



# Connecticut Disability Advocacy Collaborative Bulletin

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

**Empowerment! Opportunity! Justice!**

**April-May, 2008**

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**Please let us know!**

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## **Legislative Update!**

Much of what follows below is taken from reports prepared by Beth Leslie, Legislative Liaison for the Office of Protection and Advocacy for persons with Disabilities. The P&A Bill Tracking Report, managed by Beth, is available on-line at [www.ct.gov/opapd](http://www.ct.gov/opapd). Beth's e-mail address is [beth.leslie@po.state.ct.us](mailto:beth.leslie@po.state.ct.us) and her phone number is 860-297-4369. The TDD number at P&A is 860-566-2102 and the toll-free number (including TDD) is 1-800-842-7303.

The 2008 session of the General Assembly will adjourn on May 7. Rumor has it that a version of the state budget may be on the agenda as soon as this week (April 21- 25). Now is the time to contact your legislators about bills affected by the state budget.

The Governor's Budget Secretary has communicated with legislative leadership about concerns of an economic slowdown. The State has a projected surplus for this budget cycle, which is July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009, but there is the potential for budget deficits in the years after that. Legislative leaders, the Governor, and her negotiators (including the budget Secretary Bob Genuario of the Office of Policy and Management) are in talks now about what the final budget should look like.

### **Op Ed Article**

The following piece was submitted to the Hartford Courant by DAC Project Coordinator Stan Kosloski and AARP Executive Director Brenda Kelley in an attempt to shine a light on critical issues affecting community living opportunities:

“Currently, only one-third of Connecticut’s \$2.3 billion Medicaid dollars are spent on providing home- and community-based care. The vast majority of funds support institutional care, such as nursing facilities. Our system is out of balance.

A Long -Term Care Needs Assessment was conducted in 2007 by researchers at the University of Connecticut Health Center’s Center on Aging and presented to the General Assembly in January of this year. The groundbreaking study—the first in 20 years—reveals that the overwhelming majority of respondents, nearly 80 percent, express a strong desire to remain in their own homes, with home care services and supports provided as needed. Yet recent trends show this is not the direction we are taking.

Waiting lists for community-based services force individuals to abandon their dreams of staying at home and force many into nursing facilities. Others who are working to transition home from a nursing facility must delay or even abandon their plans because the needed supports are not available. To take one example, the Personal Care Assistance waiver, which enables qualified individuals to hire support staff to help them stay at home, has a waiting list of over seventy. We can do better.

Comparing Connecticut’s system with community living options in other states is instructive. From 1995 to 2005, Connecticut increased spending for home- and community- based services

by less than 10 percent, with most of the change coming in the late 90s; there has been little movement since.

During this same period, Oregon increased its community funding by 51 percent, Massachusetts by 22 percent and Vermont by 29 percent. The average increase for all 50 states was 20 percent. We can do much better.

The General Assembly is in session until May 7. The state budget is not yet finalized. Here are some items that should be on the table:

- Fully support a new and exciting Medicaid program called Money Follows the Person (MFP) that will enable Connecticut residents to use the money spent on nursing facility placement to transition back into a home in the community.
- Establish a Long-Term Care Trust Fund to reinvest the monies saved the State by MFP into expanded home- and community-based care options.
- Eliminate the requirement for six months of institutionalization, currently mandated by MFP, by establishing a service option for persons newly institutionalized or still living at home that eliminates this roadblock.
- Establish and fund a Single Point of Entry (also referred to as an Aging and Disability Resource Center, or ADRC) to inform elders, people with disabilities, and their families about all options and help maximize consumer choice.
- Add additional slots to the waiver programs and state -funded pilots that currently have a waiting list or are at capacity.

Currently, 27,000 individuals reside in Connecticut nursing facilities where the average private pay cost for one year exceeds \$109,000. Services utilized by individuals living at home who have similar support needs typically cost between 25 percent to 30 percent of nursing facility costs. In other words, on average, three people with support needs can be provided services in their own homes for the same amount that nursing facility placement would cost. The services that most people prefer are generally less expensive than the services they are often forced to use because of the lack of less expensive alternatives!

