



# Connecticut Disability Advocacy Collaborative Bulletin

“Enhancing the effectiveness of disability activism by organizing and empowering individuals, families, groups and organizations”

**Empowerment! Opportunity! Justice!**

**October-November 2006**

Need this newsletter in an alternative format?  
Please let us know.

To contact the Collaborative please e-mail: [collaborative@ct-dac.org](mailto:collaborative@ct-dac.org)  
or look on our website at [www.ct-dac.org](http://www.ct-dac.org)

**Other points of contact:**

Stan Kosloski, 860-635-0695 or [skosloski03@comcast.net](mailto:skosloski03@comcast.net)  
Jayne Kleinman, 203-631-4800 or [jjk1009@hotmail.com](mailto:jjk1009@hotmail.com)  
Larry Robinson, 203-335-7800 or [robinsonlarry2005@yahoo.com](mailto:robinsonlarry2005@yahoo.com).  
For archived Bulletins go to [www.kleinmanconsulting.com](http://www.kleinmanconsulting.com)

**In This Issue**

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Page</i>
October-November 2006 Calendar	See Attached
<b>In This Issue</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Disability Convention 2006 &amp; Other DAC News</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Deadline to Register to Vote, &amp; Candidates for key CT Offices</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>MFP Public Session, and Transportation News</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Heating Aid Funds, &amp; AU Event</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>News from and about P&amp;A &amp; DMR</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>BIAC event, Volunteers Available to Perform Home Repairs, &amp; Mental Health Forums</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Autism Conference, &amp; Down Syndrome Congress</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>ADA Workshop, Hiring Own Staff, People First Conference, and Position Opening at Department of Higher Ed</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CACLD News</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Seating Comfort Study, &amp; Long Term Care Needs Assessment</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>A New Web Based Tool, &amp; Articles Sought for Newsletter</b>	<b>12</b>

<b>Epilepsy and Elders, &amp; Giving Up Driving</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>CMS and motorized Wheelchairs, &amp; a New National Consumers/Survivors Organization is Formed</b>	<b>14</b>

**This Bulletin is supported by a grant that the Disability Advocacy Collaborative has received from the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities. In addition, in-kind support is being provided by the UConn Center on Disabilities, and Communitas, Inc. serves as the project's fiscal agent. To all three we extend our deep appreciation.**

### **Update on Disability Advocacy Collaborative Activities**

The Disability Convention sponsored by the Disability Advocacy Collaborative on September 16 was by all accounts a roaring success. Over 700 adults attended and there were at least 100 children who joined them. The highlights included:

- Participation of Democratic Gubernatorial candidate John DeStefano, Green Party Gubernatorial candidate Cliff Thornton, Democratic Senate candidate Ned Lamont, Green Party Senate candidate Ralph Ferrucci, Republican Congressional candidate Scott MacLean, Democratic Congressional candidate Joe Courtney, Democratic Secretary of State candidate Susan Bysiewicz, Democratic Attorney General candidate Richard Blumenthal, and state Democratic Senator Jonathan Harris.
- Participation by over 75 exhibitors, including public and private service agencies, private businesses, and disability advocacy groups.
- Announcement of the Disability Agenda adopted by the Collaborative, with Action Steps accompanying each of the six priority Issue Areas (Employment, Transportation, Housing, Health Care, Education, and Community Involvement).
- Distribution of a Convention Program, which included material about each exhibitor as well as useful information about disability resources in general and voting rights in particular.
- A workshop encouraging individuals with disabilities to run for public office, and a workshop on spirituality and wellness as they relate to disability
- Presentations by Kids on the Block and Sassy (personal support dog to Therese Nadeau)
- A wonderfully empowering keynote presentation by Greg Smith, the “Strength Coach”
- An opportunity to try out the new voting equipment which will be in use on November 7.

The Collaborative is enthused by the notification it will receive third year funding from the DD Council, beginning in January, 2007. The focus of activity for 2007 will be building the nine regional advocacy networks begun during the current and helping make them potent advocacy forces at the local level. The Collaborative also plans to have a more visible presence in the state legislature when it convenes in January for the 2007 session.

