Michigan Alliance for Families. This grant provides information support and education to families of children and adults with disabilities in the education system. The purpose of this project is to increase involvement of families in their children's education. The website is <http://www.mighicanallianceforfamilies.org>.

The group discussed holding a one day seminar in October for families to learn more about family support services. ACA and Michigan Patient Family Center Committee at U of M are also interested in participating. The Parents as Peers initiative is working on identifying a broader group of individuals to help develop a curriculum.

Public Policy Committee— April 2009

Legislative Update : There was a budget proposal to raise funding of councils. The committee is asking members to send in letters to legislators asking them to support the increase. A bill proposed to provide special funding for healthcare of children with autism is not supported nationally by councils because they want developmental disabilities to be addressed as a whole. SSI recipients will receive \$250 stimulus money.

Budget: Governor Granholm decided not to eliminate state supplement to SSI payments after hearing testimony at the House Appropriation Subcommittee from many individuals in the disability community.

The Mount Pleasant Center will be closed by October 12th, and will have residents transitioned into the community by May or sent to the Caro institution.

The Ramp It! Project has asked the state to provide a ramp to the speakers platform at the Capitol Building to allow those with disabilities to speak at events, rallies, and lobby days. The project asks the state to provide ramp and make it available.

The 2010 legislative event planning is underway. There will be a brief training session before the event so that RICC members are familiar with talking points for legislators.

Transportation Workgroup— April 2009

The DD Council endorsed the Michigan Transit Vision at their March meeting. The TWG is deciding what to do with this document.

SMART Update— Hank Johnson from the Wayne County RICC will meet with SMART to discuss their Coordinated Human Services Transportation Strategy. The Wayne RICC has been asked by DDOT to assist in an audit that involves a person with a wheelchair to assess the route to make a determination whether DDOT meets ADD requirements.

The Transportation 101 grant will be holding a conference at Soaring Eagle September 15 & 16 to teach people about transportation advocacy issues. CATA will be holding a listening session every few months to gather input from riders about services. TWG members are encouraged to start a listing session.

Minutes Continued

Housing Work Group– April 2009

One goal is to get a National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) established. Steps to secure this budget include talking to legislators, circulating letters asking for signatures, and staying up to date on what is happening on the hill related to housing. Contact Elisha Harig-Blaine at eligha@nlihc.org or 202-662-1530 ext 316 for more information.

Housing remains committed to securing the commitment by MHCDF to build everything according to universal design principles and secure the commitment to building integrated settings for housing for people with disabilities of all ages.

Individuals transitioning from nursing facilities should be given the same preference/priority in housing as people who are homeless. Discussed how to do this locally.

There is a need to adopt a consistent, working definition of homeless which is any person who does not have access to decent, affordable housing that the person controls through a rental or purchase agreement. HWG would like to pursue this definition locally and at the federal level.

HR 1408, the federal inclusive design act was reintroduced which says any 1-2-3 units built using federal money would have to be visitable. Paul Ecklund is tracking this.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) has information on the MSHDA website www.michigan.gov/mshda. There is a focus with the ARRA on high crime areas. There is also a requirement that the homes ARRA works on are marketable.

Program Committee– March 2009

There are 5 local grants and one statewide grant with MDRC.

The materials committee met at the end of January and waded through materials for dissemination. Some materials went to DDI, some were tossed, and others went to the Council. Remaining things to go through are Federal, State, and other council publications.

In regards to the RFP– Individuals and Families Planning for the Future, Carolyn suggested editing the entire document to make person-centered as the very top priority and have the toolkit as the secondary focus. Barb suggested that the technology of person centered planning needs to be emphasized, with the tools presented second. General discussion ensued around self-determination, with the idea of having local people with self-determined lives at each of the trainings to serve as examples and mentors and local sources of information.

Cheryl suggested making a resource area on our website with resources on how to do council grants and how to find and get other grants.

Minutes Continued

Diversity Committee– May 2009

The Multicultural committee has officially changed its name to Diversity Committee, as approved by the Executive Committee. Discussion took place on appointing a new vice chair for the committee.

The Shiawassee RICC is sponsoring a disability outreach open house on September 23rd. Baker discussed the presentation of Diversity Food for Thought as a possible diversity training for the coordinators. The program highlights the benefits of diversity and the need to support diversity in the workplace, particularly in our changing demographics. The video that accompanies the presentation can be viewed for free by registering as a new user at www.trainingabc.com

Education Workgroup– May 2009

A report on 20 state performance measures was released the first week of April, 2009. The date does not display if there are fewer than 10 students in a cell, which causes about 236,000 students with disabilities whose data is masked. This is an issue the EWG may raise with Rep. Melton of the House Education committee.

The *School to Prison Pipeline Report* investigates the suspension and expulsion of all types of students from the general education curriculum. The ACLU and others are going to introduce legislation so that every child has the right to an education in Michigan.

The State Board of Education is not re-printing the brochure on Universal education as there is no more money for it. The Education WG might have a role in continuing to get that information out. Also, all policies of the State Board of Education are no universal because of the Universal Education policy. Anti-bullying, character education, and other standards apply school-wide.

Michigan is not a pro-education state, but Senator Kuipers told the MI Board of Education directly that every child should have an equal opportunity and have access to the same education and standards so that there are better outcomes.

Health Issues Workgroup– May 2009

Strategy was discussed regarding budget cuts, with Bonnie Nothoff putting together statistics for legislators regarding Medicaid Dental. There is a call to action for RICCs to contact their legislators and tell them how cuts will affect the lives of those with disabilities.

It was moved that the HIWG recommend to the Council that it sign on to the Common Ground letter calling on the legislature to review existing tax expenditures and begin closing tax loopholes, which is costing the state millions per year.

The Oral Health project is currently in the advocacy stage. The presentation at the Disability Caucus has created an important ally.