



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, 2007

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

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The Connecticut Disability Advocacy Collaborative (CDAC) announces a new look to our web site. Check us out at: <http://www.CT-DAC.org>

Road to Freedom Tour a Success!

The fifty state Road to Freedom Tour visited Connecticut last week, and due to the outstanding effort of several dozen individuals and organizations it was an unqualified success. The three-stop visit was coordinated by the Disability Advocacy Collaborative.

The Tour concluded with a rousing welcome at the State Capitol the afternoon of Monday, October 15 attended by 70 advocates and disability rights supporters. The highlight of the Capitol stop was a commitment by First District Congressman John Larson to support the ADA Restoration Act (see next article). Larson had been the only member of the State’s Congressional delegation that had not signed on as a Co-Sponsor of the Act. Governor M. Jodi Rell proclaimed the date “Road to Freedom Day” in Connecticut, and Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz not only welcomed the crowd but made available for testing the new voting technology that will be used in municipal elections on November 6. Entertainment at the Capitol event included Elaine Kolb, signers/singers from the American School for the Deaf, and Selina Welborn.

At each stop, Road to Freedom organizer Jim Ward described the original tour Justin Dart made in the late 1980’s that generated the grass roots support so critical to the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990. The 2007 tour is being made to garner support for the ADA Restoration Act, needed to remedy the restricted definition of disability that has resulted from a series of U.S. Supreme Court decision over the last eight years. Included in each Tour stop were three exhibits, among which was Tom Olin’s photographic history of the disability rights movement, which has been on display at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC.

CT –KASA (Kids As Self Advocates), the City of New Haven Department of Disability Services, and the UConn Center on Disabilities (the A.J. Pappanikou Center) collaborated on Sunday afternoon to produced a youth-focused event on the New Haven Green. The Collaborative thanks Heather Northrop and Jessica Dybdahl from KASA, Michelle Duprey and Kristen Barber from the City of New Haven, and David Martin from the Pappanikou Center for the extra-ordinary effort they made to pull together a multi-phased celebration. New Haven Mayor John DeStefano and State Representative Pat Dillon welcomed the attendees, followed by short presentations from a series of speakers and performances by three entertainers who

happened to have disabilities (musician Ryan Silveira, storyteller Carol Glynn, and singer, Ellie Hazan). Inside City Hall, twenty five organizations and agencies set up tables dispensing information and sharing resources.

In Winsted, the Northwest Disability Advocacy Network, Independence Northwest, and the State Independent Living Council (SILC) collaborated on a Tour stop held at Northwestern Connecticut Community College. Bill Knight, Michael Valuckas, and Thom Condon are recognized for the skill with which they put together the Monday morning event. Torrington Mayor Ryan Bingham brought a welcome from his town, and representatives from the Town of Winsted, NWCCC, the Polio Outreach Network, and Independence Northwest also shared their support for the ADA.

Special thanks go to the Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, which provided sign language interpreters at each stop; Larry Robinson, a VISTA Volunteer with the Disability Advocacy Collaborative for his work on both the New Haven and the Winsted event; Boundless Playgrounds for providing a photographer at the State Capitol event; Chris Gaynor from the Office of Protection and Advocacy for her support on many levels; the UConn Center on Disabilities for providing staff support; and Lyman's Farms for their donation of cider and apples for the State Capitol stop.

Background on the ADA Restoration Act

Seventeen years ago, Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with overwhelming bipartisan support. In recent years, however, a number of Supreme Court decisions have significantly reduced the protections available to people with disabilities in employment settings. Courts have been quick to side with businesses and employers, deciding against people with disabilities who challenge employment discrimination over 90% of the time, often before the person has even had a chance to show that the employer treated them unfairly.

Indeed, courts have created an absurd Catch-22 by allowing employers to say a person is "too disabled" to do the job but not "disabled enough" to be protected by the ADA. People with conditions like epilepsy, diabetes, HIV, cancer, hearing loss, and mental illness that manage their disabilities with medication, prosthetics, hearing aids, etc. -- termed "mitigating measures" by the courts -- may be viewed as "too functional" to have a disability.

