

## **On Target**

Informing Indiana About Disability Issues  
Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities  
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## **Key policy and legislative initiatives underway in Indiana and the U.S.**

Disability policy and legislation at both the national and state levels were covered during this year's annual Conference for People with Disabilities held in November. Marty Ford, director of legal advocacy for The Arc and UCP Disability Policy Collaboration, as well as a panel of Indiana advocates and lobbyists presented key legislative initiatives and issues that may affect people with disabilities, such as housing policies and Medicaid services.

Ford shared critical legislative issues currently circulating on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., including an overview of the Bush administration and Congress. She touched on a variety of legislative items, including the No Child Left Behind reauthorization and Higher Education Act (1 and 2), as well as the ADA Restoration Act. Ford also discussed the upcoming 2008 election and the impact constituents can have on candidates at the polls, stressing the importance of voting and reaching out to legislators.

"The closer we get to election time, the more you'll start seeing certain issues reappear on the candidates' agendas," said Ford. The candidates will begin to focus on issues that are deemed important by their constituencies, such as health care and Social Security, which have unfortunately taken a backseat to the property tax crisis in Indiana.

At the state level, panelists also urged Hoosiers to stay abreast of the property tax crisis, as it will most definitely be a key factor in next year's election. State Representative Vanessa Summers, also from The Arc of Indiana, reminded attendees that the upcoming General Assembly session will be short and property taxes will be the primary focus, pushing disability-specific issues down on the list. Additionally, Summers mentioned that programs and services for people with disabilities may be impacted by property tax reform as legislators decide how to make up for funds the State will lose if property tax rates are decreased.

John Cardwell, director and founder of the Generations Project, added that reform could also result in negative cost issues for people with modest incomes. "It's important for all Hoosiers to be part of the tax debate," he said.

President and CEO of Mental Health America of Indiana, Steve McCaffrey, said his organization would like to see property tax funds replaced by an increase in alcohol taxes. The other alternative legislators may choose would be a reduction of services, many important to people with disabilities. "One in four people have mental health issues in Indiana," said McCaffrey. "And, yet, these issues are often not at the forefront of the legislative agenda."

The Indiana Association of Area Agencies on Aging (IAAA) will be mostly concentrated on administrative issues during the upcoming legislative session, according to CEO Melissa Durr. The organization is currently piecing together policy issues that will build a good lobbying platform to target incoming legislators.

Watch for more updates in "On Target" as Indiana's 2008 legislative session gets underway.

## **Library offers state-of-the-art assistive technology**

The Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library is now equipped with assistive technology at its Glendale branch, 6101 N. Keystone Ave., offering an X-tation Pro Accessible Workstation designed by the Assistive Technology Center of Easter Seals Crossroads. Made possible by a grant from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, the new workstation is located in the facility's Accessibility Room and will improve public computer and Internet access for patrons with vision, hearing or mobility impairments, as well as those with learning disabilities.

For individuals with vision impairments, the X-tation technology offers screen magnification software, screen reading software and a video magnifier for printed materials. It also features an advanced document scanning/reading system and a large-print keyboard. Visitors with learning disabilities, such as dyslexia and attention deficit disorder, benefit from a voice input system, bi-modal document scanning and reading system, literacy development features and Internet access system.

Patrons with mobility impairments, including cerebral palsy and carpal tunnel syndrome, have a variety of features available to them, including height adjustment options, forearm supports, slip-on typing pads, voice input system, miniature keyboard and alternate pointing devices.

The X-tation is serving as a pilot program for similar technology at the transformed Central Library and other Indianapolis branch locations.

## **Disability community remembers lifelong advocate**

A household name in Indiana's disability community, Amy Cook Lurvey, 90, died Dec. 12, 2007, and will be remembered as a champion for Hoosiers with disabilities. Her volunteer efforts made a profound impact statewide, earning Lurvey countless awards, including a Sagamore of the Wabash from the late Governor Frank O'Bannon. She's been honored with the Founders Award from the American Civil Liberties Union and was a well-known voice on disability education matters in the General Assembly for more than 40 years.