## **Hartford Region Activity**

The North Central Regional Advocacy Network of the Disability Advocacy Collaborative is sponsoring a three hour advocacy training workshop with Betty Gallo and Company on Tuesday, October 17 from 1 – 4 pm in the Hartford Room of the New Park Office and Conference Center. The facility is located at 151 New Park Avenue in Hartford. The workshop will offer an opportunity for people with disabilities and families to learn skills that allow them to effectively represent their own interest and needs within the community in which they live and/or at the state level with the state legislature and state agencies. Independence Unlimited is the organizing force behind the local Network, one of nine being created in the state. Contact person is IU Executive Director Candace Low, who can be reached at 860-523-5021 (V/TTY).

The Hartford based network will have its regular meeting on Monday, October 30 at 10 am in the same location. A light lunch will be provided. Anyone interested in getting involved with advocacy work in the Hartford area is welcomed to attend.

## **South West Corner Activity**

Carol Kana, organizer of the South West Regional Advocacy Network, reports that the Stamford Museum and Nature Center has just completed a ¼ mile trail that is covered with wooden planks to provide for wheelchair access. The project was funded by the Wheels in the Woods Foundation and Don Chiboucas of Fairfield. The site, located at 39 Scofieldtown Road in Stamford, is one of eight trails that have been developed in Connecticut.

## **Time is Running Out to Register to Vote!**

The deadline to register to vote in the November 7 election in Connecticut is October 31. Between now and the deadline, encourage family and friends who are not registered to vote to do so ASAP! Your city or town Registrar of Voters can give you voter registration forms. You can also get registration forms at many state and municipal agency offices, public libraries, and certain private agencies. Remember: every vote counts.

Note that if a voter has moved, he or she must register their new address. If a voter is not sure he or she is registered, a voter registration form should be filled out. When in doubt, fill it out!

For more information about the 2002 HAVA (Help America Vote Act) go to:  
[www.sots.ct.gov/ElectionsServices/HAVA/IntroHAVA.htm](http://www.sots.ct.gov/ElectionsServices/HAVA/IntroHAVA.htm) .

## **Candidates for Governor, U.S. Senate, and Congress**

(D = Democrat, R = Republican, I = Independent, G = Green Party, \* = Incumbent)

**Governor**

M. Jodi Rell (R)\*  
John DeStefano, Jr. (D)  
Scott Merrell (I)  
Cliff Thorton (G)

**United States Senate**

Joseph Lieberman (I)\*  
Ralph Ferrucci (G)  
Ned Lamont (D)  
Alan Schlesinger (R)

**United States House of Representatives - District 1**

John Larson (D)\*  
Scott MacLean (R)

**United States House of Representatives - District 2**

Joe Courtney (D)  
Rob Simmons (R)\*

**United States House of Representatives - District 3**

Rosa DeLauro (D)\*  
Daniel Sumrall (G)  
Joseph Vollano (R)

**United States House of Representatives - District 4**

Christopher Shays (R)\*  
Diane Farrell (D)  
Phil Maymin (L)  
Stephen Miller (G)

**United States House of Representatives - District 5**

Nancy Johnson, (R)\*  
Chris Murphy, (D)

To locate candidates for state Representative and state Senate, go to:  
[www.aarp.org/issues/state\\_elections/state\\_index.html?state\\_abbr=ct](http://www.aarp.org/issues/state_elections/state_index.html?state_abbr=ct)

**Important Stakeholder Meeting on MFP**

On Wednesday, October 25 the state Department of Social Services is holding a public comment session on its plans to submit a “Money Follows the Person” proposal to the federal government. The session will be held from 10 am- 4 pm at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. For more information contact Dawn Lambert at

**Transportation Options for People with Disabilities**

Last year at PATHS’ forums people with disabilities who use public transportation had an opportunity to share perspectives about what’s working and what isn’t. This year, PATHS is offering workshops around the state to help people with disabilities get

comfortable using public transportation and other services. Five workshops have already been held and one more is scheduled for October 25 (2-4 pm – Mansfield Senior Center).