The American Association of Persons with Disabilities (AAPD) has been working with a broad coalition of disability organizations to help Representative James Sensenbrenner (R-WI) draft the ADA Restoration Act of 2007. The proposal would enable Americans with disabilities utilizing the ADA to focus on the discrimination that they have experienced rather than having to first prove that they fall within the scope of the ADA's protection. The House version of the bill is HR 3195, the Senate version is S 1881.

With this bill, the ADA's clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination on the basis of disability will be properly restored. Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD), who played a leading role in passage of the ADA in 1990, is a co-sponsor of the bill.

What can you do to help get the ADA Restoration Act passed?

1. Sign the ADA Petition

In response to the dramatic narrowing of the ADA in the courts, ADA Watch is hosting a petition to encourage Congress and the President to pass and sign a bipartisan "ADA Restoration Act" that would restore vital civil right protections for children and adults with physical, mental, cognitive and developmental disabilities. To view and sign the petition, visit:

http://www.democracyinaction.org/dia/organizationsORG/adawatch/petition.jsp?petition_KEY=589&t=roadtofreedom.dwt .

2. Contact Congress

Contacting Congress sounds harder than it actually is. Actually, it is quite simple! Visit the http://roadtofreedom.org/cs/what_you_can_do/contact_congress to see the many different ways you can contact Congress and help to make a difference.

3. Sign up for News & Alerts

Stay informed by email with periodic news and alerts about the ADA and the Road To Freedom by signing up for ADA Watch news and alerts at:

http://roadtofreedom.org/cs/what_you_can_do/sign_up_for_alerts .

4. Donate to ADA Watch

You can help keep the Road To Freedom bus on the road and support their educational efforts by contributing to the National Coalition for Disability Rights (NCDR), a 501(c)3 charitable organization.

Disability Advocacy Collaborative Regional Contacts

To get involved with one of the Collaborative's Regional Advocacy Networks, contact the following:

Northwest -- contact: Bill Knight (lackerman01@snet.net) – meetings are held at the Litchfield Arc

Southwest –contact: Carol Kana (pkana@snet.net) – meetings are held at the Norwalk Police Department

Danbury Area -- contact Pam Arturi (parturi@abilitybeyonddisability.org) – meetings are held at Ability Beyond Disability in Bethel

North Central — contact: Candace Low (clow@independenceunlimited.org) – meetings are held at 151 New Park Avenue in Hartford

Waterbury Area –contact: Mike Valuckas (mike.valuckas@independencenorthwest.org) – contact Mike for information about next meeting

Northeast Area – contact: Carolyn Newcombe (cnewcombe@charter.net) – meetings are held at the Mansfield Senior Center.

Presidential Candidates' Forum on November 2!

A National Forum on Equality, Opportunity and Access, hosted by the Granite State Independent Living Center in New Hampshire, will be web cast on Friday, November 2, 2007. This day-long live event will take place in Manchester, New Hampshire and will feature presidential candidates speaking on disability issues, panel discussions with national disability leaders, and more! The entire event will be web cast at www.hovrs.com beginning at 8:30 A.M.

Please invite your members, consumers and local constituents to view this important, pre-primary event at a common gathering area with Internet access. If you are hosting a Webcast viewing, please contact Terri Voth at Granite State Independent Living, (603) 228-9680 or e-mail terri.voth@gsil.org

The Presidential Candidates' Forum is being hosted by the NH Developmental Disabilities Council, the NH Disabilities Rights Center, the NH Institute on Disability, the NH Spinal Cord Injury Association, People First of New Hampshire, and TASH.