Connecticut's soaring population of older adults and persons of all ages with disabilities who need long-term care deserve the dignity of living in their own homes and communities. They should have choices when it comes to long term care.

Action taken now by our General Assembly can be both humane and fiscally responsible.

It's a win-win for all concerned."

### **Autism Related Legislation**

HB 5696 AN ACT REQUIRING INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER THERAPIES, has been approved unanimously by the House of Representatives. It now needs to be approved by the State Senate. The deadline for action is midnight, Wednesday, May 7.

Other autism-related bills awaiting action by the House of Representatives and State Senate:

- HB 5666 AN ACT CONCERNING EXPANSION OF THE PILOT PROGRAM FOR PERSONS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS. To increase access to the autism spectrum disorders pilot project and ensure that such pilot project remains in effect through June 30, 2009.
- HB 5590 AN ACT CONCERNING THE TEACHING OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES. To require the development and use of instructional methods for children with autism and other developmental disabilities.

Go to [www.cga.ct.gov](http://www.cga.ct.gov) for detailed bill information.

### **Qualified Interpreter Legislation**

On April 21, HB 5797 (AAC the Availability of Qualified Interpreter Services) was passed by the Judiciary Committee. The bill now goes back to the House floor; it can then be referred to another committee, or be placed on the House of Representatives calendar for a vote.

### **Other Bills of Interest**

Below is a list of selective bills – not yet approved - that would affect people with disabilities. A comprehensive list is available on the P&A website [www.ct.gov/opapd](http://www.ct.gov/opapd) under "Latest News". The below bills are listed by topic area - not by disability. Where the bill title does not clearly indicate the contents of the legislation, a short summary follows the bill title. Summaries are based on research summaries done by staff in the Office of Legislative Research and published on the legislative website. You can check the status of any bill by going to the legislative website [www.cga.ct.gov](http://www.cga.ct.gov) and entering the bill number in the "Number" box at the top of the homepage. Again, we thank Beth Leslie at P&A for the outstanding work she does every year reporting on legislation affecting people with disabilities.

#### **BUDGET**

HB 5021 AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2009. To implement the Governor's budget recommendations. This is the "budget bill" and it is available on the Internet at:

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/ofa/Documents/OFABudget/2008/Committee/Index.htm>

#### **CHILDREN**

SB 174 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF

#### **EDUCATION**

SB 418 AN ACT CONCERNING THE HIRING OF SUPPORT STAFF FOR TEACHERS OF THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED.

HB 5888 AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE OPTICAL SCAN VOTING SYSTEM. Adds that voters "be informed of the different voting options available and have the right to use the voting system of their choice from the systems available" and requires that Voter's Bill of Rights Posters indicate include this provision. By law, the secretary of the state must distribute the Voter's Bill of Rights posters to each municipality. The posters must be placed conspicuously in all polling places. (This is the same language as SB 444.)

#### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

HB 5039 AN ACT CONCERNING AN ENHANCED 9-1-1 SERVICE DATABASE.

This bill allows subscriber information in the enhanced 9-1-1 database to be used for enabling emergency notification systems in life-threatening emergencies. Under current law, it may be used only in responding to emergency calls or investigating false or intentionally misleading reports of incidents requiring emergency service. The bill defines "subscriber information" as the name, address, and telephone number in the enhanced database of a telephone used to place a 9-1-1 call or in connection with an emergency notification system.

#### FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA)

SB 65 AN ACT ALLOWING BLIND OR PHYSICALLY DISABLED STATE OR QUASI-PUBLIC EMPLOYEES TO USE ACCUMULATED SICK LEAVE FOR GUIDE DOG TRAINING.

SB 242 AN ACT CONCERNING CHANGES TO STATUTES AFFECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES. Among other things, this bill requires the DDS ombudsman to have experience in the field of developmental services rather than mental retardation. The bill also permits DDS to hire another self-advocate in a general worker position.

SB 417 AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FATALITY REVIEW BOARD. This bill codifies, with changes, the Fatality Review Board (FRB) for Persons with Disabilities, which was created by Executive Order 25 in February 2002. The bill's nine-member board must investigate the circumstances surrounding untimely deaths of people with disabilities when the director of the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (OPA) determines it is warranted. The FRB must report on its investigations by February 1, 2009, and annually thereafter, to the governor and the Human Services and Public Health committees. Executive Order 25 requires annual reports to the governor and the Public Health Committee.

