

Disability Advocacy Collaborative Bulletin

Disability Rights is a Civil Rights Issue

October 2004

Please relay this information to your membership including constituents who do not have e-mail access. Make this available in large print, tape and for others who have difficulty accessing information. View and Print this Bulletin in [RTF format](#) (compatible with most word processing software).

If you want something to appear in the next edition send it to me at jayne@kleinmanconsulting.com or ijk1009@hotmail.com or Jayne Kleinman, 55 Corrigan Ave., Meriden, CT 06451, 203-238-9391

ADDRESS CORRECTIONS AND REMOVALS:

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Calendar of Events

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Event</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Sponsor</u> | <u>Contact</u> |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Oct. 14 11:15 am – 3 pm | The Americans with Disabilities Act Coalition – Tenth Annual Meeting | The Farmington Club, Farmington | ADA Coalition | Carolyn Newcomb – 860-823-1898 or Candace Low 860-523- 5021 or email clowindun@aol.com |
| Oct. 15 8:00 am - 10:30 am | “Bright Lights: Stars of Achievement” | CCSU Keynote Speaker Tom Clark, Life Project, Inc. | Governor’s Coalition for Youth with Disabilities | GCYD, Box 370233, West Hartford, CT 06137 |
| Oct. 16 | Mandatory voter registration sessions in all towns | Statewide | Secretary of the State | 860-508-6100 or 1-800- 540-3764 |
| Oct. 17 11:00 am - 2:00 pm | National MS Society, Greater CT Chapter Annual Meeting | Rocky Hill Marriott | National MS Society, Greater CT Chapter | 860-953-0601 www.ctnmss.org |
| Oct. 17-19 | AAMR X Region Conference Quality of Services | Mystic, CT | AAMR X | Terry Macy 203-458- 8532 ext. 14 |
| Oct. 16, 19 | Voter Registration Drives “Every Vote Counts” | Various locations around the state | CT Votes | Minaren Bozeman 860-727-1157 |
| Oct. 19 | Voter Registration Deadline | Statewide | Registrars of Voters | |
| Oct. 20 | Deaf Focus Group | | Disability Network of Eastern CT | Adele Wise 860-889-3501 |
| Oct. 21 6:00-8:30 pm | Resource Expo | Best Western East Windsor | Allied Rehabilitation Centers | elamontagne@allied group.org 860-741-3701 |
| Oct. 24 12 – 4 pm | Tribute and Celebration of the life of Regina DeMarasse | Manchester Community College | | George Ducharme or Pat Beeman – 860-512- 2789 |
| Oct. 26 Tues. 7-8 pm | The Road to Recovery-A relevant and irreverent look at mental illness | Groton Senior Center | The Second Step Players | Eileen Cicchese victor_j_cicchese@sbcg lobal.net |

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| Oct. 30 8:30 am - 3:30 pm | People First of CT Annual Conference | Bristol Radisson Inn | People First | Jean Bowen at WeCAHR 203-792- 3540 advozealot@aol.com |
| Nov. 2 Nov. 10 7:30 am – 5:00 pm | ELECTION DAY! Current Trends in Aging and Disability Issues | statewide Radisson Hotel Cromwell | Nat'l Assn of Social Workers, CT Chapter & CT Systems Change Grant AAPD | 860-257-8066 www.naswct.org |
| Oct. 20 | Disability Mentoring Day | Nationwide | AAPD | www.nmd-aapd.org or call 1-800-840-8844 (V/TTY) |

**"Vote as if your life depended upon it —
Because it does!"
Justin Dart**

Many political observers believe that this coming election will have a profound impact on the future direction of public policy in the United States. Since one of the mottos of the independent living movement is "nothing about us without us," it is essential for us to be participants rather than bystanders at this decisive moment. We need to mobilize our community and demonstrate the power of voters with disabilities!

Disability Advocacy Collaborative Takes One More Step Forward

After running a very successful voter education campaign over the last four months, the Disability Advocacy Collaborative took a leap forward at an open meeting September 30 in Wallingford. Nearly thirty individuals, representing more than eleven disability organizations, met at the Wallingford Parks and Recreation Department to discuss the organization's "next steps".