People First Annual Conference – November 3

Elections for People First officers will be held at the organization's Annual Conference on November 3, 2007 (8:00 am – 3:30 pm), at the Clarion Hotel, Bristol. Tia Nelis, national leader SABE (Self Advocates Becoming Empowered), will keynote the day focusing on "Celebrating Change". Workshops include "Breaking out of your shell", "Personal Power: Use your Individual Plan to change your Life!", and "Who is Richard LaPointe and why is he in prison?" and more.

Questions about the conference? Contact Jean Bowen at advozealot@aol.com or 203-788-3156, Laura Hastillo at l_hastillo@yahoo.com or 860-342-0700, ext. 14.

Municipal Elections are Coming on November 6!

Susan Bysiewicz, Secretary of State, is reminding voters with disabilities that they may choose to vote at the polls on November 6 using a specially designated telephone. The way Vote by Phone works is this: an election official will escort you to the voting station and will access the audio ballot by entering a poll worker ID number and the ballot access code for your voting district. Simply listen to the directions and make your choices using the keypad. When you are done completing your ballot, the system will ask you to verify your choices. You will be given the opportunity to change any of those choices and even to spoil the ballot and start again, if you choose. You then press “#” to complete the voting process and wait for the fax machine to send you your paper ballot. Place the ballot in the ballot box and your vote is complete.

These are the three steps to remember:

1. Listen carefully to the directions and make your selections using the telephone key pad.
2. Verify and confirm your choices after completing the ballot.
3. Wait for the fax machine to send your paper ballot. Place that ballot in the ballot box provided.

To learn more about how Vote-By-Phone works, try the toll-free demonstration line: Dial 1-866-979-3900 and when asked for the poll worker ID number, enter 1234#. When asked for the ballot access ID, enter 101# (Township of Addison), and then follow the instructions for completing the demo ballot.

More Info on Voting

As noted, Connecticut's local elections are coming up on Tuesday, November 6. Municipal elections usually receive only local press and scrutiny, leading to the misunderstanding that they are less important than the state and national races. But it is in the local races for alderman, mayor, town clerk, selectmen, etc. that political power has its base. Frequently decisions are made on a local level about available transportation and housing and the quality of education in your community. Global political action is nothing but local action multiplied. To change the world is to change your neighborhood.

Registering to vote is just the beginning. Identify the issues that are important to you. Get to know the candidates. Don't be afraid to question them and scrutinize their records. Then get out there and vote. For more information about the November 6 elections contact the League of Women Voters, 1890 Dixwell Avenue, Suite 113, Hamden, CT 06514-3183, call 203-288-7996, e-mail lwwct@lwwct.org , or go to their website at www.lwwct.org/.

If you won't be in the state on November 6, or if you chose to vote by absentee ballot, contact your city or town Registrar of Voters. To locate your [town or city](#) officials and Registrar of Voters click on the link or go to www.cga.ct.gov/maps/Townlist.asp.

If you have always voted absentee, consider going to the polls in person this year. Polling places should be wheelchair accessible, and public visibility is an important part of any liberation movement. Put a face on disability rights . . . yours!

For more general information about voting you can also go to:

Disability Vote Project

American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)

web site: www.aapd.com/dvpmain/dvpindex.php - e-mail: aapdvote@earthlink.net

629 K Street NW, Suite 503 - Washington, DC 20006

V/TTY: 202-457-0046, V/TTY toll free: 800-840-8844

Disability and Medical Decision Making: Ethical Issues in Policy and Practice

The Connecticut DD Network (the Office of Protection and Advocacy, the UConn Center on Disability, and the Council on Developmental Disabilities) is sponsoring a unique learning opportunity on Friday, November 9, 2007 from 10 am – 1 pm at the Four Points by Sheraton Meriden (275 Research Parkway · Meriden, Connecticut 06450). Entitled "Disability and Medical Decision Making" the event will bring forth and attempt to address the very serious ethical issues that have arisen in medical decision-making policy and practice.

