

On Target

Informing Indiana About
Disability Issues

April 2007 | Volume 20 Number 4 | Informing Indiana About Disability Issues

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

Housing, voting discussed at Disability Policy Seminar

The 2007 Disability Policy Seminar not only gave Indiana advocates a chance to meet key government officials, it also provided them with updates on a number of disability issues. In addition to restoration of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) - which were highlighted in the April "On Target" - other key issues discussed were housing and voting rights for people with disabilities.

Across the nation, people with developmental and related disabilities face a crisis in the availability of accessible housing. Approximately 750,000 people with developmental disabilities live with aging parents (one of whom is over age 65). For people who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices, finding housing with even basic accessibility features is difficult.

The housing affordability gap for people with disabilities continues to worsen. According to the soon-to-be-released "Priced Out in 2006," on a national average, 4 million Americans with disabilities who rely on monthly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) of \$632 for all their basic needs would have to pay 113 percent of their entire monthly income to rent a modest one-bedroom unit - up from 109 percent in 2004. For the first time, the cost of renting a smaller studio/efficiency rental unit also rose above monthly SSI income (100.09 percent in 2006).

Advocates are asking Congress to make housing a priority.

Director According to them, the two most important initiatives are a national housing trust fund to increase the production of affordable, accessible housing and increasing funding and protecting the integrity of affordable federal housing programs.

Christine
Dahlberg
*Associate
Director*

Paul
Shankland
*Grants
Manager*

Programs currently in place include Section 811 and Section 8. Section 811 is the Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities Program, which provides housing for people with physical or developmental disabilities, or people with chronic mental illness who are 18 years of age or older and have very low incomes (at or below 50 percent of the area median income). Section 811 participants may live in supportive housing units developed and owned by non-profit organizations, or they may receive tenant-based rental assistance that helps them rent decent and safe housing in the private rental market.

Section 8 vouchers, which are administered by public housing agencies, are designed to bridge the gap between income and rent by paying the difference between what a very low-income household can afford and modest rental housing costs. People with disabilities comprise approximately 30 percent of Section 8 voucher holders.

In addition to housing, other Disability Policy Seminar content focused on civil rights and voting. In 2002, Congress passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) in response to the difficulties encountered in the 2000 elections.

The Act has many components and affects each part of the voting process, from voting machines to provisional ballots and from voter registration to poll worker training. These components help ensure that all citizens will be able to cast votes, and that those votes will be counted.

Much of the focus in the disability community has been on accessible polling places and machines, which were due to be in place nationwide by Jan. 1, 2006. After the 2006 election, however, it was reported that more than half the states had failed to meet either the accessible machine or accessible polling places provision. Since the 2006 election,

a number of voting-related bills have been or are being considered.

Sen. Barack Obama's (D-Ill.) S. 453, the Deceptive Practices and Voter Intimidation Prevention Act of 2007, would ensure criminal penalties for campaigns, organizations or individuals that use intimidation or disinformation to stand between eligible voters and their right to vote. The bill would both criminalize deceptive practices and give voters a private right of action to seek relief from deceptive practices, as well as requiring Department of Justice involvement in implementation and enforcement of the Act.

In addition to S. 453, Rep. Rush Holt (D-N.J.) has introduced House Rule 811, the Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act of 2007, focusing largely on a requirement for a voter-verified paper ballot for every vote in the country. Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) is also expected to introduce a significant piece of voting reform legislation, as is Sen. John Ensign (R-Nev.), both calling for paper ballots, amid a number of other reforms.

The position of the disability community is in favor of S. 453 and primarily remains neutral on the requirement for paper ballots/paper trails, but insists the paper ballots/paper trails be fully accessible.

To view the PowerPoint presentations for each session and issue-specific fact sheets, visit www.thearc.org, click on "Public Policy," then click on 2007 "Disability Policy Seminar."

Youths honored in essay contest

At United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Indiana's (UCPAGI) annual awards luncheon March 30, six Indiana students were honored for their award-winning entries to the Attitude Essay Contest. The contest, which is also sponsored by the Governor's Council, celebrated its 12th year of raising disability awareness by highlighting "the last barrier for people with disabilities" - attitudes.

First- and second-place winners in three categories - third

and fourth grades, fifth and sixth grades, and seventh and eighth grades - were given cash prizes and Attitude bears. All those who submitted essays received certificates of participation.

For more information on the contest or UCPAGI, call (317) 632-3561 (voice) or (800) 723-7620 (toll free). You may also e-mail casemanager@ucpaindy.org or visit UCPAGI's Web site at www.ucpaindy.org.

DPC helps navigate federal Web sites

Web sites provided by the Disability Policy Collaboration (DPC) can be helpful for educating the disability community on federal public policy. Navigating these sites, however, can be difficult. To help visitors make the best use of these Web sites, the DPC has provided instructions for each.

The Federal Register

The Federal Register, available at www.archives.gov/federal-register, is an online publication that provides rules, proposed rules, notices of federal agencies and organizations, executive orders and other presidential documents. From the home page, click on the link "Today's Federal Register" below the heading "Government Actions" on the right side of the screen. Click on the "Contents" page to find items for viewing and printing in either "Text" or "PDF" format. Past and next-day issues of the Federal Register can also be found under the "Government Actions" heading.

Thomas

Thomas, at thomas.loc.gov, is a Web site containing legislative information from the Library of Congress. The primary function of this site is to review bills, resolutions and other legislative information. Visitors can search Thomas by using keywords, a bill's number and/or the House member's or senator's name.