Elanah Sherman, representing the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) project at the Office of Protection and Advocacy, reminded the organizations present of the various deadlines coming up between the end of September and Election Day on November 2. The importance of registering new voters was stressed, as was encouraging people to get to the polls on November 2.

Jayne Kleinman discussed her role as editor of the Collaborative's publication "The Disability Advocacy Collaborative Bulletin" and encouraged those present to send her notices of upcoming events as well as items of general interest for inclusion in the Bulletin. She plans to get the publication out on a monthly basis. At this time, it is not possible to send out hard copies of the Bulletin to folks without e-mail, but Jayne would be willing to work with a volunteer who might take on this task (anyone interested?).

Stan Kosloski reported that the Collaborative has received a grant from the DD Council that will enable the organization to continue to progress by offering a series of regionally based self-advocacy training workshops next year. The workshops will be the organizing vehicle which will form the foundation for a large scale Disability Convention in the fall of 2006, the time at which we will elect our Governor and other state constitutional officers.

Stan also discussed the evolution of the Collaborative's mailing list and noted that upwards of 140 advocacy organizations and groups have been identified as potential members. All identified disability advocacy organizations will be asked to sign up as official members over the next 4-5 months.

The discussion then turned to the following organizational issues:

- The consensus of the group was that the success of the effort would be determined by the strength of regional groups that would need to be formed; these groups must be cross disability, ethnically diverse, and intergenerational (include young people and elders with disabilities)
- Stan and Jayne have been meeting with a core group to work on the voter education initiative, and they would like to continue to use such a group as a resource in the development of the Collaborative; representatives from the

regional groups will be added to the core group as the regional initiatives are developed

- Robin Wood reported that nine self-advocates, recently hired by DMR, will be researching self-advocacy training curricula, and would be glad to share the results of their work with the Collaborative
- The American Association of Persons with Disabilities (AAPD) has conducted a survey on the position of the presidential candidates on disability issues and links will be provided to those on the Collaborative's mailing list:
<http://www.aapd-dc.org/campaign04/bushondis.html>
<http://www.aapd-dc.org/campaign04/kerryondis.html>
- Strategies will need to be developed 1) to ensure ethnic diversity in the work of the Collaborative, and 2) to reach out and identify individuals who are isolated from the disability rights movement and support their inclusion at the regional level
- The time of meetings at the regional level was discussed, and the consensus was that evening and week-end meetings would be necessary to support the participation of people not employed by a disability organization
- The role that state disability agencies might play in the development of the Collaborative was discussed, and it was noted that the focus should be on how they can support the participation in the Collaborative by consumers of the agencies' services

Disability Advocacy Collaborative Background

Problem Statement: Starting in the early fall of 2003, a small group of individuals began meeting to determine the feasibility of developing a new advocacy initiative in the state of Connecticut. At that time a number of state agency disability leaders were retiring, and the state legislature's Program Review and Investigations Committee was considering a proposal to merge several disability agencies into one super-agency.

Meetings continued over several months with larger groups of advocates and the following needs were identified:

- We must improve communication between and among the various advocacy organizations
- We must create a more unified voice among disability advocacy groups, which would result in a stronger political power base
- We must enhance support for broad based advocacy issues
- We must do a better job of educating the legislature
- We must include youth and elders in disability advocacy strategies
- We must include individuals with disabilities and families not currently involved in disability advocacy, with an emphasis on grass roots organizing and leadership development

- **We must encourage passion and enthusiasm in the promotion of disability rights**

The concept of a Disability Advocacy Collaborative was therefore born and the above bullets became the Problem Statement the Collaborative would address.

Summary of the Initiative: The newly formed Disability Advocacy Collaborative proposes to revitalize the disability rights movement in Connecticut by pulling together advocacy organizations under the umbrella of a “collaborative” structure. The Collaborative, which will be in place by the end of this calendar year, has been designed to take place in three phases: 1) a concentration on voter education and voter registration this year, 2) a series of regional cross-disability self-advocacy training workshops in year 2 (2005) and 3) the big event - a large scale disability convention in the fall of 2006, which will be the next year we will elect state constitutional officers (i.e., Governor, Attorney General, Treasurer, Comptroller, Secretary of State).