A flyer with details about the workshop is posted on the website of the UConn Center on Disabilities ([www.uconnucedd.org](http://www.uconnucedd.org)). Please share with friends and colleagues, and post wherever possible.

To learn more and to request sign language interpreters or other accommodations, contact Angelo Fazio at [angfazio@uchc.edu](mailto:angfazio@uchc.edu) or 860-679-1589.

### **Public Transit 101: Beyond the Basics**

Public Transit 101: Beyond the Basics is a *free* 2-hour workshop designed to teach social services professionals about public transit. The Kennedy Center and local transit providers will provide information about accessing public transit and using tools such as the web to get needed information. The Kennedy Center will also present its nationally recognized travel training program. The workshop is a good opportunity for social workers and others to ask questions and give feedback to the local transit districts. To register or for further information please e-mail Ginger Fiore at [gfiore@kennedyctr.org](mailto:gfiore@kennedyctr.org) or call (203) 332-4535 x245.

The workshops will be offered on October 18, 2006 from 1-3 pm at the Burroughs Community Center, 2470 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport; October 24 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm at the Norwalk Transit District, 2470 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport; October 26 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm, Connecticut Transit, 26 Elm Court, Stamford; November 13, 1:00 – 3:00 pm, Meriden Public Library, 105 Miller St., Meriden; November 28, 1:00 – 3:00 pm, Regional Water Authority, 90 Sargent Dr., New Haven and December 1, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm, Regional Water Authority, 90 Sargent Dr. , New Haven.

### **Extra Winter Heating Aid for Low-Income Families**

On September 8 Governor Jodi Rell announced that Connecticut's home-heating assistance program will provide increased benefits to low-income families for the second straight winter. Families and individuals can call Infoline at 2-1-1 to be referred to the nearest application point.

The Governor has also designated a contingency heating assistance program for eligible households with incomes too high for the regular energy assistance program. Recipients can receive up to \$300 in basic benefits, as well as crisis assistance.

### **Advocacy Unlimited to Feature film “Tarnation”**

Advocacy Unlimited, a non-profit consumer-controlled organization whose mission it is to empower individuals in recovery from psychiatric disabilities, is sponsoring a presentation of the film “Tarnation” on November 28 at the Torp Theater on the CCSU

campus in New Britain. The film, which has won numerous national and international awards, is an autobiographical documentary depicting the lives of the Caouette family and their experiences with severe mental illness over three generations. The film's director, Jonathan Caouette, will be present to show the film and lead a discussion afterward. The event will run from 6:30 – 9:30 pm.

To obtain tickets (\$10), to become a sponsor, or to place an ad in an ad book, call 860-667-0460 or (toll free) 1-800-573-6929.

### **Change DMR's Name and Mission?**

The state Council on Developmental Disabilities has replaced its "Renaming the Department of Mental Retardation" blog ([www.ctcdd.org](http://www.ctcdd.org)) to "Change DMR's Name and Mission". The Council is considering proposing state legislation to change both the name (and mission) of the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) to the Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services. The public is invited to comment on the Council's draft proposal by responding to the blog. For more information contact Council Director Ed Preneta at [ed.preneta@po.state.ct.us](mailto:ed.preneta@po.state.ct.us).

### **P&A Authority to Investigate Abuse and Neglect in Schools**

Two separate U.S. Circuit Courts, including one involving a Connecticut case, backed the authority of Protection & Advocacy agencies to investigate abuse and neglect in public schools. The decisions affirm federally mandated access to the protect rights of people with disabilities.

More than 30 years ago, Congress created the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) System with agencies in every state to investigate abuse and neglect and protect the rights of individuals with disabilities. In 2000, Congress expanded the authority of P&As to protect the rights of individuals with mental illness in non-residential settings, including public schools. Despite this clear Congressional mandate, the Hartford Transitional Learning Academy (HTLA) in Connecticut and the Department of Public Instruction in Wisconsin tried to block P&A investigations.