Keynote speaker will be Judith Heumann, who has been involved on the international front working with government officials around the world to advance the human rights of people with disabilities for over 30 years. Heumann participated in the 1995 International Congress on Disability in Mexico City and was a delegate to the fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, China. She has been active with Disabled People International, Rehabilitation International and numerous independent living centers throughout the world. She co-founded the World Institute on Disability in Oakland, CA, and, after serving as the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the Department of Education during the Clinton administration, was named in 2002 as the World Bank's first adviser on disability and development. In this position, Heumann led the World Bank's work to expand the Bank's knowledge and capability to work with governments and civil society on including disability initiatives.

A panel of responders which includes clergy, a physician, individuals with disabilities, parents and an attorney will share their thoughts following Ms. Heumann's presentation.

Sign language interpreters will be present. To register or to request accommodations: call 1-860-679-1500 or toll free 1-866-623-1315.

“The Right to be Disabled”

The Connecticut Down Syndrome Congress will host their annual convention on Saturday, November 10, with the agenda being “The Right to be Disabled”. Norman Kunc and Emma Van der Klift will lead participants in a “rousing call to place less emphasis on ‘fixing’ people and instead focus on the inherent assets and gifts that each person brings to the community”. Workshop topics include Birth to Three, IEPs, Self Advocacy, and Adult Life. Twenty businesses and organizations will be exhibiting products and services, including the latest books, educational toys, assistive technologies, and financial services. There will also be a silent auction.

The Convention will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Cromwell. More information can be found on the Convention tab at the Congress web site – www.ctdownsyndrome.org - or by calling 1-888-486-8537.

Your Input Needed on DOT Reorganization

On April 30, 2007, Governor M. Jodi Rell appointed a special working group to consider reforms to the structure and operation of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT). The Commission is chaired by Michael Critelli, Chairman and former CEO of Pitney-Bowes Corporation in Stamford.

Transportation advocates are encouraged to submit ideas and comments for consideration by the Commission, which has been charged with making recommendations to the Governor by December 1, 2007, in time for Governor Rell to draft and recommend legislation for consideration by the 2008 General Assembly. So act now! To submit an idea or comment, e-mail: judd.everhart@po.state.ct.us with "Governor's Commission" in subject line. To get details about upcoming meetings go to: www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?a=3155&q=390108.

“Redefining Long Term Care: Aging and Disabilities Revisited”

On Tuesday, November 13, 2007, the 4th Annual Fall Specialty conference, co-sponsored by the National Association of Social Workers and the Connecticut Department of Social Services, will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Cromwell. Click here to see the conference brochure: <http://www.naswct.org/Temp/2007%20Fall%20Conference.pdf>.

Once “long-term care” was equated with admission to a nursing home or the purchase of an insurance policy to cover your needs in case you did have to be admitted to a nursing home. Not so today. As cited in the Long-Term Care Plan Report to the General Assembly and by Connecticut’s Commission on Aging, “long-term care” encompasses a wide range of services over a continuum of time. Today, “long-term care” is not an issue to be dealt with only by those who are elderly or disabled but, rather, it is an issue for people of all ages and from all walks of life.

This new, broader interpretation requires that we redefine “long-term care” and the 4th Annual NASW/CT Specialty Conference is an effort to help find more accurate, inclusive definitions and more creative resources that will serve us today and into the future.

If you have any questions or if you require accommodations to permit your attendance or participation, please contact Pat Hartman at the NASW chapter office 860-257-8066, or phartman@conversent.net.

Cognition and MS

The [National Multiple Sclerosis Society](#), Connecticut Chapter, will host “Cognition and MS” on Thursday, Nov. 29 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., at the Hartford Chapter Office at 659 Tower Ave., Hartford. Refreshments will be provided. Pre-registration is required by Wednesday, Nov. 21. For more information, or to register, call 1-800-FIGHT MS or e-mail programs@ctfightsMS.org.

There are more than twenty multiple sclerosis support groups throughout Connecticut which bring together people who share a common life experience as it relates to MS. [Click here](#) for more information and to find the MS support group near you.