#### HEALTH CARE / INSURANCE

HB 5514 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A LOAN PROGRAM FOR THE PURCHASE OF PROSTHESES.

SB 414 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE-FUNDED HOME CARE PROGRAM FOR THE DISABLED AND PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR THE DISABLED. This bill increases the asset limits in the state-funded, pilot home and

community-based services program for adults under age 65.

SB 561 AN ACT CONCERNING THE MONEY FOLLOWS THE PERSON PROJECT. This bill increases, from 700 to 5,000, the number of individuals who can be served under the state's plan for participating in the federal Money Follows the Person (MFP) Demonstration program. MFP is a five-year program that permits states to move individuals out of nursing homes or other institutional settings and into less-restrictive, community-based settings. The Department of Social Services (DSS) has developed a protocol for the demonstration, which needs federal approval before it can be implemented.

HB 5791 AN ACT CONCERNING A SINGLE POINT OF ENTRY FOR LONG-TERM CARE.

HB 5845 AN ACT CONCERNING THE HOMECARE OPTION PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY (HOPE). Among other things, this bill adds certain requirements and stipulations concerning the status of the HOPE trust fund, its relationship to the state, and how deposits must be administered. HOPE allows participants to establish individual savings accounts within a state-administered trust fund. It allows an account's designated beneficiary to withdraw funds for qualified home care expenses that (1) are either not covered by a long-term health insurance policy or supplement services covered by such a policy or by Medicare and (2) will allow them to remain in their homes or live in a non-institutional setting as they age. HOPE is administered by the state comptroller.

#### MOTOR VEHICLES / TRANSPORTATION

SB 499 AN ACT CONCERNING PARKING FOR PERSONS WHO ARE BLIND AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES WHICH LIMIT OR IMPAIR THE ABILITY TO WALK.

This bill establishes several new requirements with respect to the issuance and use of handicapped parking windshield placards including: requiring anyone issued a placard to have either a Connecticut driver's license or a non-driver photo identification card; requiring a placard to expire and be renewed when the recipient's license or identification card has to be renewed; requiring the newly issued placards to contain additional information; requiring placards to be returned to the motor vehicle commissioner when the recipient moves to another state or dies; establishing a \$500 fine for using a placard issued to a deceased person; and requiring a person's certification of eligibility for the credential to be made under penalty for false statement. The bill also requires the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) commissioner to establish an on-line procedure for members of the public to file complaints of violations of the handicapped parking laws and evaluate alternative enforcement methods and certain other issues related to the handicapped parking laws and submit recommendations to the Transportation Committee by January 15, 2009.

SB 664 AN ACT CONCERNING INDEPENDENT TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS. This bill increases from four to five the number of initial grant recipients that the Department of Social Services (DSS) must select to provide community-based regional transportation systems for the elderly. This increase reflects a fifth initial grant recipient funded by DSS. The five recipients initially each received a \$50,000 grant covering FY 06 and 07. The bill requires the commissioner to provide a \$25,000 grant to each initial recipient for FY 09. It also adds the requirement that a grantee provide wheelchair accessible options. Existing law requires a

grantee, to the extent practicable, to model its system on the ITNAmerica model and to work cooperatively with the regional planning agency of which it is a member to develop the network.

### **The DAC Southwest Regional Network presents!**

The South West Region of the Disability Advocacy Collaborative presents "The A.D.A.: How To Make It Work For You". This seminar is open to the public and will be held on Thursday, May 22 from 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.. Registration will begin at 9:30 a.m. The Seminar will be held at the Tully Health & Fitness Center Auditorium, on 32 Strawberry Hill Court, in Stamford (203-355-4567).

Learn about when and how the Americans with Disabilities Act can help you, and why you need to know this information if you have a disability, or are a consumer, a member of the business community, an employer or an employee, or a service provider. Learn what your requirements/rights are under the ADA. Learn how to contact the ADA, and how to follow through on an issue, including how and when to file a complaint if your rights are blocked.