The Second Circuit Court, covering Connecticut, New York, and Vermont, affirmed a permanent injunction Friday allowing the Connecticut P&A access to students and parental contact information at the HTLA. Conflict over P&A's access to HTLA arose in February 2004, when the agency launched an investigation into reports from parents and others concerning incidents of improper use of restraint and seclusion and related student injuries.

"These decisions are a tremendous victory for special education students and their parents," said P&A Executive Director Jim McGaughey. "They make very clear that the P&A authority to investigate abuse and neglect does not stop at the school house door. This is especially important as increasing numbers of students with emotional and behavioral disabilities are educated in local schools."

For more information go to: Connecticut decision:  
[www.ndrn.org/amicus/CT\\_FERPA\\_Op.pdf](http://www.ndrn.org/amicus/CT_FERPA_Op.pdf).

### **BIAC's Walk for Thought**

The Brain Injury Association of Connecticut (BIAC) is holding fund-raising walk along the Connecticut River on Saturday, October 21 to raise awareness of brain injury. Interested parties may walk as a team or as an individual. All proceeds will go to BIAC's services and programs. Check out their web site for more information ([www.biact.org](http://www.biact.org)) or call 1-800-278-8242.

### **Volunteers Available to Perform Home Repairs**

Next spring AmeriCares HomeFront Volunteers will be available to repair 180 homes at no cost to qualified homeowners. Owners must be low income or disabled. For more information call: AmeriCares Home Front – 1-800-887-HOPE.

### **Provide Feedback on Connecticut's Plan to Improve Mental Health Services!**

The State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services is sponsoring a series of Town Hall Meetings pursuant to the state's federally funded Mental Health Transformation Grant. The purpose of the meetings is to get feedback from consumers and families on the best ways to "transform" the mental health system in Connecticut.

When: Thursday October 26, 2006 - 4:30 -6:30 pm

Where: Asnuntuck Community College, Enfield (pending)  
Gateway Community College Auditorium, North Haven  
Northwestern Community College Auditorium, Winstead (pending)  
Norwalk Community College Room E 220  
Quinebaug Valley Community College - Polycom Room W205,  
Danielson  
Three Rivers Community College Auditorium, Mahan Drive  
Norwich (pending)  
Low Learning Center, University of Connecticut Health Center, Farmington

To get more info and to register visit: [www.dmhas.state.ct.us/transformation](http://www.dmhas.state.ct.us/transformation), call (860) 418-6729, or E-Mail: [mh.transformation@po.state.ct.us](mailto:mh.transformation@po.state.ct.us) .

## **Autism and Safety Issues – What Parents and Caregivers Should Know**

Do you know all the things you need to know to keep your child or adult with autism safe? Join the Autism Spectrum Resource Center (ASRC) and the Autism Spectrum Disorder Pilot Project as they host a morning with Dennis Debbaudt. Dennis is the father of a young man with autism, and has been a professional investigator and journalist for 28 years. Over the past 11 years he has trained and developed training materials for law enforcement, first response, and criminal justice professionals throughout the U.S., Canada, and the U.K.

Date: December 2, 2006

Time: 9:30 am -12:30 pm (registration begins 9:00 am)

Place: Frenchtown Elementary School - Frenchtown Road – Trumbull

Contact ASRC for more information, (203) 248-5222 or visit [www.ct-asrc.org](http://www.ct-asrc.org).

## **Connecticut Down Syndrome Congress Convention**

The 21st annual convention of the Connecticut Down Syndrome Congress will be on Saturday, November 4, 2006, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Cromwell. This annual event has become one of the premiere venues for information about developmental disabilities.

The theme this year will be "What Now? Futures for the Inclusion Generation" and will feature two keynote speakers. Steve Riggio, a parent of a child with Down syndrome and the CEO of Barnes & Noble Bookstores, will speak on "What I want for my daughter and what she wants for herself: a parent's journey in advocacy". The second keynote will be Chris Burke, a well-known self-advocate, actor and performer, who will speak and perform his show "Everyone can be a Singer with the Band" during lunch.

The Convention will also offer twenty educational sessions on birth to three, IDEA, LRE, educational inclusion, issues facing adults with Down syndrome and other special topics including an all-day mini-conference for individuals with developmental disabilities to share with one another their experiences in school, work and the community.