For 2005, the Collaborative has received funding (\$27,970) from the Council on Developmental Disabilities to organize a series of cross-disability self-advocacy workshops that will be offered in six regions of the state from June – December. The outcome of these workshops will be a solid foundation for a Disability Convention that will be held in the fall of 2006, the next election year for our state constitutional officers (i.e., Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, etc.).

The DD Council funding will support the development of the organization by enabling it to 1) complete the compiling of a comprehensive disability advocacy contact list, 2) secure the support (i.e., sign on) of all identified disability advocacy groups, 3) identify self advocacy training curricula that currently exist (e.g., Advocacy Unlimited, Partners in Policymaking, People First), 4) develop a curriculum for regional, cross-disability, self-advocacy workshops, be culturally and ethnically diverse, and include families as well as people with disabilities, and 5) plan and implement a series of self-advocacy workshops in each of the six regions of the state.

The work of the Collaborative will be directed by Stan Kosloski, recently retired Assistant Director of the State Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, and currently a Community Facilitator (part-time) for the University Center on Disabilities at the University of Connecticut Health Center, and Jayne Kleinman, a long time disability rights advocate and the principal behind Kleinman Consulting, LLC.

The primary outcome of this community organizing project will be a strong, respected, and effective cross-disability rights organization, fully capable of advocating the critical issues facing people with disabilities and families.

Don't Forget to Vote – Nov. 2, 2004

From the Press of Atlantic City, Sept. 19, 2004

ATLANTIC CITY - Arriving in wheelchairs adorned with American flags and shirts that read "Disabled and proud," more than 1000 people gathered to hear former U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno and other speakers Saturday [September 18, 2004] at the first national disabilities convention [held] at the Atlantic City Convention Center.

Although the audience gave Reno a standing ovation and some audience members cheered for Bush during other speeches, many speakers and delegates expressed frustration with both candidates [for not addressing disability concerns].

The New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities sponsored the event as an alternative political convention where people with disabilities could hear speakers from both presidential campaigns talk about disability issues. However, Doro Bush Koch, President Bush's sister and planned speaker for the Republicans, could not attend.

The keynote speaker was Bob Kafka, the national organizer of ADAPT, a disability-rights group that [last year] organized a 150-mile wheelchair march from the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia to Washington, D.C.,to support Medicaid for people living in community settings. He said he was angry that both political conventions ignored disability issues. Kafka said that the 35 million disabled people in the country, along with their families and caretakers, represent a voting bloc of about 70 million people. He asked why politicians focus on "soccer moms," "NASCAR dads" and numerous other subsets of the population but slight people with disabilities. "Just hugging disabled people is not going to cut it anymore. If I see Sen. Kerry hug Max Cleland one more time on TV," he said, trailing off. He then added, "We do not need to be hugged; we need candidates to talk about the issues." (For a complete copy of the article go to www.pressofatlanticcity.com).

Presidential Views

Compare the presidential candidates' responses to the American Association of Persons with Disabilities (AAPD) questionnaire on disability issues:

<http://www.aapd-dc.org/campaign04/bushondis.html> and

<http://www.aapd-dc.org/campaign04/kerryondis.html>

Deaf Focus Group in Norwich invites all to attend monthly meetings

On September 15, 2004, Stan Kosloski spoke about the development of the Collaborative and voter education issues to twenty individuals with hearing disabilities at a monthly meeting of the Deaf Focus Group in Norwich. The Focus Group is a joint venture of the Disabilities Network of Eastern Connecticut and the American School for the Deaf. The next meeting of the group will be October 20 at

6:30 pm. Lisa Reynolds from the Norwich Senior Center will be in attendance to discuss the presidential issues for the 2004 election. The Deaf focus group welcomes individuals that are deaf or have other disabilities and their family and friends.

For more information contact Adele Wise at 860-889-3501.

Position Announcement **ADA Coalition Project Director**

A Hartford based private, non-profit coalition seeks a committed, dynamic project director. The 30-hour a week position with the Americans with Disabilities Act Coalition of Connecticut (ADACC) requires an individual who has in-depth knowledge of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The candidate must have excellent written and oral communication skills; experience with non-profit management; strong grant writing and resource development skills; ability to provide training and technical assistance on disability related legislation and regulations; experience in developing marketing, legislative and advocacy strategies; ability to achieve organizational goals and objectives; and an ability to build alliances with disability advocates and ADA covered entities. S/he must have a Bachelor's degree or extensive background in the above required qualifications. Personal experience with disability is preferred. Minimum travel required. EEO/AA employer.