The cost for the Seminar is \$12 which includes lunch. The program will be led by Stan Kosloski, former State A.D.A. Coordinator and current Project Director of the Connecticut Disability Advocacy Collaborative. The following topics will be covered: How can the A.D.A. help me, and When, Why, and How to go about achieving your rights.

To register, please send a check to Carol Kana, 42 Wescott St., Riverside, CT 06878, made out to Disability Advocacy Collaborative, no later than May 10, 2008. For further info, please contact Carol Kana at 203-637-4304, or email her at [pkana@snet.net](mailto:pkana@snet.net).

If you need an accommodation to attend the training, or written materials in an alternate format, please contact Carol by May 10.

### **Save the Date!**

**The Disability Advocacy Collaborative presents the**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Disability Convention and Expo**

Saturday September 27, 2008

At the Connecticut Expo Center  
265 Reverend Moody Overpass, Hartford (off I-91 Exit 33)

10 am – 4 pm

- Meet with elected officials and candidates for Office

- Visit vendors carrying the latest in adaptive equipment and technology
- Attend presentations on topics vital to the disability community, such as employment and transportation
- Get information on the many services available for children and adults with disabilities
- Bring the kids, participate in fun activities for the whole family
- GET READY TO VOTE ON NOVEMBER 4!

### **BHP Peer and Family Peer Support Workshops**

The Connecticut Behavioral Health Partnership, the Community Collaborative, and local family advocacy organizations are presenting a series of workshops on how parents and families can work together to improve the lives of people living in your communities. Topics to be covered include: What is a Peer or Family Peer Specialist? Who is eligible for this service? What other resources are available to me and my family?

Who should attend?

- HUSKY A and HUSKY B members receiving mental health and/or substance abuse services
- Family Members
- Community Collaborative Members
- Community Advocates
- Family Organizations
- Youth Services Bureaus
- School Services Personnel
- All Other Interested Members of the Community

Dates, times, and locations:

May 7, 2008 9:30 a.m. - Enfield, CT

May 12, 2008 9:30 a.m.- Manchester, CT

May 15, 2008 11:30 a.m.- Waterford, CT

May 21, 2008 10:30 a.m.- New Britain, CT

A light meal will be served, and translators will be available!

Please RSVP by telephone or e-mail: Connecticut Behavioral Health Partnership 860-263-2172 or 877-552-8247 x302172 or e-mail us at: [ctbhp@valueoptions.com](mailto:ctbhp@valueoptions.com)

**Need a Ramp?**

A church in Ridgefield, which does a youth service project each summer where they go to Appalachia and repair homes, will instead be making ramps available in Connecticut this summer. The youth have been trained on basic construction of building wheelchair ramp sections

and they are closely supervised by carpenters. The ramp sections don't "pass" unless they are correctly completed.

There are 75 eight foot sections of ramps free for the taking, which will be available starting Saturday night, May 3. Ramps will continue to be built until May 18.

If you or someone you know needs a ramp on their home please have them contact Kathy Marchione. Let her know what you need and she can help them arrange for pickup. Kathy can be reached at 203-551-5517, or 203-578-4551.

### **FAP Workshop on DDS**

Friends of Autistic People (FAP) is holding an event on Monday, April 28th entitled: "Working In Partnership: Home-School And Community Resources, An Overview of DDS Services and Supports". The workshop, which will run from 7:00 – 9:00 pm, will include presentations by the Department of Developmental Services West Region Individual and Family Support Resource Team (Nancy Dyer - Educational Liaison; Cynthia Stevenson - Transition Coordinator; and Brian Smith - Case Management Supervisor, Lower Fairfield Center. It will be held at the Christ Church Parish House in Greenwich.

There is a \$10 charge to cover expenses. Refreshments will be provided.

For more information or to RSVP call 203-661-8510.

### **Parents with Cognitive Limitations: A Summit for the Future**

Come hear what's working on a national level to support parents with cognitive disabilities, and help create Connecticut's plan to address the service needs of these families. The event will be held on Tuesday, June 24, 2008 from 8:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. at Amarante's Sea Cliff in New Haven.