Lurvey's 60-year journey of advocacy began after graduating from Indiana University in 1939 and becoming the first speech and hearing therapist in a special education department for Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS). Her passion for IPS led to a volunteer career as a lobbyist for the Parent Teacher Association and her work to bring the Head Start program for economically disadvantaged preschool children to Indianapolis. Lurvey also played an instrumental role in establishing Indiana's Mandatory Special Education Law, which required Indiana public schools to include children with disabilities as a part of the regular student population.

In 1969, Lurvey founded COVOH (Council Of Volunteers and Organizations for Hoosiers with Disabilities) where for 30 years she drove legislative and policy initiatives to promote the welfare of children and adults with disabilities. In 1999, Lurvey worked to build a partnership between Indiana University and Purdue University to establish spinal cord and head injury research and treatment centers. Her efforts helped the program win a \$2 million appropriation from the General Assembly in 1999 and 2000.

Lurvey has left an impressive mark on Indiana's disability community and will long be remembered as a true pioneer for Hoosiers with disabilities.

## **UCP sponsors ATTITUDE essay contest**

The United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of Greater Indiana and the Governor's Council are teaming up again to sponsor the ATTITUDE essay contest, which coincides with Disability Awareness Month in March. More than 5,000 essays have been submitted for the contest over the past 13 years. The contest's subject is especially appropriate this year in light of the 2008 awareness month theme, "Attitude is Everything."

Entrants are asked to do one of the following:

- Interview a child or adult with a disability and describe his or her experience with the attitudes of others.
- Read a book about people with disabilities and describe the impact of attitude on their lives.
- Write about their own observations or feelings about attitudes toward people with disabilities.

The contest has three divisions: third and fourth grades; fifth and sixth grades; and seventh and eighth grades.

Each student can only submit one entry, which must include a completed entry form, typed or legibly printed on 8.5" x 11" white paper, and should not exceed 500 words. Entries will not be returned and must be postmarked by Feb. 8, 2008. Entries should be mailed to UCP's new address at 6100 N. Keystone Ave., Suite 254, Indianapolis, IN 46220.

All entrants will receive a certificate of appreciation. First place winners will also receive an ATTITUDE bear and \$150. Second place winners will also receive an ATTITUDE bear and \$75. All winners are invited to attend an awards luncheon in Indianapolis later in the spring.

UCP of Greater Indiana encourages schools to participate in the essay contest and welcomes requests for informational presentations on the subject. Teachers, school administrators or anyone else interested in more information can contact Donna Roberts, executive director of UCP of Greater Indiana, at (317) 632-3561 (voice) or [donnar@ucpindy.org](mailto:donnar@ucpindy.org).

## **HIP applications now being accepted**

Enrollment for the new Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP), which provides health insurance coverage for low-income adults, is now open for plans that went into effect Jan. 1, 2008. HIP was passed by the state Legislature during the last session and is funded through proceeds from an increased cigarette tax to provide health insurance to previously uninsured Hoosiers.

The program is open to uninsured adult Hoosiers between the ages of 18–64 whose household income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL), and who are not eligible for Medicaid. Eligible participants must be uninsured for at least six months and cannot be eligible for employer-sponsored health insurance. Individuals contribute to the plan based on a sliding scale.

HIP covers physician services, prescriptions, diagnostic exams, home health services, outpatient and inpatient hospital visits, hospice care, preventive services, family planning, and case and disease management. Mental health coverage is similar to coverage for physical health and includes substance abuse treatments. Vision and dental coverage is also available for purchase separately, and individuals will pay 50 percent of the premium cost for the services.

The HIP application process is similar to Hoosier Healthwise, which is a Medicaid program for children. Currently, if a parent and child are signing up for health insurance coverage at the same time, a HIP application must be completed for the parent, and a separate Hoosier Healthwise application must be filled out for the child. HIP plans to consolidate the application for family health insurance into one document by July 2008.

