

# On Target

Informing Indiana About  
Disability Issues

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Issues

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*On Target* is a monthly publication of the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities.

We welcome your suggestions for newsletter content and ideas concerning the actions of the Council. *On Target* is made available in accessible formats upon request.

Suellen Jackson-Boner  
*Executive Director*

Christine Dahlberg  
*Associate Director*

Paul Shankland  
*Grants Manager*

## **A case for inclusion - Indiana making some progress, but lags national average in spending and percentage served**

The state of Indiana ranks better than the U.S. state average for the percentage of Medicaid recipients with developmental disabilities served in home- and community-based settings with less than four residents. This is according to United Cerebral Palsy's (UCP) recently released national analysis of state and Medicaid services for people with developmental disabilities and mental retardation (MRDD). However, among all 50 states and Washington, D.C., Indiana ranked 21st in how well Medicaid is serving Hoosiers in the MRDD population. Suellen Jackson-Boner, executive director, Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, said, "The trend toward inclusion of more Hoosiers with disabilities into smaller residential community settings is positive, but our ranking in the percentage of Medicaid recipients with MRDD leaves room for improvement."

On the plus side, Indiana is paying better than the U.S. state average for vocational rehabilitation wages, and the state is better at employing Hoosiers with disabilities (as a percentage of those without disabilities employed) than the U.S. state average. To help assure quality services are provided, Indiana is

one of only 31 states with a Medicaid MRDD quality measurement program (National Core Indicators).

Additionally, Indiana provides many key Medicaid optional services, according to the UCP study. It is one of only 29 states to offer occupational therapy, as well as physical therapy and therapy for speech, hearing and language disorders. Overall, Indiana received a "C" grade in the UCP study, which compared more than 230 data sources in addition to receiving guidance from national disability experts.

"Many states still direct a major portion of limited Medicaid resources to supporting individuals with disabilities in large, often costly, state-run institutions," said Tarren Bragdon, an expert in healthcare policy and author of UCP's "A Case for Inclusion." The report clearly reveals that top-performing states emphasize community inclusion for people with developmental disabilities and mental retardation. New Hampshire, the top state in the United Cerebral Palsy report, spends more than 98 percent of Medicaid dollars to support people living in their communities through home- and community-based services. On the other hand, Texas, which ranked last, only spends about 31 percent. Indiana spends about 53 percent of its Medicaid dollars on providing home- and community-based services. The full United Cerebral Palsy report is available online at [www.ucp.org/medicaid](http://www.ucp.org/medicaid).

### **Apply for 2007 Partners in Policymaking Academy**

The Partners in Policymaking Academy is accepting applications from adults with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities who want to be engaged in an intense leadership-training program to learn about best practices in services and how to work with

policymakers. The 2007 Academy Class will participate in a structured program offering extensive training over eight weekends during monthly meeting formats spanning from October to May. The program, sponsored by the Governor's Council, teaches leadership skills and techniques to develop positive relationships with elected officials, school personnel and other individuals who make decisions regarding services that individuals with disabilities use. Advocacy topics include history, education, employment, community inclusion, state services, influencing policy, federal and state laws, legislative issues, media relations, coalition building and community organizing.

Only a limited number of spaces are available for the program, so apply now. Join the ranks of more than 500 Indiana Partner graduates who are making a difference for people with disabilities in their communities. For more information or an application, call Partners in Policymaking at (317) 232-7771 (voice/TT), toll free at (866) 234-1635 (voice) or [PIP@gpcpd.org](mailto:PIP@gpcpd.org) (e-mail). Or, visit [www.in.gov/gpcpd](http://www.in.gov/gpcpd) and click on the Partners in Policymaking logo. The application deadline has been extended to Friday, July 7, 2006.

### **New Indiana laws reflect positive short session**

While Governor Mitch Daniels' Major Moves program grabbed most of the limelight during the legislative session, a handful of positive bills addressing disability issues were quietly passed by the Indiana Legislature and signed into law by the governor.