The intended audience for the conference is Bureau Chiefs, Area Directors, Program Directors, Program Supervisors and Supervisors in State departments, and Executive Staff in other agencies. Guests will include the Thortons, a family previously interviewed on 60 Minutes. Topics will include the challenges of screening and identifying these families and effective strategies for working with them. To date over 600 people throughout the state have been trained on identifying and working with these families. The next step requires changes that can only come about through the leadership of decision-makers.

For more information contact [wendy.kwalwasser@ct.gov](mailto:wendy.kwalwasser@ct.gov).

## **NEAT Offerings**

The NEAT Center will present a “Vision Open House” on Thursday, May 29, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm at the NEAT Center, 120 Holcomb Street in Hartford. Learn about the latest equipment and services currently available for people who are blind or visually impaired. Representatives from several leading manufacturers and service providers will be available to provide hands-on product overview and to answer questions.

For more information call 860-243-2869 or 860-286-3113 (TTY), or e-mail [info@neatmarketplace.org](mailto:info@neatmarketplace.org). You can also get information about the event at [www.neatmarketplace.org](http://www.neatmarketplace.org). The web site includes a wide range of workshops that NEAT will be offering over the next six months.

## **BESB Awards of Excellence**

The Board of Education and Services for the Blind has announced that the agency is now accepting nominations for the 2008 Awards of Excellence. There are six nomination categories including awards for students, small and large businesses, entrepreneurs who are blind, consumers, teachers, and community boards and foundations. The nomination submission deadline is June 27, 2008. An awards ceremony will be held in October in conjunction with White Cane Safety Day in Connecticut. Specific information about the nomination process will be available on the agency website ([www.ct.gov/besb](http://www.ct.gov/besb)) in the near future.

## **NSCIA Spring Fling**

A date has been set for the annual band fundraiser at Murphy and Scarletti's in Farmington, sponsored by the Connecticut Chapter of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association. The activity will be held in the evening of Thursday, May 22, at the beginning of the Memorial Day weekend, with the intention of bringing summer in with a bang. To find out the details e-mail Bill Mancini at [bmancini2208@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bmancini2208@sbcglobal.net).

## **Next in the Series of DD Council Events**

The next event in the Council on Developmental Disabilities’ series on Life Threatening Public Policy will be held on May 2 from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. Jo Masserelli will offer a workshop on “Common Life Experiences of Human Service Recipients and How They Contribute to Their Deaths”. In this workshop Jo will trace the common “wounding” life experiences of people who are recipients of human services. If one is devalued in our society, one is likely to be a recipient of human services, which tends to bring with it patterns of life experiences that are limiting, wounding and even life threatening. Issues raised will include how segregation and congregation can threaten lives and the lethal effects of negative imagery, social isolation, and life-wasting activity.

Other workshops in the series, which also run from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, include:  
May 16 – “An Exploration of Some Fundamental Issues of Restraint as a Human Service Technique”

May 30 - "Quality Of Life and Medical Deathmaking"  
June 13 - "Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide"  
June 27 - "Constructive Responses to Life Threatening Public Policy"

To register for any event, call 418-6157, or toll free 1-800-653-1134, or e-mail [ed.preneta@ct.gov](mailto:ed.preneta@ct.gov). There is no cost to attend.

### **A Date to Save: May 15, 2008**

The Connect-Ability program will host a Transportation Forum on May 15 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Connecticut Expo Center in Hartford. The event will take place during National Transportation Week and will include a round-table discussion highlighting transportation challenges that confront people with disabilities and the opportunities available to them. Glendine Henry ([glendine.henry@ct.gov](mailto:glendine.henry@ct.gov)) is coordinating the planning effort.