Can We Talk?

“Can We Talk?” is a monthly teleconference series for people newly diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. If you want to learn from experts in their field, ask questions, receive information or obtain support, register now for the series. The conference calls are toll-free and open to anyone diagnosed with MS within the last three years as well as family or friends. Featured topics include: • Symptom Management • Employment Issues • Coping with MS • Insurance Options & Money Matters • Exercise & Fatigue • Making the Most of Doctor Visits • Complementary Therapies • “Top 10 List” of MS Questions.

The Connecticut Chapter of the National MS Society web site can be found at: www.ctfightsMS.org

MS Scholarship Application Now Available

The 2008 National MS Society scholarship application is now available. The application deadline is Monday, Jan. 15, 2008. Those eligible include:

- High school seniors who have a parent with MS who will be attending an accredited post secondary school for the first time
- High school seniors who have MS and will be attending an accredited post secondary school for the first time
- High School (or GED) graduates of any age who have MS and who will be attending an accredited post secondary school for the first time
- High School (or GED) graduates of any age who have a parent with MS and who will be attending an accredited post secondary school for the first time.

Go to:

www.nationalmssociety.org/site/PageServer?pagename=HOM_SOCIETY_scholarship_faq for more information about eligibility requirements or [click here](#) to download an application.

New Pilot Program to Help Adults with Disabilities Live at Home

The state Department of Social Services has opened applications for the new “Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled”, funded earlier this year by the state General Assembly and supported by the Governor.

Persons eligible for the program must meet the following criteria:

1. Be between age 18-64 and who, but for their age, would otherwise qualify for Category 2 services under the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders.
2. Have as a primary diagnosis a degenerative neurological condition, including, but not limited to, Multiple Sclerosis, Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s Disease, Huntington’s Disease, and ALS.
3. Be inappropriately institutionalized or at risk of institutionalization as defined by requiring assistance in at least three of the following areas: bathing, dressing, toileting, transferring, eating/feeding, meal preparation or medication administration.
4. Have assets, if single, that do not exceed the minimum community spouse-protected amount, or, if married, have assets do not exceed 150% of that amount.

Persons ineligible for the pilot are those who would qualify for the Personal Care Assistance Waiver, whose primary diagnosis is mental illness or intellectual disability, or who are active with or eligible for Medicaid.

Any person participating in the pilot program whose income exceeds 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), shall contribute to the cost of care in accordance with the methodology established for recipients of medical assistance.

To apply, call 1-800-445-5394 (toll-free) or 860-424-4904 (in Hartford area); choose option 4. Applicants will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis.

Is There a Need?

The CT Autism Spectrum Resource Center (ASRC - www.ct-asrc.org/) is interested in starting a support group for parents of adults with ASD and a support group for wives of men who are high functioning and have shadow Asperger's syndrome. They are trying to determine if there is a need. If you are interested in either of the above-listed support groups, or have questions, please contact Lois Rosenwald at 203-265-7717 or ct-asrc@sbcglobal.net.

BIAC Positions Open

The Brain Injury Association of Connecticut has the following positions open:

- **Community Advocate:** Full time position providing information and advocacy for individuals who have a brain injury, their families and professionals. Preferred qualifications include understanding of community based services, relevant master's level degree or human services degree with brain injury experience required. Bi-lingual (Spanish speaking) applicants encouraged to apply. Send or email resume and cover letter by October 31st to: ckramer@biact.org, BIAC, 333 East River Dr., Suite 106, E. Hartford, CT 06108. No phone calls.
- **Community Educator:** Part-time salaried position (20 hrs/wk) responsible for public awareness regarding brain injury, school and community presentations, coordinating professional and family workshops/conferences and oversight of professional library. Develops and implements new educational and prevention programs. Extensive state-wide travel required. Bachelor's degree in related field and knowledge of brain injury required. Sense of humor and positive attitude essential. Bi-lingual (Spanish speaking) applicants encouraged to apply. Send or email resume and cover letter by October 31st to: jpeters@biact.org, BIAC, 333 East River Dr., Suite 106, E. Hartford, CT 06108. No phone calls.