The convention program and registration materials are available under the Convention tab at: [www.ctdownsyndrome.org](http://www.ctdownsyndrome.org) or via email request to: [convention@ctdownsyndrome.org](mailto:convention@ctdownsyndrome.org).

## **The ADA and People with Hidden Disabilities**

ADA Coalition of Connecticut is presenting a workshop entitled “People with Hidden Disabilities, Employment, and the Americans with Disabilities Act”. The event will be held Tuesday, October 24, 2006 at the Newington Senior and Disabled Center, 120 Cedar St. - Newington. Attorney Gary Phelan, nationally known expert on employment and ADA law, will be the keynote speaker, and the workshop trainers will be Melissa Marshall, Executive Director, Advocacy Unlimited, and Stan Kosloski, former ADA Coordinator, State of Connecticut. The event will run from 9:30 am (check in, coffee) until 3:30 pm. A light lunch will be provided. There is no charge to attend.

Call Lisa Caron to register (860-297-4383 – [adacoalition@sbcglobal.net](mailto:adacoalition@sbcglobal.net)).

The ADA Coalition will be holding its Annual Meeting on Thursday, October 26 at 12 noon at the Farmington Club. Contact Lisa Caron (see above) if you are interested in attending.

### **Hiring and Managing Your Own Staff**

The West region of the Department of Mental Retardation is hosting a series of forums for families on hiring your own staff. Forums will be held on the following dates:

October 24, 2006 – 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., 195 Alvord Park Road, Torrington Office

November 2, 2006 – 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m., Ella Grasso Center, 300 Armory Road, Stratford Office

November 8, 2006 – 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., 400 Main Street, Danbury Office

November 16, 2006 –10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon, Lower Fairfield Center, 146 Silvermine Avenue, Norwalk Office.

To RSVP contact Joan Fortin (203) 805-7420.

### **People First of Connecticut Annual Conference**

People First of Connecticut is a self advocacy organization for people with intellectual disabilities. Founded in 1987, People First receives support from the Western Connecticut Association for Human Rights (WeCAHR). Members believe in and support the civil and human rights of all people with disabilities. The 2006 Conference will be held at the Bristol Clarion Hotel, 42 Century Drive in Bristol on Saturday, October 28 from 8:00 am - 4:00 pm. For more information call WeCAHR at 203-792-3540.

### **Connecticut Department of Higher Education Position Opening**

The state Department of Higher Education seeks a professional to serve as a part-time Inclusion Officer. The position will provide training, technical assistance and consultation to AmeriCorps programs related to recruiting, selecting and supporting volunteers with disabilities. The Inclusion Officer will work 20 hours per week.

To apply, submit a letter of application by October 19<sup>th</sup> indicating position, resume and a list of three references to:

Annie Davis, Executive Assistant  
Connecticut Department of Higher Education  
61 Woodland Street - Hartford, Connecticut 06105-2326

### **Effective Advocacy Skills Educational Workshops**

The Connecticut Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities (CACLD) is holding a series of ten educational workshops on Effective Advocacy Skills for parents and community based agency professionals. Instructors for the 10 sessions are from the State Department of Education, the Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC), CACLD, and professionals in private practice. Individual presenters will bring their practice, knowledge, and skills to each session. Kathleen Casparino, M.Ed., an educational advisor and Rena Schine, Ph.D. an advocate and former school psychologist, are the program coordinators.

The goal of the ten sessions is to provide attendees with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively advocate in obtaining an appropriate education for the child with a learning disability (LD) and/or an Attention Deficit Disorder (AD/HD). The workshops will be held from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM at CACLD, 25 Van Zant Street, East Norwalk on consecutive Tuesdays which started on September 26, 2006, and which will end on December 5, 2006. There will be no session on Election Day, November 7.

The fee for the remaining individual sessions is \$30.00. Full and partial scholarships are available to those who otherwise could not attend. Registration is required. For information and registration contact: Carol Maloney, CACLD, 25 Van Zant St. Suite 15-5, Norwalk, CT 06855, or call 203-838-5010, or e-mail [caclد@optonline.net](mailto:caclد@optonline.net).