### **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](mailto:lackerman01@snet.net)) -- meetings are held at the Litchfield Arc -- next meeting May 14 at 10 am

Southwest -- contact: Carol Kana ([pkana@snet.net](mailto:pkana@snet.net)) -- meetings are held at the Norwalk Police Department (see article on ADA training event being held on 5-22-08)

Danbury Area -- contact Dale Brown ([dbrown@wecahr.org](mailto:dbrown@wecahr.org)) -- meetings are held at Ability Beyond Disability in Bethel

North Central -- contact: Candace Low ([clow@independenceunlimited.org](mailto:clow@independenceunlimited.org)) -- meetings are held at 151 New Park Avenue in Hartford -- next meeting April 28 at 10 am

Waterbury Area -- contact: Mike Valuckas ([mike.valuckas@independencenorthwest.org](mailto:mike.valuckas@independencenorthwest.org)) -- contact Mike for information about next meeting

Northeast Area -- contact: Carolyn Newcombe ([cnewcombe@charter.net](mailto:cnewcombe@charter.net)) -- meetings are held at the Mansfield Senior Center -- next meeting May 20 at 6 pm

Bridgeport Area -- contact: Tony LaCava ([tlacava@drcfc.org](mailto:tlacava@drcfc.org)) -- meetings are on the third Thursday of the month at various sites

### **MS Phone Support Groups**

The Connecticut Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society has announced two new phone support groups: "Weight Management" and "Pain & Spasticity". They also have phone support groups for "Men with MS," "Parents who have MS and are raising children under age 18," "Children ages 9-14 with a parent who has MS" and "Family Caregivers".

If any of these support groups interests you, and you want to get in touch with others from the comfort of your home, free of charge, sign up. You will meet over the phone, one hour a week

for 12 weeks. To register, contact Amy Watkins at 1-800-FIGHT MS (344-4867) or e-mail her at [awatkins@ctfightsMS.org](mailto:awatkins@ctfightsMS.org). For more information on the chapter please go to [http://ctn.nationalmssociety.org/site/PageServer?pagename=CTN\\_homepage](http://ctn.nationalmssociety.org/site/PageServer?pagename=CTN_homepage).

### **Hope Center Offers Workshops for Parents**

The Hope Center for Autism and Related Disorders has announced a workshop series for parents of young children. Practical strategies and tips will be offered along with multiple examples and time for questions. Sessions will be held at The Hope Center (19 Ludlow Road, Suite 202, Westport, CT 06880) from 9:15 to 11:45 am with coffee and ...

Dates and Topics:

May 7 - Facilitating Successful Toilet Training

May 14 - How to Increase Independence in Daily Activities

May 21 - Motivating Your Child to Learn

May 28 - Building Social Skills through Structured Play Dates

June 11 - Addressing Your Child's Sensory Needs

June 18 - Beyond the "Bed-time Story": Components of Effective Sleep Programs

June 25 - Designing Individualized Education Programs

Advance registration fee for an individual session is \$65. For the entire series the fee is \$390. In an effort to facilitate discussions and address questions, enrollment will be very limited. To register or for more information, call the Hope Center at 203-227-3383. On-site babysitting in a very child centered, fun environment may be arranged in advance for an additional fee.

### **Governor's Task Force to Offer Seminar**

The Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children will hold a one day seminar, "Into the Light: Children with Disabilities and the Legal System", on May 15, 2008. The event, to run from 9:00 am – 4:30 pm will feature Nora J. Baladerian, PhD, a Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, and a Board Certified Forensic Examiner. It will be held at the Four Points Sheraton in Meriden (275 Research Parkway).

For more information contact Sharon Dexler at 860-566-2106, Ext. 306.

### **DOJ Business Leadership Forum**

On June 26th the New Haven Department of Services for People with Disabilities will be co-sponsoring with the U.S. Department of Justice and Yale New Haven Hospital a Business Leadership Forum to discuss providing accessibility to healthcare services and facilities for individuals with disabilities. If you are interested in attending please send Department Director Michelle Duprey your mailing address so she can put you on her mailing list:

Michelle M. Duprey, Esq., Director,  
Department of Services for Persons with Disabilities  
City of New Haven, 165 Church Street, New Haven, CT 06510  
(203) 946-7651 Fax: (203) 946-8587 TTY: (203) 946-8582

### **Ready to Start Your Spring Cleaning?**

You can support CT-KASA (CT Kids As Self Advocates) and clean the clutter from your house, all at the same time! CT-KASA is having a series of tag sales and lemonade stands on Friday and Saturday July 11 & 12, 2008 at various locations around the state. If you would like to donate your “treasures” for this worthy cause, or you’d like to sponsor a sale at your location, please contact Heather Northrop at [heathernorthrop@sbcglobal.net](mailto:heathernorthrop@sbcglobal.net) or 860-679-1561.