Applications are available on HIP's Web site or can be picked up at various community organizations participating in the V-CAN network, Hoosier Healthwise Enrollment Centers and your local Division of Family Resources office. For more information, visit the HIP Web site at [www.HIP.IN.gov](http://www.HIP.IN.gov), e-mail [hipinfo@fssa.in.gov](mailto:hipinfo@fssa.in.gov) or call toll-free (877) GET-HIP-9 (438-4479).

## **Indiana athletes compete in international competitions**

The Special Olympics and Junior Olympics received a large dose of Hoosier competition this year. Seven Indiana Special Olympics athletes took home medals from the World Summer Games in Shanghai, China, and one Union Township student was voted the Most Valuable Player after his performance at the Junior Olympics in Australia.

Hoosiers Jessica Crook, Mitch Johnson, Danielle Burgin, Shane Talbert, Sam McNew, and Jason and Bob Plante were among the 7,500 athletes chosen to represent the United States in the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games in October. The Indiana team competed in four of the 25 sports offered during the games and returned with 12 medals.

Special Olympics athlete Katie Crawford of Indianapolis and Kokomo Police Department Patrol Officer Troy Hintz received the special honor of running the final leg of the Law Enforcement Torch Run into Shanghai. The "Flame of Hope" was lit in Athens, Greece, on June 29 and passed through more than 10 cities before the hand-off to Crawford and Hintz.

At the same time, Jared Arambula of Union Township and his teammates were gearing up for the 2007 Day of Difference Junior Games for athletes in wheelchairs in Sydney, Australia. Arambula, a 17-year-old Wheeler High School senior, played guard on the United States Junior Olympic wheelchair basketball "19 and under" team. Not only did his team capture the title, but Arambula was named the tournament MVP and was given a spot on the All-Star team.

Basketball has been an important part of Arambula's life. He was born with spina bifida and is paralyzed from the knees down. Arambula, who has been playing wheelchair basketball since age 6, hopes to attend the University of Alabama and has his sights set on trying out for the wheelchair Olympic team that will go to London in 2012.

## **U.S. Supreme Court splits 4–4 in special education case**

The U.S. Supreme Court recently deadlocked in a case that called into question the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (Board of Education of the City School District of the City of New York v. Tom F.). The 4-4 decision involved whether school districts should be required to finance private education for children with disabilities in instances where the student has not yet tried a public special education program.

The current law mandates that if school districts are unable to provide suitable special education, they must reimburse parents for private schooling. Following an early-October hearing, the Court justices upheld a lower court ruling in which the defendant was entitled to reimbursement for his son's private education at Stephen Gaynor School in New York City.

Because the local public school didn't originally offer a special education program, the district had been reimbursing the defendant for his son's private schooling. Eventually, the public school began implementing its own program in the late 1990s. However, the defendant wasn't satisfied with the new initiative and kept his child enrolled in the private school for academic year 1999—2000, for which he sought reimbursement for the \$21,819 in tuition.

The school board originally won its case at the federal level, but the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit overturned the decision. The Supreme Court's affirmation of this ruling did not set a nationwide precedent.

## **Of Note**

### ***Order DAM materials now***

March Disability Awareness Month (DAM) materials are now available. The theme of this year's campaign is "Attitude is Everything." To order, visit [www.in.gov/gpcpd](http://www.in.gov/gpcpd) or contact Kim Dennison at (317) 631-6400 (voice) or [kim.dennison@borshoff.biz](mailto:kim.dennison@borshoff.biz) (e-mail).

### ***Winter heating assistance available***

For help in paying your winter heating bills, contact the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA), the organization that runs Indiana's Energy Assistance Program and Weatherization Assistance Program. The programs are implemented through Community Action Agencies with outreach offices in each county. For a list of offices, visit [www.indianahousing.org](http://www.indianahousing.org) or call (800) 872-0371 (voice).

Heating assistance may also be available through your local utility company, which often sets aside funds for those who have a financial need.

### ***Register now for INARF's annual conference***

The Indiana Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, Inc. (INARF) is hosting its annual conference March 12–14, 2008, in Indianapolis. For more information or to register, visit [www.inarf.org](http://www.inarf.org) or call (317) 634-4957 (voice).