Suellen Jackson-Boner, executive director of the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, said, "Overall, it was a good session for people with disabilities in Indiana. To be sure,

there's much more to do, but we do appreciate what the legislators and the governor accomplished this year."

The brief session ended March 14 with 193 measures passed into law, some of which address areas of special interest to Hoosiers with disabilities and their families, such as:

- Providing for more addiction treatment facilities in the state.
- Requiring a study of drug, alcohol and tobacco use by pregnant women.
- Extending the life of a commission created to study mental health in Indiana to the year 2011.
- Providing for volunteer advocates to represent incapacitated adults.
- Creating a new Division of Aging as a separate entity from the Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services. Advocates say this move is important as the "baby boomers" grow older because it creates a more responsive entity.
- Creating the Bureau of Child Development Services within the Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services. This transfers the First Steps program and clarifies co-payment procedures, along with specifying what health records the division can access to administer the program.
- Changing the state's Medicaid spend-down options, so people can pay their spend-down amount directly to the State.
- Imposing a moratorium on comprehensive care beds through June 30, 2007.

Additionally, a new law was passed concerning medical alert notifications on drivers' licenses and identification cards that use special symbols rather than displaying cardholders' blood type and other private medical information.

All-in-all, disability advocates say positive results for people with disabilities highlighted the short session.

### **Young Indiana writers honored for essays**

Hundreds of young writers proved that "kids can make a difference" through entries in an essay contest sponsored by the United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Indiana, Inc., and the Governor's Council for People with Disabilities.

The ATTITUDE Essay Contest, exploring the last barrier for people with disabilities and celebrating "The Bridge to Inclusion," was part of a ceremony honoring National Disability Awareness Month. Six winners received cash awards and an ATTITUDE bear. All of the writers were awarded a certificate of participation.

For more information on the awards and the United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Indiana, Inc., call (317) 632-3561 (voice) or e-mail Donna Roberts at [donnar@ucpaindy.org](mailto:donnar@ucpaindy.org).

### **Canine graduates change lives**

There were smiles all around - and a few slurpy kisses - when the Indiana Canine Assistant and Adolescent Network (ICAAAN) honored its nine recent canine graduates. Trained by offenders from Indiana prisons, the dogs were turned over to their new owners on March 16.

These remarkable canines will make coping with everyday challenges much easier for people with disabilities, performing tasks such as opening doors and turning on lights.

The dogs have also often changed the lives of their trainers, giving the offender/trainers a new sense of purpose and responsibility.

## **Plan now for possible avian flu pandemic**

While an outbreak of avian flu in the United States may seem remote, scientists around the world are carefully monitoring the spread of Influenza A (H5N1), a virus subtype that occurs mainly in birds and is prevalent today in Asia and Europe.

Several cases of H5N1 infection in humans also have occurred from direct or close contact with the infected birds, and scientists are concerned that H5N1 may mutate to allow person-to-person spread of the virus, for which there is little or no immune protection. The result could be an influenza pandemic (worldwide outbreak of disease).

To assure that you and your loved ones are well prepared, disability advocates should get involved with local public officials now and implement the necessary community precautions in advance. If a pandemic occurs in this country, federal and state officials are already warning that they may be unable to respond to all emergencies in time. The most recent influenza pandemic in the U.S. (in 1968) was relatively mild, yet killed about 34,000 Americans.

A pandemic may force schools and businesses to close, large group gatherings to be canceled and public transportation to be curtailed. And, if large-population areas are forced to stay in their homes for an extended period, here are some initial steps to consider:

- Store extra water, food, medicines and other supplies.
- Determine how you could work from home.
- Determine how you would care for and educate your children if schools were closed.
- Identify and pay special attention to the

elderly and people with disabilities who may require increased assistance.

- Work with public officials to develop plans to care for your community's most vulnerable.

Common sense will be more important than ever:

- Instruct children to wash hands often and to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Drink lots of water and go easy on salt, sugar, alcohol and saturated fat.
- Exercise on a regular basis and get plenty of rest.