The proceeds of these efforts will promote youth advocacy, community inclusion and opportunity for all. For more information, go to [www.ctkasa.org](http://www.ctkasa.org) .

### **Celebrate ADAPT's 25th Anniversary in Washington, DC**

April 27th  
Fun Run for Disability Rights

April 28th - April 30th  
Grassroots Actions

May 1st  
25th Anniversary Dinner, Exhibition and Show

For information: 512-442-0252, 303-733-9324

Food, Music, Exhibits, History, Multi-media, Faces from ADAPT’s past

Contact [info@adapt25.org](mailto:info@adapt25.org) or go to [www.adapt.org/](http://www.adapt.org/) for more information.

### **Update on ADA Restoration Act**

Twenty-one veterans and military organizations have signed letters to Congress supporting the ADA Restoration Act, which seeks to restore the original intent of Congress in protecting people with disabilities from discrimination in the workplace.

The Restoration Act will remedy the absurd Catch-22 created by the legal system which now allows employers to say a person is “too disabled” to do the job but not “disabled enough” to be protected by the law:

- People with conditions like epilepsy, diabetes, HIV, cancer, hearing loss, and mental illness who manage their disabilities with medication, prosthetics, hearing aids, etc. – or “mitigating measures” – are viewed as “too functional” to have a disability and are denied the ADA’s protection from employment discrimination.

- People denied a job or fired because an employer mistakenly believes they cannot perform the job – or because the employer does not want “people like that” in the workplace – are also denied the ADA’s protection from employment discrimination

The ADA Restoration Act (H.R. 3195/S. 1881) ensures the right to be judged based on performance. It restores the original intent of Congress, harmonizing the ADA with other civil rights laws and requiring the courts to interpret the law fairly.

For more information on the bill, go to [www.c-c-d.org/task\\_forces/rights/tf-rights-ada.htm](http://www.c-c-d.org/task_forces/rights/tf-rights-ada.htm) .

### **Brain Injury Bill Passes Senate!**

On April 10, the U.S. Senate passed a slightly revised version of S. 793, the Traumatic Brain Injury Act, which exactly matches the House version passed earlier in the week. The bill has now been cleared entirely by Congress and will be forwarded on to the President for his signature. Grassroots advocates played an essential role in moving this legislation and ensuring that Congress passed it this year. The Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) and its Connecticut chapter (BIAC) have sent out a huge “thank you” to all who contacted your Representatives and otherwise worked to ensure the progress of this key legislation.

The legislation will extend and improve funding for a range of traumatic brain injury rehabilitation programs, such as assistance in returning to work, finding a place to live, and obtaining needed support and appropriate rehabilitation services. It also funds an important Center for Disease Control program to prevent such injuries. The bill will be of major assistance to soldiers with such injuries from combat, and to children, who tend to have a higher incidence of brain injuries.

More information on S. 793 can be found on the Brain Injury Association of America web site: [www.biausa.org](http://www.biausa.org) .

### **HUD's Notice Re "Reasonable Accommodation" and Increasing Housing Voucher Payments for Persons with Disabilities**

Steve Gold, long time disability rights advocate, shares his insights into changes in HUD regulations:

“HUD (the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) recently issued a new Notice (PIH 2008-13) entitled "Requests for Exception Payment Standards for Persons with Disability as a Reasonable Accommodation." As many of you know, persons with disabilities who require mobility accessible housing units and who have a Housing Choice Voucher (aka Section 8 tenant-based voucher) often have great difficulty locating a unit that meets their needs. When they do find such a unit in the private market that would accept a voucher as payment, the rent most often exceeds the payment standard of the voucher.

Federal regulations authorize Housing Authorities (the local agencies that administer the voucher program), on their own, to increase the value of a voucher up to 110% of the Fair Market Rent (established by HUD for each local area). To increase the voucher from 110% up to 120% of the FMR, the Housing Authority must request the HUD Field Office for permission and to increase the voucher above 120% the HA must request HUD's national headquarters for permission.