### ***Remember Community Spirit Awards during DAM***

After completing your 2008 Disability Awareness Month (DAM) activities, remember to submit nominations for the Council's Community Spirit Awards. (2007 winners can be found in the enclosed conference insert.) Exceptional campaigns will be recognized with two awards, one that recognizes an individual and one that recognizes a group/organization whose exemplary awareness campaign has changed attitudes and enhanced the perception and value of people with disabilities. Nomination forms can be found on the Council's Web site at [www.in.gov/gpcpd](http://www.in.gov/gpcpd).

### ***Problems voting?***

If you experienced accessibility issues or problems voting at your polling site during the last election, Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services wants to hear from you. To report a problem

in Indianapolis and southern Indiana, call (800) 622-4845, ext. 234. To report a problem in northern Indiana, dial extension 236.

## **SPECIAL CONFERENCE INSERT**

**This year's conference, "Disability Matters: We're 51,000,000 Strong," was lauded by attendees as one of the best ever. Nearly 400 participants were at the Hyatt Regency Indianapolis on Nov. 27 and 28 for three keynote sessions and 10 different workshops. Highlights from the presentations are included on the following pages, along with photos from several conference events.**

### **Revolutionary common sense shared in opening keynote, workshops**

Kicking off this year's Conference with her "Disability is Natural" presentation was Kathie Snow, publisher of the popular Web site [disabilityisnatural.com](http://disabilityisnatural.com), as well as author of several books and a nationally known speaker.

The mother of a child with cerebral palsy, Snow believes that disability alone is not a problem, but rather people's attitudes and perceptions about disabilities.

Snow is a supporter of people-first language and understands the power of language and labels. Snow encouraged the audience to reframe deficits or problems into gifts, assets or strengths. Although simple, she believes the matter of perspective is vitally important. In two workshops to smaller groups, Snow discussed inclusive education and self-determination.

Snow has worked tirelessly to reform education across the United States and Canada to ensure that inclusive classrooms are integrated into the school system for the benefit of children with and without disabilities. According to Snow, the three keys to self-determination and inclusion include: 1) tools, such as assistive technology, supports and accommodations; 2) natural assistance; and 3) ordinary opportunities and experiences.

For more information about Kathie Snow, visit her Web site at [www.disabilityisnatural.com](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com).

### **The final note: "Music Within"**

If Richard Pimentel's dynamic presentation was critiqued in the same fashion as a movie, it would be given "two thumbs up."

This year's closing session featured Pimentel, a nationally acclaimed speaker whose story is told in the newly released major motion picture "Music Within." Pimentel lost his upper register

hearing during service in the Vietnam War and has since pursued a life of advocacy for people with disabilities, playing an influential role in the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In his life after disability, Pimentel was discouraged from his aspirations to find a job and to become a national speaker. It wasn't until he teamed up with Arthur Honeyman, a man with cerebral palsy, that Pimentel became motivated to beat the odds.

Pimentel was inspired by Honeyman's positive attitude in a world where people pointed fingers and discriminated against him. Some of their experiences inspired them to advocate on behalf of others with disabilities so they would not have the same negative treatment.

As poet Oliver Wendell Holmes once said: "Most people go to their graves with their music still inside them." Pimentel challenged the audience to let their voices be heard.

For more information about Pimentel or to view the trailer for "Music Within," visit [www.miltwright.com](http://www.miltwright.com).

## **DDRS director shares policy updates**

As the second part of Tuesday's keynote address, Peter Bisbecos, Director of the Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS), shared some statistics and information. His department has a \$1 billion annual budget, nearly \$800 million of which is for programs for people with developmental disabilities. Other components include First Steps (early intervention), vocational rehabilitation and services for people who are blind or deaf.

Bisbecos reminded the audience that a few months ago the state was able to take 650 people off the Medicaid Waiver waiting list for the first time in years. The goal is to have 3,000 more people off the waiting list and into services by June 30, 2009.