State Health Commissioner Judith A. Monroe, M.D., has invited communities throughout Indiana to hold summits or town meetings to address pandemic influenza preparedness on a local level. Contact your local health department to see how your community is planning to address this issue.

For more information visit [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov) or [www.statehealth.in.gov](http://www.statehealth.in.gov).

### **Indiana State student earns 2006 Microsoft/AAPD internship**

Angela Kuhn, an Indiana State University senior, was one of only 10 students nationwide selected by Microsoft and the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) to be awarded an 11-week summer internship with a federal agency in Washington, D.C.

"This internship program is the perfect opportunity for me to gain wonderful work experience, while showing potential employers what an asset I could be to their company," Kuhn said.

A management information systems (MIS) and business administration major, Kuhn credits her award to her experiences and her professors at ISU.

Kuhn, who has Diastrophic Dysphasia, has found a place where she can excel, get involved and make a difference. She is the president of the Management Information Systems Association (MISA), secretary of Alpha Iota Mu and member of Beta Gamma Sigma. In addition to her involvement, Kuhn has been named to the National Dean's List and ISU's Dean's List. She also has been inducted into the Golden Key National Honor Society and honored as the recipient of the Hurlbut-Leak Memorial Scholarship.

This is the fourth year for the joint program between Microsoft and AAPD. The program is designed for college students with disabilities looking for a career in information technology.

For more information on the internship program, call the AAPD at (800) 840-8844 (voice/TT). Or, visit [www.aapd-dc.org](http://www.aapd-dc.org).

### **Of Note**

#### **Indianapolis finalist in NOD Community Accessibility Award**

The National Organization on Disability (NOD) recently announced Indianapolis as a top 10 finalist in the 2005 Accessible America Awards. The awards recognize the outstanding efforts of local governments to offer persons with disabilities full and equal opportunities to participate in the life of their community. "A basic but vital role for local government is ensuring all residents have equal opportunities to succeed and enjoy the community they live in," said Mayor Bart Peterson. "This national recognition is

representative of our city's dedication to inclusion and our continuous work to improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities."

### **Conference dates confirmed**

The 2006 Indiana Conference for People with Disabilities will be held Nov. 16 and 17 at the Westin Hotel in downtown Indianapolis. Look to future issues of On Target for more information.

### **Scholarship application deadline approaches**

Applications for the Ethel Louis Armstrong scholarships are due June 1, 2006. Scholarships are awarded to women graduate students with physical disabilities who are enrolled in a college or university in the United States. Details and an application can be found at [www.ela.org](http://www.ela.org) or by calling Deborah Lewis at (626) 398-8840 (voice).

### **ARC offers trainings on legislative advocacy**

This summer, the Arc of Indiana is conducting 11, one-day regional trainings throughout the state on "How to be an Effective Advocate." The sessions will be held in June and July and are designed for people with disabilities, family members and advocates who want to learn how to get their message across to legislators. The hands-on training will include bill basics, communications, establishing relationships and role-plays. For more information, contact the Arc of Indiana at (317) 977-2375 (voice) or visit [www.arcind.org](http://www.arcind.org).

### **Sign up for the Council E-News**

Council E-News is a bimonthly newsletter featuring updates on public hearings, policy issues, conferences and other Indiana-related issues. To subscribe, send your name and e-mail address to [cdahlberg@gpcpd.org](mailto:cdahlberg@gpcpd.org) (e-mail). For

more information, contact Christine Dahlberg at  
(317) 232-7774 (voice).

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Indiana Governor's  
Council for People with Disabilities  
150 West Market Street, Suite 628  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

(317) 232-7770 voice  
(317) 232-7771 TT  
E-mail: [GPCPD@gpcpd.org](mailto:GPCPD@gpcpd.org)  
Web site: [www.state.in.us/gpcpd](http://www.state.in.us/gpcpd)