Interested parties should send a cover letter and resume, postmarked on or before October 26, 2004, to Evelyn Oliver Knight, Chair, ADACC Search Committee at BRS/DSS, 25 Sigourney Street, 11th Floor, Hartford, CT 06106.

Other News

Closed Captioning Petition

Eight Years after the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Gaps Remain in Analog and Digital Captioning

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 8, 2004 - The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) is lending its support to Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc. (TDI) in its joint filing, with other national organizations serving deaf and hard of hearing Americans, of a petition to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

“The FCC needs to make it fully clear that provision of inferior quality of captioning is discriminatory and exclusionary” said Andrew J. Imparato, AAPD

President and CEO. “The FCC must emphasize clearly that full access to television for all viewers is a top priority”.

As part of the advocacy organizations' ongoing efforts to promote more consumer involvement with the FCC and other government agencies, AAPD encourages all television viewers who use closed captioning to share their own personal experiences with the FCC, and to file comments in support of this Petition with the FCC and ask them to improve captioning quality for all.

In all comments related to the Petition, please be sure to include this docket number: RM-11065 and mention the Captioning Petition filed on July 23, 2004. You may either email your comments to fccinfo@fcc.gov or fax them to 1- 866-418-0232. When citing problems with quality of a specific program, be sure to include the following information: program, date(s) and times, channel (use names not numbers), and your city and state. Please send a copy of your comments to TDI at info@tdi-online.org or FAX 301- 589-3797.

RFP on Parent-focused Training on Special Ed
\$50,000 in funds for parent-focused training on special education

The Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities has announced the availability of up to \$50,000 in funds for parent-focused training on special education. All Council funded initiatives must promote the full inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in community life, in accordance with its State Plan and the Federal Developmental Disabilities Act.

The Council is looking for new, creative initiatives that would promote advocacy, capacity building and systems change. Applications are now being accepted only for parent-focused training on special education. Initiatives must promote the full inclusion of all students with developmental disabilities, with appropriate supports, in general education classrooms of their neighborhood public schools. Individuals, as well as private and public agencies, are encouraged to respond to the request for proposals (RFP).

If you should have any questions on how to apply for a grant, please contact Mary-Ann Langton, Disability Policy Specialist, at the Council Office. You may reach her by phone at: (860) 418-6160 V, (860) 418-6172 TTY, or 1-800-653-1134. You may email her at: mary.ann.langton@po.state.ct.us. You may also download this document from the Council's web site at: <http://www.state.ct.us/ctcdd>.

CMS Waivers and "Money Follows the Person" Concept
A Note from Sheldon Taubman, Esq.

On August 17, 2004 the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) issued another of its "Dear State Medicaid Director" letters (dated 8/17/04, SMDL #04-005). This letter is an important handle that advocates can use to persuade state Medicaid agencies to move institutionalized persons with disabilities into the community. The letter may be helpful when the State agency offers excuses for why it cannot move disabled people into the community. CMS says it can move them into the community and can do it under existing rules.

[The] CMS [letter points out that the agency] has "supported states in implementation of the principles of money follows the person (MFP)... We are committed to continuing to assist states in implementing the principles of MFP under existing authorities."

Money Follows the Person, CMS continues, is "a system of flexible financing for long-term services and supports that enables available funds to move with the individual.... It is a market-based approach that gives individuals more choice over the location and type of services they receive. A system in which money follows the person is also one that can incorporate the philosophy of self-direction and individual control in state policies and programs." CMS then discusses two critical issues that many State Medicaid directors use as excuses: Waiver capacity and cost neutrality. CMS stated "States may request to amend their current HCBS waiver program to include additional participants.... Most states have found that in the aggregate [not the individual-based cost neutrality] waiver programs continue to demonstrate cost neutrality even with the addition of waiver participants."

The letter continues "States that implement MFP strategies will begin to achieve a more equitable balance between the proportion of total Medicaid long-term support expenditures [in the community and institutions.] We encourage states to reduce nursing facility beds to assist a state in rebalancing its long term care service system, but this is not a requirement."