In the past there have been several problems which we believe (and hope) that the recent HUD Notice will correct: (1) Housing Authorities unwillingness to increase the value of the voucher so a person with a disability could rent an accessible unit, and (2) when housing authorities were willing to increase the voucher's payments, the HUD process for requests above 120% of the FMR was so cumbersome that by the time national HUD acted, the rental units were gone.

HUD's Notice 2008-13 addresses both of these problems in new ways. First, HUD emphasized that increased payments for vouchers for persons with disabilities to use with accessible units were a "reasonable accommodation" under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. By recognizing that increased payments were often necessary to achieve equal access and equal opportunity in using vouchers, and therefore were a civil rights issue, this should force Housing Authorities to increase the voucher payments.

If you have an accessible unit and if your housing authority refuses to increase the payment as a reasonable accommodation or if the housing authority refuses to request HUD for permission to pay over 110% or over 120% of the FMR, the housing authority has potentially violated the civil rights' protections for persons with disabilities in Section 504 and can be sued. It is no different than if they refused to put up grab bars or a ramp as a reasonable accommodation.

Second, the Notice provides a specific person in national HUD office and her fax number and email address for voucher payments exceeding 120% of the FMR. We hope this will significantly expedite the process so persons, who finally find an accessible unit, do not lose it because HUD has taken too long to respond.

The Notice provides an example of the calculation process which should be followed and lists the types of documentation that should be provided.”

[Steve Gold, The Disability Odyssey continues, Information Bulletin #243 (4/08). Back issues of other Information Bulletins are available online at [www.stevegoldada.com](http://www.stevegoldada.com) with a searchable Archive at this site divided into different subjects. To contact Steve Gold directly, write to [stevegoldada@cs.com](mailto:stevegoldada@cs.com) or call 215-627-7100.]

### **“Rights and Responsibilities of Transit Customers with Disabilities” Now Available in Spanish**

“Rights and Responsibilities of Transit Customers with Disabilities” is a 16-page guide which is now it’s available in Spanish. The publication, published by Easter Seals Project Action, guides riders through an understanding of their rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act. It also addresses etiquette and thoughtful behavior on vehicles, and encourages community advocacy for transportation issues. Transit agencies are encouraged to order a free

quantity of this booklet to make available to their customers. Go to the following to obtain copies:

[https://secure2.convio.net/es/site/Ecommerce?VIEW\\_PRODUCT=true&product\\_id=2401&store\\_id=3863&JServSessionIdr005=q7vqke8lv2.app26b](https://secure2.convio.net/es/site/Ecommerce?VIEW_PRODUCT=true&product_id=2401&store_id=3863&JServSessionIdr005=q7vqke8lv2.app26b)

## **Inclusive Livable Communities for People with Psychiatric Disabilities**

On March 17 the National Council on Disabilities (NCD) released a report that looks at barriers and solutions relating to people with psychiatric disabilities and their ability to fully participate in the life of their communities. This report comes as a follow up to reports in 2004 and 2006 on “livable communities”.

In 2004, the National Council on Disability (NCD) issued a comprehensive report, *Livable Communities for Adults with Disabilities*, which contained a number of specific recommendations to promote the full integration of people with disabilities. A 2006 follow up report identified six elements that are integral to improving the quality of life for all citizens—including children, youth, and adults—with disabilities. For the promise of full integration into the community to become a reality, people with disabilities need safe and affordable housing; access to transportation; access to the political process; and the right to enjoy whatever services, programs, and activities are offered to all members of the community by both public and private entities. Although the NCD reports addressed people across the full array of disabilities, a main focus of accessibility was on environmental elements that primarily apply more to the “obvious” disabilities than to “hidden” disabilities like many psychiatric disabilities and mental illnesses. Information about the six identified elements of livable communities, other elements, barriers, and promising practices for people with psychiatric disabilities needs to be broadened to achieve all-inclusive communities.

The March 2008 report focuses specifically on expanding the livable communities framework and elements to people with psychiatric disabilities and supports full inclusion that leaves out no one.

To obtain a copy of the report, go to: <http://www.ncd.gov/> .

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