For more information, visit the DDRS Web site at [www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs](http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs).

## **Outstanding disability advocates take home Community Service Awards**

### ***2007 Distinguished Leadership Award (person with a disability)***

Sharon Arvin Byrnett, Indianapolis, was honored for her significant impact on the Indianapolis community and beyond with regards to inclusion, community access and accommodations for people with disabilities.

### ***2007 Distinguished Leadership Award (parent of a child with a disability)***

Alice Tinsley, Indianapolis, was acknowledged as a pioneer in advocating for children with disabilities. Her persistent voice in the government arena for disability services impacted program development and legislation.

## ***2007 Disability Awareness Campaign Award***

Indiana University Kokomo was recognized for “Room for Everyone to Achieve a Secondary Education,” the university’s first-ever comprehensive Disability Awareness Month campaign.

## ***2007 Disability Awareness Campaign Award***

Northwest Indiana Special Education Cooperative was honored for their decade-long effort to involve all 61 Lake County public schools in Disability Awareness Month each year.

## **Update on state programs and services**

This workshop featured presenters from a variety of Indiana government agencies that provide helpful resources to Hoosiers with disabilities.

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) presented on “Indiana’s Approach to Fight Obesity,” particularly Governor Daniel’s Web-based initiative, INShape Indiana, which offers tools for combating obesity and smoking. Hoosiers can “log on and lighten up” by going to [www.INShape.IN.gov](http://www.INShape.IN.gov) or calling (800) 433-0746 (voice).

The Department of Natural Resources’ (DNR) presentation featured accessible attractions for people with disabilities in Indiana’s parks, focusing on entrances, main attractions/services and restroom facilities. For more information, visit [www.in.gov/dnr](http://www.in.gov/dnr).

The Indiana Civil Rights Commission presented information on the various State and Federal laws supporting civil rights for people with disabilities. Contact them for more information at (800) 628-2909 (voice) or [www.in.gov/icrc](http://www.in.gov/icrc).

Presenters from the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority and WorkOne also spoke. For more information on those agencies, visit [ihcda.in.gov](http://ihcda.in.gov) and [www.work-one.org](http://www.work-one.org).

## **Transitioning from school to adult life**

Pat Rogan, a professor at Indiana University School of Education, addressed the issue of young adults with disabilities who finish school and face problems finding a job. The workshop provided an open forum for attendees to share their experience and knowledge. Rogan also spoke about several legislative and work incentive programs that could provide assistance, including Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS) and the Workforce Investment Act.

The workshop also focused on how to better prepare children with disabilities at different stages of their development. Some examples include:

- Applying for a Medicaid Waiver.
- Helping children develop a strong work ethic during elementary school.
- Exploring career options and developing independent living skills during middle school.
- Working at an age-appropriate job to gain experience.
- Getting involved in extracurricular activities during high school.



For information on transition resources and work incentives, visit [www.iidc.indiana.edu](http://www.iidc.indiana.edu) and click on "Employment/Community Living" then "Publications."

## **Preparing for Disability Awareness Month**

Attendees of this workshop were introduced to the 2008 Disability Awareness Month theme for this March, "Attitude is Everything." A new process for ordering this year's materials was also discussed. All activity packets are now offered electronically on one comprehensive CD as opposed to hard copies that have been individually ordered in years past. A copy of the CD and collateral materials can be ordered by completing the form on the Council's Web site at [www.in.gov/gpcpd](http://www.in.gov/gpcpd).

Several panelists shared their experiences in hosting events during last year's campaigns and provided tips on how others can implement successful events.

## **Health care reform in Indiana**

A panel of experts and advocates in the field of health care reform spoke about possible solutions to what continues to be a hot topic in America. Vicki Pappas, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Planning and Policy Studies at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, discussed the results of the 2007 Indiana Disability Poll, which was co-sponsored by the Governor's Council, the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, and Indiana Protection & Advocacy Services. The poll provided a snapshot of how the state's disability community feels about health care. The top three areas identified for improvement included more coverage and services; improved administration and coordination, less red tape and paperwork; and lower costs, co-pays and premiums.