What advocates should do:

- 1. This is only a CMS "Dear Medicaid Director" letter; nothing will happen unless you use the CMS letter in your struggles with your State Medicaid agency and your Governor. The letter eliminates your States' excuses.**
- 2. Make your State amend their waivers to make sure they are using the "aggregate" cost-neutrality basis.**
- 3. Make your States reduce the number of nursing home beds. Nearly every state has an excess of beds.**

4. There should be no waiting list for waiver services. As CMS has suggested, just have your state increase the number of participants in its waiver programs. This process is not difficult.
5. Has your State developed a Money Follows the Person program? Why not? After this CMS letter, what could be their excuse?

"Disability Advocates Oppose Bush Psychiatric Testing Plan"
White House May Be Planning Nationwide Program to Diagnose, Drug Kids

[For more information on President Bush's proposal, visit http://www.mindfreedom.org/mindfreedom/bush_psychiatry.shtml. Mind Freedom has collected a series of articles on the issue and provides numerous links. The following article from The New Standard News <http://newstandardnews.net> is somewhat dated but captures the core issues effectively]

A plan by the Bush administration to test the nation's public school population for mental disorders and treat them with controversial drugs has raised an alarm among some medical science watchdogs and members of the mental health community. The White House is expected to announce a mental health and disability initiative that recommends the screening and treatment of the country's K-12 students. The plan is based on a Texas program a government whistleblower has called "a Trojan horse" for pharmaceutical companies.

The plan is derived from findings by the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, a committee of doctors and mental health care professionals established in 2002. Published by the New Freedom Initiative (NFI), the report recommends states start testing for and treating mental disorders as early as possible, focusing on students who can be easily accessed in the public school system.

The American Psychiatric Association, which itself receives some funding from drug companies, has hailed the commission's conclusions as a sound preventative approach to dealing with mental illness. Critics of the plan, however, point to strong connections between the New Freedom Commission on Mental Health and the pharmaceutical industry, and they contend that the plan will be a financial boon to drug companies while compromising the mental health of the nation's children. Holistic mental health advocate David Oaks, director of Mind Freedom, a coalition of groups that campaigns for people diagnosed with psychiatric disabilities, says the issues of child mental health are not only more complicated than just testing for disorders and putting kids on drugs, but also colored by powerful societal pressures and millions of dollars in drug revenues. Oaks says the president's plan amounts to little more than "No child left undrugged."

"Quality – from three perspectives: the person served (& family),

the agency providing the services, and the funder”

October 17th, 18th, and 19th at the Mystic Hilton in Mystic CT.

Sponsored by AAMR Region X, this is a major conference on the subject of “quality” in disability services. It presents a unique opportunity for learning about the national perspective on the subject as well as regional (New England) approaches that have proven successful. This conference offers a unique blend of three perspectives on the subject. Opening and closing panels will be made up of representatives of all three perspectives.

Self advocates and family members from Connecticut and Rhode Island will define their own sense of what quality means to the consumer. Providers from nearly every state in AAMR Region X will present their latest quality initiatives - concentrating on translating theory to practice - from new consumer surveys, values based policies and procedures, direct support professionals presentations, and what quality means to students and educational systems. Contact Terry Macy, Ph.D. 203-458-8532 at ext. 14 for more details.

"Lack of U.S. Coverage of Paralympics Could Hurt U.S. Bid"

Here's a sobering news report. The U.S. likes to pride itself in its support for disability rights. And yet the U.S. media have demonstrated little interest in covering Paralympics events. As the International Olympic Committee evaluates future locations for Olympic games, the U.S.'s lack of TV coverage of this year's Paralympics may hurt New York's bid for hosting the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics games. – AAPD 9-22-04

**Federal Transit Administration's (FTA)
Section 5310 capital grant program.**

The Connecticut Department of Transportation is responsible for managing the federal 5310 capital grant program that comes into the state. The program provides capital funds to buy vehicles to assist in meeting the transportation needs of elderly persons and persons with disabilities where public transportation services are unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate.