### **CACLD Annual Conference**

CACLD is also holding its 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Saturday, October 28, 2006 at the Stamford Marriott Hotel. Entitled “Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficits Through the Lifespan”, the conference will run from 8:30 am – 3:30 pm and begin with a keynote panel that includes Scott Bezsylo, M.A., Jonathan Cohen, Ph.D., and Ruth Nass, M.D. The event will also offer 16 workshops, 22 speakers, a bookstore, plenty of free materials, exhibits, book signings, and loads of networking opportunities.

For more information see the CACLD web site: [www.caclد.org](http://www.caclد.org).

### **College Tips for Students with LD/AD/HD**

The Connecticut Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities (CACLD) has useful information for high school students with LD/AD/HD who are planning on attending college. Articles on receiving accommodations in college and

helpful planning hints are available free of charge by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: CACLD, 25 Van Zant St., Suite 15-5, East Norwalk, CT 06855 - Attn: College Info.

CACLD is a non-profit organization based in southwestern Connecticut that supports individuals, families and professionals by providing information, education and consultation while promoting public awareness and understanding. CACLD's goal is to ensure access to the resources needed to help children and adults with learning disabilities and attention deficits achieve their full potential.

### **Wheelchair Research Study: Seating Comfort Issues**

The University of Pittsburgh Rehabilitation Science and Technology Department is conducting a research study to examine comfort in wheelchair seating for specific populations of wheelchair users. You may be eligible for the study if you are:

1. Older than 18 years of age.
2. Have used a wheelchair or scooter for at least 3 months.
3. Have the desire to use your wheelchair or scooter for at least 12 hours per day.
4. Have a limitation in your ability to change your seated position to relieve discomfort.
5. Have limitations in your daily activities because of discomfort or pain.
6. Have normal or near normal buttock and upper body feeling.

Participation in the study involves a 3 - 5 day period of using a newly designed seating system. Testing will be done in your home, and you will have daily questionnaires to complete. You will be paid \$30.00 for your participation. If interested, please call Barbara Crane (Project Coordinator) - 860-529-4936 - [barb.crane@cox.net](mailto:barb.crane@cox.net)

### **State Launches Long Term Care Needs Assessment**

This past legislative session the state General Assembly authorized a comprehensive long-term care needs assessment, to be implemented in consultation with the Long Term Care Advisory Council, the Connecticut Commission on Aging, and the Long Term Care Planning Committee. This is the first time in twenty years that such a comprehensive study has been attempted.

Background: the Connecticut Medicaid program alone spends \$2 billion annually on long term care. According to the state's 2004 Long Term Care Plan, 69% is spent on institutional care and only 31% on home and community care. The outcome of the study will likely have a direct impact on the supports individuals with disabilities and elders will need if they are to remain in – or return to – the community.

An important part of the assessment will be mail, telephone, internet, and in-person surveys of 15,000 Connecticut residents. To participate in the survey, contact Irene Reed at the UConn Health Center (860-679-2089) or via e-mail at [ired@uchc.edu](mailto:ired@uchc.edu).

### **Input Sought to Ensure That Web-Based Tool is Accessible**

The Paciello Group is working with Qwest Communications to ensure that a web-based tool is accessible for people with disabilities. They will be conducting usability testing of this web site with people with disabilities using various assistive devices. The event will be held on Monday, October 16 through Friday October 20 at the New England Assistive Technologies Marketplace, 120 Holcomb Street Hartford, CT 06112. Sessions will take about one hour and participants will be paid \$50.

The sponsors are looking for disabled users experienced with the following devices: JAWS, version 6.2, - JAWS, version 7.1, - and WindowEyes, version 5.5. They are also looking for Low-vision users of- ZoomText, version 9.0 or MAGic, version 8.8 and for mobility-impaired users: of - Dragon NaturallySpeaking, Version 9.0 (professional). Participants must be familiar with Windows and Internet Explorer, and should have solid experience using the World Wide Web, including filling in forms and performing transactions (such as buying merchandise) on the web.