Users can also view House and Senate activities, the Congressional Record, Congressional schedules and

calendars, committee information, Presidential nominations and treaties on Thomas. The Congressional Record is accessed by clicking on "Congressional Record Latest Daily Digest" under the "Current Activity" heading from the home page. Federal appropriations information is located by clicking on "Appropriation Bills" under the "Find More Legislation" heading from the home page.

Public Laws

The U.S. Government Printing Office's GPOAccess Web site provides information on current public laws and can be accessed at www.access.gpo.gov/nara/publaw/109publ.html.

A list of public laws is available in both "Text" and "PDF" formats.

Summer camps offer fun

With the end of the school year just around the corner, it's time to start planning summer activities. Summer camps offer educational and developmental activities that provide a great learning experience in a fun environment.

Although there are many disability-focused summer camps in Indiana, children may also benefit from attending an inclusive camp with children who do not have disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements apply to all programs offered to the public, including summer camps and programs for children. Under the ADA, children with disabilities must be given an equal opportunity to participate in a camp's programs and services. If you have questions related to the ADA and summer camps, call The Great Lakes ADA Center at (312) 413-1407 (voice/TTY).

According to the American Camping Association, Inc. (ACA), there are several things parents can do to prepare their children for a summer camp experience. First, parents should prepare for camp with their children. If a child feels like part of the process, he or she may be more likely to have a positive camp experience. Second, parents should encourage their children to express feelings of uneasiness

about going away. Talking about the feelings and expressing confidence in their ability to be away from home may be helpful. Third, parents should have reasonable expectations. Every child may experience high and low points, so encourage children to have a realistic view of camp without the pressure to "succeed."

Also according to the ACA, parents of children with disabilities may want to visit an inclusive camp before enrollment to assess whether or not the camp is a good fit for their child. Parents should ask specifics about the camp programs, to see if the schedule has too many or too few activities for their child. After enrolling their children, parents should equip camp administration with any instructions and information that will be useful, along with needed medications.

Parents should also ask what the camp can and cannot provide in terms of special supports, caregivers, etc. A camper-to-counselor ratio may be a good indicator. Basically, the more information a parent has, the easier it is for him or her to make a decision that works best for the child. For more information or to find a list of camps near you, visit www.acacamps.org.

As for programs for children with disabilities, Camp Red Cedar in Fort Wayne offers several programs for children both with and without disabilities, where the two intermingle during some activities to encourage an inclusive environment, according to staff member Carrie Perry. Activities include arts and crafts, nature activities and, new to the program this year, mind and body wellness activities.

"Summer camps give children with disabilities the opportunity to do things that other kids get to do," Perry said.

Camp Riley, located at Bradford Woods in Martinsville, offers an accessible environment, including hiking trails, pontoon boats and a climbing wall. Activities encourage a sense of independence, self-determination and self-advocacy that allow children to succeed beyond their own expectations,

according to staff member Shay Dawson.

For information on these camps and others for children with disabilities, visit www.insource.org/Camp2006.htm. Or, call IN*SOURCE at (800) 332-4433 (toll-free).

Making technology easier to use

The world of communication technology is moving ahead at full speed, and the new national Coalition of Organizations for Accessible Technology (COAT) is making sure that people with disabilities aren't left behind. Evolving Internet technologies such as high-speed broadband and wireless services can be helpful for people with disabilities, enabling more independence, integration and privacy. However, these tools aren't always user-friendly.

The new coalition will advocate for legislative and regulatory safeguards to ensure that digital- and Internet-based technologies are designed to be accessible for people with disabilities. COAT consists of 45 national, regional and community-based organizations that work to ensure people with disabilities can enjoy emerging communication technologies that are affordable and usable.

COAT hopes to achieve equal access for people with disabilities in the 21st century. They plan to reach this target by pushing for provisions to the Communications Act to extend existing relay service obligations and Decoder Circuitry Act so closed captions are available on more transmitting devices. They also hope to make emergency information more accessible through digital technology and increase the number of people with disabilities using high-speed broadband Internet services.

For more information on the issues, visit www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2006/discrimination.htm.

Conference dates confirmed

The 2007 Indiana Conference for People with Disabilities will be held Wednesday, Nov. 28 and Thursday, Nov. 29. Due to

renovation at the Westin, this year's events will be held at the Hyatt hotel in downtown Indianapolis. Look to future issues of "On Target" for more information.

Of Note

Updated toll-free guide now available

A revised version of the Council's toll-free resource guide, which lists contact information for disability-related organizations statewide, is now available at www.in.gov/gpcpd/publications. To receive a paper copy, call (317) 232-7770 (voice) or e-mail bwade@gpcpd.com.

Community Spirit Award nominations due June 5

Remember to submit nominations by June 5 for the Council's Community Spirit Awards, which are awarded at the annual conference. The Distinguished Leadership Awards recognize one person with a disability and one parent or guardian of a child with a disability who are honored for extraordinary contributions to disability advocacy. Exceptional Disability Awareness Month campaigns will be recognized with two awards, one that recognizes an individual and one that recognizes a group/organization whose exemplary DAM 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.

Indiana employment resource directory

SHARE Network Indiana is a free, online, statewide resource directory created to help Hoosiers find jobs, keep jobs or obtain better jobs. Although SHARE Network is not an employment service and does not directly provide services to the public, it does offer an online database of resources available to the public that can be used to help meet employment goals. The network is sponsored by the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, the Department of Workforce Development and the Department of Correction, in collaboration with the United States Department of Labor. Visit the network at

www.in.gov/ofbci/share.

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.

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

Web site: www.state.in.us/gpcpd