Carol Cutter, Indiana Department of Insurance, explained the provisions of the Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP), which took effect Jan. 1, 2008. It provides expanded coverage for individuals at certain percentages of the poverty level. See the general "On Target" article for more information on HIP.

Robert Stone, MD, Director of Hoosiers for a Commonsense Health Plan, presented facts and figures about our ailing health care system which, despite being the most expensive, lags behind that of other countries. He spoke in support of universal health care to address the needs of the 750,000 uninsured in Indiana alone. For more information, visit the organization's Web site at [www.hchp.info](http://www.hchp.info).

Eric Wright, Ph.D., a member of the IU Workgroup on Healthcare Reform, explained how an FSSA-commissioned think tank he's leading is investigating ways to provide universal-type coverage in Indiana. For more information on the workgroup, visit [www.healthcarereform.iupui.edu](http://www.healthcarereform.iupui.edu).

## **Breaking bad lifestyle habits**

This workshop focused on promoting a healthy lifestyle for one's physical, mental and emotional well-being. Presenters from the Center for Youth and Adults with Conditions of Childhood (CYACC) discussed how the nation's Healthy People 2010 plan can help people with disabilities ensure a healthy lifestyle.

Smoking, stress triggers and successful cessation were major topics of discussion during the workshop, especially given the Centers for Disease Control's recent release of information about the high percentage of smoking among people with disabilities. Other topics included eating practices, weight loss, physical activity, caffeine, sleep and hygiene.

For more information on healthy lifestyles, contact CYACC at (317) 278-0061 (voice) or e-mail [cyacc@iupui.edu](mailto:cyacc@iupui.edu).

## **Helping crime victims with disabilities**

People with disabilities are not only more vulnerable to crime, but often face additional problems in dealing with the police and the justice system after being victimized.

Advocates from Fifth Freedom and Indiana Protection & Advocacy Services shared the following personal safety recommendations:

- DO stay alert and tuned in to your surroundings.
- DO send a message that you are calm, confident and know where you are going.
- DO trust your instincts and leave somewhere if you do not feel comfortable.
- Be realistic about your limitations and avoid places or situations that put you at risk.

For more information on these organizations, visit [www.fifthfreedom.org](http://www.fifthfreedom.org) and [www.in.gov/ipas](http://www.in.gov/ipas).

## **Update on Medicaid Waiver services**

Presenters from the Arc of Indiana and Self Advocates of Indiana took workshop attendees back to the basics, explaining that Medicaid Waivers provide support services in the homes of people with disabilities who meet eligibility requirements. They also discussed Indiana's Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waiver. Previously, Medicaid long-term care services were only available to assist people living in institutions.

Attendees also received information about new Waiver priorities now available, including DD (Developmentally Disabled) Waivers for caregivers 80 years of age and older and a Support Services Waiver (SSW) for children finished with school and seeking employment.

Detailed information about Indiana's Medicaid Waiver Programs can be found on the Council's Web site at [www.in.gov/gpcpd](http://www.in.gov/gpcpd) by clicking on "Publications."

## **Your voice in government**

Jim Dickson, J.D., of the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), leads voter participation drives for people with disabilities. During this workshop, he said when encouraging people to vote, one must decide if he or she wants to just complain or join a movement for change. When you become part of a larger group, your voice — and your vote — can be heard.

For more information, sign up for the AAPD's Disability Vote Project listserv by e-mailing your name, mailing address and e-mail address to [aapdvote@earthlink.net](mailto:aapdvote@earthlink.net).

Julia Vaughn with the Citizens Action Coalition also noted during the workshop that since one in five Hoosiers has a disability, this makes for a potent political presence. She stressed the

importance of working your lists, calling and mailing, and ensuring people arrive at the polls and are knowledgeable about the candidates.

For more information on the presidential candidates' responses to questions about disability issues, visit [www.aapd-dc.org](http://www.aapd-dc.org) and click on "2008 Presidential Election Action Center."