People meeting these requirements can schedule a session by contacting Mary Utt, [maryutt@paciellgroup.com](mailto:maryutt@paciellgroup.com), phone: 978-618-9772, 978-263-0994. The local point of contact is Jennifer Baker, Program Coordinator, New England Assistive Technology, 120 Holcomb Street, Hartford, CT 06112, 860-286-3102, [www.neatmarketplace.org](http://www.neatmarketplace.org).

### **Request for Articles**

*All Children Considered*, a newsletter for people who care for children, is seeking articles for its next issue. The deadline for submission is October 27, 2006.

For this issue, articles are requested on the following topics:

- Mental health at the time of childbirth
- Managing stress in providers and in preschool/school age children
- Recognizing and dealing with various mental health needs in children
- Promoting mental health in child care settings

Interested in submitting an article for the Winter 2006-07 publication?

1. Guidelines for Articles

- Length: 300-500 words written in MS Word or Word Perfect and sent via e-mail
- If special formatting cannot be sent electronically, please send a hard copy
- Include author's name, title, organization, mailing address, phone and/or email address

2. Newsletter Audience – Caregivers (of children, birth to twelve years of age) who work in home child care, center care, or after school programs, etc.
3. Editorial Review - Articles are subject to editorial team review, for appropriate content, style, and length. The reading difficulty should be at a 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade level.
4. Authors receive no remuneration for articles submitted, nor can articles be returned.
5. Submit article via email to: [Harry.Mangle@uconn.edu](mailto:Harry.Mangle@uconn.edu) or mail diskette to:  
Harry Mangle, Editor, All Children Considered, Hartford County Extension Center, UCONN Greater Hartford Campus, 1800 Asylum Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06117
6. For questions or to indicate your interest please contact the editor by email or call (860) 570-9077.

### **Epilepsy can be Subtle for Seniors**

Increasingly, doctors are finding that older people whose minds seem to wander are suffering from a treatable condition — epilepsy. In fact, older Americans now make up the highest percentage of the 200,000 people newly diagnosed with epilepsy each year in the United States. Currently about 570,000 persons over the age of 65 have epilepsy, according to the Epilepsy Foundation. Contact the Epilepsy Association in Middletown for more information (860-346-1924 – web site: [www.epilepsyfoundation.org/connecticut/](http://www.epilepsyfoundation.org/connecticut/)).

### **Giving Up Driving—The Personal and Societal Costs**

Older people who keep driving are more likely to stay out of nursing homes or assisted living centers than those who give it up or who have never driven, researchers report. Their study, in the current *American Journal of Public Health*, found that non-drivers were four times as likely as drivers to end up in long-term care. “Older adults are expected to make good decisions about when to stop driving,” the authors write, “but the hardships imposed on older adults by not driving are not widely recognized.”

The study was led by Ellen E. Freeman of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. The researchers said they were not encouraging drivers to stay on the road past the point when they could drive safely. But they said that when people did stop driving, especially when they lived in areas without good public transportation systems, the personal and societal costs could be heavy. For older people [and people with disabilities], the loss of personal mobility can mean an inability to secure basic necessities. From a public policy point of view, their entry into nursing homes can carry a heavy price tag. And they may have no real medical need to be there. One solution, the researchers said, could be to try to come up with innovative transportation options for non-drivers.

[Editorial Note –So let’s continue to look for innovative transportation options for non-drivers such as volunteer programs, asking a neighbor or relative in exchange for paying for gas, giving your car to a friend or neighbor in exchange for rides, creating a “voucher system” for individuals to create their own transportation options and utilizing less

expensive non-emergency transportation options such as liveries and accessible taxis so State dollars can go further. —Jayne Kleinman]

## **Advocates Assail CMS Undermining of Wheelchair Access**

Clinicians and advocates representing seniors and people living with disabilities have charged the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) with "dismantling" the Medicare benefit for power mobility equipment by dramatically reducing the reimbursements for power wheelchairs.