City of Hartford Looking for You!

The Hartford Commission on Disability Issues is looking for a few good people to become commissioners. The Commission is charged by ordinance to assure the following:

- (1) Correcting deficiencies in the city which prevent persons with disabilities from functioning as full citizens;
- (2) Developing procedures for locating and identifying persons who have disabilities in the city;
- (3) Encouraging merchants and others to establish lines of communication between the city government and persons with disabilities; and
- (4) Providing advice and assistance to persons with disabilities.

The commission also reviews any city, state and federal regulations which affect persons with disabilities, while advising the City Council and the Mayor of their implications and making recommendations which may improve the city's ability to serve its residents who have disabilities.

If you have an interest in becoming a commissioner, please contact Eloy Toppin at 860-757-9788.

Did You Know?

Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation services are offered on a personalized and individualized basis by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation (MPTN-VR) where consumers work one-on-one with a VR Counselor and/or a Rehabilitation Technician. The consumer and VR Counselor work as a team to custom-tailor a rehabilitation plan that offers the most benefits to the consumer. MPTN-VR also incorporates traditional Native American services into a rehabilitation plan that, again, is tailored for the consumer. This includes: sweat lodge ceremonies; smudging; prayer; talking circles; social events; and traditional lifestyle information.

The program's goal is to help those Native Americans with disabilities get and keep good jobs. Eligibility requires residency in Rhode Island or Connecticut, enrollment in a Federal or State recognized Tribe, and a documented disability which impedes the ability to obtain or continue in employment.

For more information contact Silvermoon Mars, Program Manager, Vocational Rehabilitation Program, Tribal Health Services, Matt's Path, P.O. Box 3310, Mashantucket, CT 06338, 860-396-2105, Toll-Free: 860- 399-1122, SMars@mptn-nsn.gov. You can also go to their website at www.tribalvr.org/?PHPSESSID=3a06552eb5f2867a4e8d5b737ec09099.

Connecticut's Network of Care for Behavioral Health

Connecticut's Network of Care for Behavioral Health has recently launched a new web site: <http://connecticut.networkofcare.org/mh/home/index.cfm> . Connecticut's Network of Care is a product resulting from state legislation and Connecticut's Mental Health Transformation Initiative, with funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration).

The site is committed to promoting access to behavioral health care information for all residents of Connecticut, and is a resource for individuals, families and agencies concerned with mental health. It provides information about mental health services, laws, and related news, as well as communication tools and other features.

Office for Veterans' Workforce Development

The Connecticut Department of Labor's Office for Veterans' Workforce Development is available to assist veterans in acquiring the various benefits and services they might be entitled to receive and to make the transition from military to civilian life as seamless as possible. Their website (www.ctdol.state.ct.us/veterans/default.htm) includes information on employment assistance, unemployment insurance, veteran preference and benefits options, training opportunities, women's issues, job fairs, career coaching, résumé preparations, job search workshops, veteran's services, legislative updates and current events relating to veterans.

Contact your local Veterans' Employment Representative to request an appointment: Connecticut Department of Labor, 200 Folly Brook Boulevard, Wethersfield, CT 06109, 860-263-6000 or dol.webhelp@ct.gov.

UHar Looking for Subjects

The University of Hartford Physical Therapy Department is conducting a research study examining the effects of training consumers on the use of power wheelchair tilt systems. They are looking for assistance in recruiting subjects 16 years old or older who may be appropriate for the study.

Participants need to have a power wheelchair with a power tilt system and use their wheelchairs for a minimum of four hours per day. They should not have had any pressure sores or wounds on the buttocks in the last 6 months. Participation will require two weeks during which time they will be provided with a tilt monitoring device to record their daily utilization of their power tilt system. Graduate students from the Physical Therapy Department will meet with participating subjects to install the monitoring device and provide training at the subject's convenience and location.