Eligible grant recipients are Private Nonprofit Organizations or Eligible Public Bodies which usually have specific clientele to transport. Only private nonprofit organizations registered with the Secretary of the State's Office and eligible public bodies are qualified to apply to the State for funding under the Section 5310 program. Eligible public bodies are defined as those certifying to the governor that no nonprofit corporations or associations are readily available in an area to provide service and that are approved by the State to coordinate services for elderly persons

and persons with disabilities. The Section 5310 program is funded 80% by the Federal Transit Administration with 20% funded by the awarded recipient.

Any organization interested in obtaining an application for this program or who would like more information related to the Section 5310 program, please contact Ellen Lawrence at ConnDOT at 860-594-2912.

RESOURCES

ADA Library on-line

A new on-line library of ADA documents is now available on the Internet. Developed by Meeting the Challenge Inc. of Colorado Springs with funding from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, this website makes available more than 3,400 documents related to the ADA, including those issued by Federal agencies with responsibilities under the law. It also offers extensive document collections on other disability rights laws and issues. The portal can be found at <http://www.ADAportal.org>

Benefits Check Up

The National Council on the Aging has created the one place to learn about federal, state, local and private programs you might be eligible for. "It's simple. It's fast. And it's free." Go to BenefitsCheckup.org. You do not need to give your name, address or Social Security number.

Connecticut Lifespan Respite Coalition

"Working to establish quality, coordinated respite services in Connecticut" To find out more, contact: ctrespite@sbcglobal.net, 860-297-2572, or on-line at www.ctrespite.org.

Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center

The Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center, Inc. (CPAC) is a statewide nonprofit organization that offers information and support to families of children with any disability or chronic illness, age birth through 21. Help is provided to understand special education laws, to identify a child's educational needs, to communicate more

effectively with professionals and how to participate in the educational decision making process. Contact them at 860-739-3089 V/TDD or toll-free at 1-800-445-CPAC.

Medicare Counseling and Information Available

Shiptalk.org offers one-on-one counseling and assistance to people on Medicare and their families. SHIPs are currently working with local groups to provide consumers with information about the Medicare discount card program and \$600 annual credit. The updated SHIP Web site makes it easier to locate local SHIPs. Simply go to www.shiptalk.org, click on "Find Counselor" and select a state and county.

Office of Protection and Advocacy's web-site updated

The Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (better known as "P and A") is an independent State agency created to safeguard and advance the civil and human rights of people with disabilities in Connecticut. Part of a nationwide network of protection and advocacy systems, P&A operates under both State and Federal legislative mandates to:

- provide information, referral, and advocacy services;
- pursue legal and administrative remedies on behalf of people with disabilities who experience disability-related discrimination;
- has authority to investigate selected complaints from people with disabilities and into allegations of abuse and neglect with respect to adults who have mental retardation (ages 18-59), and for people in psychiatric facilities; and,
- provide public education and training on disability issues and to inform policy makers about issues affecting people with disabilities.

You may reach the agency's updated web-site at: www.ct.gov/opapd/site/default.asp

Paralysis Resource Guide

The Christopher and Dana Reeve Paralysis Resource Center has published a 310 page comprehensive information tool for people with spinal cord injuries and related disorders. The guide (available in both English and Spanish) provides information about ALS, stroke, spina bifida, brain or spinal cord trauma, MS and other causes of disability. Individuals and organizations may obtain one free copy of each guide by visiting their website at paralysis.org or calling 1-800-539-7309 from 9 am -5 pm EST.

United Spinal Association

United Spinal Association is a membership organization that was incorporated in New York in 1947 under the name Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association (EPVA).

Until January of 2003, EPVA operated as a chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) and provided services to veterans with a spinal cord injury or disease, such as multiple sclerosis, poliomyelitis, or Lou Gehrig's disease. Beginning on January 5, 2004, EPVA is transitioning its name and operations to United Spinal Association.

United Spinal has expanded its mission of advocacy to all individuals with a spinal cord injury or disease, regardless of their age, gender, or veteran status. In doing so, United Spinal's commitment to America's veterans remains unaltered. The organization is simply extending its membership to include new segments of people that have very similar needs, and is undertaking a gradual expansion from a regional to a national organization.

How to find your federal Representatives and Senators

Go to www.congress.org. Find the box under the heading Write Elected Officials, type in your zip code and press the enter key. Then, when the names of your elected officials come on the screen, click your mouse on the word Info under the name of the elected official you want to contact. The telephone number will be listed on the page that comes up next.