"The Medicare mobility benefit as we knew it is gone," asserted Andrew Imparato, President and CEO of the American Association of People with Disabilities. "CMS has chipped away at the benefit over the last three years, and this latest step ensures that people living with disabilities will get little help from Medicare when they need a power wheelchair to remain independent, and out of institutions."

CMS's latest action lowered the Medicare reimbursements for power wheelchairs and scooters by 21% to 41% depending on the model of the equipment. Already, many suppliers from around the country say they will stop providing mobility equipment or go out of business because the Medicare reimbursement payments will be too low to cover the cost of acquiring the chair, fitting the patient and servicing the equipment.

Restrictive changes in the coding and coverage policies, as well as the price reductions, are due to take effect on November 15. A summary of the new LCD policy is posted at [www.aapd.com/News/health/060914item.htm](http://www.aapd.com/News/health/060914item.htm).

Connecticut advocates may want to contact Members of Congress, to encourage them to support legislation to eliminate Medicare's "in the home" restriction for mobility devices. Until there is enactment of "in the home" legislation, Medicare will continue to utilize this discriminatory coverage restriction to prevent access to appropriate mobility devices for people with disabilities. You can contact your Members of Congress via the Capitol switchboard toll-free at 1-877-224-0041. Please contact Emily Niederman at the ITEM Coalition with any questions: (202) 349-4260.

## **Mental Health Consumer/Survivors Create National Coalition**

Mental health consumer/survivors have formed a national coalition to ensure that they play a major role in the development and implementation of health and mental health care and social policies at the state and national levels. The Coalition will collaborate with other advocacy groups to ensure that consumer rights policies continue to move towards promoting full participation and integration in the community.

The creation of the National Coalition of Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Organizations (NCMHCSO) is a milestone, said the groups Director of Public Policy, Lauren Spiro. “The formation of this Coalition takes us to the next level- it enables us to raise our collective voice, based on our experience of mental health recovery, and be heard at the seat of power.”

The Coalition embraces the disability movement’s motto, “Nothing about us without us”. It will collaborate with other advocacy groups to ensure that consumer rights policies continue to move towards promoting full participation and integration in the community.

The rapidly growing Coalition currently consists of organizations run by consumers representing 28 states and the District of Columbia, including representatives from the three federally funded consumer-run national technical assistance centers: the Consumer Organization and Networking Technical Assistance Center, the National Empowerment Center, and the National Mental Health Consumers Self-Help Clearinghouse.

The Coalition, whose office is in Washington, D.C., received start-up funding from the Washington-based Public Welfare Foundation. For additional information, visit [www.NCMHCSO.org](http://www.NCMHCSO.org).

**Please relay this Bulletin to your membership including those who do not have e-mail access. Suggest your membership without e-mail go to the library and go onto [www.kleinmanconsulting.com](http://www.kleinmanconsulting.com) to view or print a copy. If you would like to see previous issues of the Bulletin, read about the background of the Collaborative or if you would like to be added to the mailing list, you may also go to [www.kleinmanconsulting.com](http://www.kleinmanconsulting.com).**

**If you want something to appear in the next edition please send it to us – [jjk1009@hotmail.com](mailto:jjk1009@hotmail.com) or [skoslosk03@comcast.net](mailto:skoslosk03@comcast.net) — or Jayne Kleinman, 55 Corrigan Ave., Meriden, CT 06451, 203-631-4800.**

**ADDRESS CORRECTIONS AND REMOVALS: If you are not interested in receiving this Bulletin, or you would like this information sent to a different e-mail address, please e-mail Jayne Kleinman at [jjk1009@hotmail.com](mailto:jjk1009@hotmail.com) with your request.**

**How can you find your federal Representatives and Senators? Go to [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org) and 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 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. You may also call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at 1-888-818-6641. The best way to contact your Member of Congress is via phone (or ideally in person). The best time to call either in CT or in Washington, D.C. is early in the morning.**

**For State Legislators, Committee Members and local government officials go to [www.ct.gov](http://www.ct.gov) and click on Government. If you need more assistance please contact [jjk1009@hotmail.com](mailto:jjk1009@hotmail.com) or call 211 – Infoline.**