The research study is being chaired by Dr. Barbara Crane who is a full time faculty member of the University of Hartford. Candidates who may be interested in this project may contact Dr. Crane at 860-768-5371 or by e-mail: bcrane@hartford.edu.

NFB Praises Bill to Create Work Incentives and Opportunity

Congressman John Lewis (D-GA) has introduced legislation designed to help blind persons receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) to return to work. The Blind Persons Earnings Fairness Act of 2007 (H.R. 3834), which has already drawn bipartisan support, will eliminate penalties that prevent blind persons from reentering the workforce and will facilitate their transition to employment.

The legislation will increase the amount of monthly income that a blind person can earn while still receiving SSDI benefits. The earnings limit will gradually rise from its current level of \$1,500 per month to \$2,850 per month in 2011. In 2012, the earnings limit for blind people will be tied to that applicable to senior citizens in the year they attain full retirement age.

AAPD Accepting Applications for 2008 Summer Interns

The American Association of Persons with Disabilities (AAPD) is now accepting applications for its 2008 Summer Internship Programs. Details and the application are available on the AAPD website (look under Leadership Development): www.AAPD.com.

Applications are due Friday, December 14, 2007.

Center for Personal Assistance Services

The Center for Personal Assistance Services provides research, training, information dissemination and technical assistance on issues of personal assistance services (PAS) in the United States, including:

- The relationship between [formal and informal PAS](#) and caregiving support, and the role of assistive technology (AT) in complementing PAS;
- Policies and programs, barriers and new models for PAS in the [home and community](#);
- [PAS Workforce](#) development, recruitment, retention, and benefits; and
- [Workplace](#) models of formal and informal PAS and AT at work.

Numerous new resources are available on the Center for PAS website (www.pascenter.org), including conference materials from “Meeting the Nation's Need for Personal Assistance Services: State of the Science” held on April 27, 2007, and “State legislation regarding wages and benefits of home care workers: Thirteen promising practices”, which focuses on examples of state legislation seeking to specifically increase the hourly wages or benefits of home, direct or personal care workers.

An additional resource is “Successful Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Direct Service Workers (CMS) -- Updates on the Progress of the 2006 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' National Direct Service Worker (DSW).” Resource Center grantees outline ten successful strategies for recruiting and retaining direct service workers. For more information, go to [Detailed updates on each of the DSW Demonstration Grants](#).

An Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

A research team from the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Universal Design and the Built Environment at the State University of New York at Buffalo is conducting online surveys examining how designed environments affect individuals' activities. The environments being studied are public buildings, streets and residences and their impact on individuals with a variety of disabling conditions.

If you think you might be interested in participating or would just like additional information, go to the research study's website at [UD E-World | Built Environment](#). The surveys will be available online through January 2008.

NCD Calls for Increased Employment Opportunities

The National Council on Disability (NCD) has released a report that presents the best practices in the public and private sectors and the promising public policies and initiatives that increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The employment rate of working age people with disabilities remains only half that of people without disabilities (38 percent compared with 78 percent in 2005).

The report, "Empowerment for Americans with Disabilities: Breaking Barriers to Careers and Full Employment" comprehensively reviews the issues integral to the employment of people with disabilities. It has two broad aims: 1) to summarize the existing knowledge regarding the employment of people with disabilities in a series of short issue briefs; and 2) to present new information on the perspectives of employers, people with disabilities, and disability specialists on the key barriers and facilitators of employment. To read the rest of the report, including NCD's recommendations for improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities, go to: www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2007/NCDEmployment_20071001.htm.

Hearing Loss Group Complains to FCC about iPhone

A group representing people with a hearing loss filed complaints with the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) last month, accusing Apple of not making its iPhone compatible with hearing aids. The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) filed formal complaints with the FCC in August.

Under its Section 255 regulations, the FCC requires phone manufacturers, including those selling mobile handsets, to make their products accessible to people with disabilities, if such access is "readily achievable." That standard is defined by the agency as "easily accomplishable without much difficulty or expense." To view an article about the complaint, go to www.macworld.co.uk/business/news/index.cfm?RSS&NewsID=19166

More about Hand Held Media

WGBH/Boston has received a \$600,000 grant from the [Department of Education's National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research](#) to support its groundbreaking efforts to make handheld media accessible for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Titled "Captioning Solutions for Handheld Media and Mobile Devices", the grant provides WGBH's Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM) with \$600,000 over three years to research and develop technical solutions for delivering captioned content to iPods, cell phones, PDAs and other mobile devices.

Partnering with Your Child's School: A Guide for Parents

The HSC Foundation, in partnership with George Washington University's Graduate School of Education and Human Development, offers a new resource for parents. The booklet, available online and in hard copy in English and in Spanish, is designed to help parents of children who have been diagnosed with health or mental health care needs to learn about available resources and to develop a partnership with their children's schools. The booklet's content has been reviewed and validated by groups of parents, youth, and educators and is produced in partnership with the Council for Exceptional Children and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education. For more information, go to: [Family Supports: The HSC Foundation](#).

Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide

The World Health Organization has produced a guide that encourages cities to become more age-friendly. Based on consultations with older people in 33 cities in 22 countries, the Guide

identifies the key physical, social and service attributes of age-friendly urban settings. The checklist of age-friendly features includes such specific items as sufficient public benches that are well-situated, well-maintained and safe. It also shows the need for sufficient public toilets that are clean, secure, and accessible by people with disabilities, and such general items as a civic culture that respects and includes older persons. For more information on the guide, go to: www.aapd.com/News/tech/071010wgbh.htm.

Guide Offers Parents Help with ADHD Treatments

The American Psychiatric Association and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry have created a guide meant to help parents better understand ADHD treatments for their children. "We can effectively help the majority of children, adolescents and adults who have ADHD," said Dr. David Fassler, a Vermont child and adolescent psychiatrist. "The real problem is ... that many young people and adults aren't receiving effective and appropriate treatment they deserve."

"The 911 Modernization and Public Safety Act of 2007"

The Coalition of Organizations for Accessible Technology (COAT), comprising over 120 national and local disability groups, sent a letter of support to the Congressional sponsors of H.R. 3403, "The 911 Modernization and Public Safety Act of 2007." This legislation, if enacted, will help ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to 9-1-1 emergency public safety answering points ("911 centers") as these centers start using Internet technologies. For instance, barriers must be identified and solutions implemented for devices and services that connect to 911 centers when using Internet Protocol (IP). The bill would also require that telecommunications relay service providers must be involved in the development of the new national 9-1-1 plan and must have the same protections from liability and nondiscriminatory access to 9-1-1 centers that currently protect wireline and wireless telephone carriers. The Disability Coalition letter can be found on the AAPD website at www.aapd.com/News/tech/070921coat.htm.

Revamped Medicare Web Site Easier To Navigate?

Medicare has unveiled an updated Web site that allows greater comparisons of price, coverage and quality. The site (www.medicare.gov) lets beneficiaries sort plans in their communities by factors such as annual costs, the amount of premiums, and what kind of coverage the plans provide once beneficiaries have reached the so-called "doughnut hole," when coverage temporarily stops. Beneficiaries can continue to enroll for 2007 coverage through Nov. 30. The open enrollment period for 2008 begins Nov. 15 and ends Dec. 31. Beneficiaries who do not have access to the Web may obtain the same information through Medicare's toll-free hotline at 1-800-MEDICARE (633-4227). Beneficiaries who may be eligible for low-income assistance may obtain more information on the Web at www.cms.hhs.gov/limitedincomeandresources.

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