



## **Connecticut Disability Advocacy Collaborative Bulletin**

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

**Empowerment! Opportunity! Justice!**

**January - February, 2009**

To include information in next month’s Bulletin please contact us!

Website: <http://www.ct-dac.org/contactus.htm>

Stan Kosloski, 860-614-8351 or [StanKosloski@ct-dac.org](mailto:StanKosloski@ct-dac.org)  
Jayne Kleinman, 203-631-4800 or [JayneKleinman@ct-dac.org](mailto:JayneKleinman@ct-dac.org)

*A slide show featuring activities from the September 27 Disability Convention and Expo is being prepared for our web site. Check us out in a week or two: [www.ct-dac.org](http://www.ct-dac.org) .*

<i>In This Issue</i>	<i>Page</i>
<b>Info on Food Stamps &amp; Fuel Assistance</b>	2
<b>The Governor, the state budget, the 2009 session of the General Assembly, autism, CEAN, NAMI-CT and Beth Leslie</b>	2
<b>NAMI-CT, MFP, &amp; depression and bi-polar support</b>	6
<b>An observation from Communitas &amp; an unemployment extension</b>	7
<b>AmeriCares free clinics and other upcoming events</b>	8
<b>Accessible taxis in CT &amp; updated census data</b>	9
<b>National News: health insurance for kids; the federal stimulus package and disability; Jerry Lewis petition; new websites – one for family caregivers and one for veterans; social security update; a new Medicaid primer; a report on public policy and aging, and one on disability and health; &amp; a college scholarship announcement</b>	10
<b>Regional Advocacy Networks</b>	14

## **New SNAP (Food Stamp) Telephone Info Line**

As of December 1, individuals interested in learning about SNAP (formerly the Food Stamp program) can access basic information by calling 1-866-974-SNAP twenty-four hours a day or access the on-line pre-screener at [www.ctfoodstamps.org](http://www.ctfoodstamps.org).

## **Fuel Assistance Information Available Through 2-1-1**

Thousands of Connecticut households have been approved for home heating assistance this winter and thousands more applications are being processed. Information on all the programs is available by calling 2-1-1 – the statewide information helpline. A comprehensive energy aid Web site can be found by clicking on the “CT Energy Resources” link on the State of Connecticut Web site at [www.ct.gov](http://www.ct.gov).

## **Disturbing Budget News**

Governor Jodi Rell announced this week that her budget office now estimates the deficit for the current fiscal year at nearly \$922 million – even after the latest round of budget cutting. The most recent deadline for quarterly estimated income tax payments was January 15. Those payments were 20 percent below projections, and if these trends continue income tax revenues for the entire year will likely fall \$665 million – nearly two-thirds of a billion dollars – below projections. The latest deadline for corporation tax estimated payments was December 15, and those payments are trending \$100 million below projections. Sales tax collections, meanwhile, are running \$50 million behind projections.

## **You are invited...**

Re: the above - the Governor’s announcement that the likely state deficit for THIS YEAR will approach \$1 billion was more than double what was projected just one month ago. For the next two years the funding gap will be \$6 billion, out of a total state budget of \$18 billion. How will the deficit be covered? What will be cut? What will be spared? What principles will guide the decision making process? How can people with disabilities impact the end result?

The Disability Advocacy Collaborative is inviting the leadership of disability advocacy organizations, and individual disability advocates, to come together on **Wednesday, February 18** to discuss strategies that can be put in place to make sure our voices are heard. The meeting will be held **from 9:30 - 11:30 am** in the Training Room at the Office of Protection and Advocacy - 60 B Weston Street - Hartford, CT 06120. [Note that the Governor's budget will come out on February 4, so we will know what her recommendations are when we meet].

The outcome of our meeting may be a communication system we set up to make sure all advocacy groups and advocates are fully informed of all the actions that are taking place, or the group that meets may decide to collectively take a pro-active step to make our voices heard.

Please RSVP me ([stankosloski@att.net](mailto:stankosloski@att.net) or 860-614-8351) to let me know of your interest in attending. I also ask that you bring with you any insights or suggestions you may have re: impacting the legislative decision making process.

Stan Kosloski  
Project Director  
CT Disability Advocacy Collaborative

## **Autism News**

During the 2009 legislative session, a number of autism organizations will be working together in support of several autism-specific items:

- Continued expansion of the autism pilot program
- Medicaid Waiver for adults
- Autism insurance reform (ABA, psychological evaluations and medications)

To get involved, go to [www.autismvotes.org](http://www.autismvotes.org) and register to receive legislative updates. You are also invited to come to the Capitol on April 8 to participate in Autism Awareness Day.

Sara Reed  
Autism Society of Connecticut (ASCONN)  
[www.asconn.org](http://www.asconn.org)  
888-453-4975  
e-mail: [asconn@sbcglobal.net](mailto:asconn@sbcglobal.net)

Shannon Knall  
Autism Speaks, Connecticut  
[www.autismvotes.org](http://www.autismvotes.org)

Lois Rosenwald  
Autism Spectrum Resource Center (ASRC)  
[www.ct-asrc.org](http://www.ct-asrc.org)

Beth Lambert  
CT Families for Effective Autism Treatment (CTFEAT)  
[www.ctfeat.org](http://www.ctfeat.org)

## **CEAN Releases 2009 Legislative Priorities**

The Connecticut Elder Action Network (CEAN) has released its priorities for the 2009 session of the state General Assembly, and many of them relate to the needs of individuals with disabilities. CEAN notes that to achieve success for efforts designed to allow individuals to receive services and supports in their homes and communities—such as the newly launched Money Follows the

Person program—Connecticut must support the long-term care infrastructure. This must be accomplished by taking the following steps:

- Reinvest the “enhanced match” received under Money Follows the Person - as required by Public Act 08-180 – in support of community based services. Low provider rates exacerbate an existing workforce shortage - we must pay providers, including personal assistants, a reasonable reimbursement rate and invest in initiatives to recruit and train more direct care workers to address our existing workforce shortage.
- Ensure the long-term viability of all programs that help individuals who are receiving care in the community, including the Personal Care Assistant waiver, Acquired Brain Injury waiver, Home Care Program for Disabled Adults and others. Without these programs in place and open to new participants, individuals may be forced to receive care in more expensive, institutionalized settings.
- A comprehensive reorganization of DSS--while retaining its all-ages approach-- could achieve cost savings, improve the delivery of services and supports, be easier for residents and would result in a more integrated approach to long-term care. This consolidated approach is fully supported by the Long-Term Care Needs Assessment and other national research and best practices.

### **Beth Leslie Reports**

Beth Leslie, Legislative Liaison for the Office of Protection and Advocacy, has shared important information re: the state legislative session just underway:

FINAL COMMITTEE ACTION (often called the "JF Deadline"): The time limit for committees to vote to report favorably and submit bills and resolutions proposing amendments to the constitution and other substantive resolutions to the Legislative Commissioners' Office shall be not later than 5 p.m. on the following committee deadlines:

March 5: Aging; Children; Veterans' Affairs

March 9: the Program Review and Investigations Committee

March 10: General Law; Housing; Public Safety and Security

March 11: Legislative Management

March 12: Banks; Insurance and Real Estate; Labor and Public Employees

March 16: Transportation

March 17: Commerce; Higher Education and Employment Advancement

March 19: Energy and Technology; Human Services

March 20: Environment

March 23: Education; Planning and Development

March 27: Public Health

March 30: Government Administration and Elections

April 3: Judiciary

April 16: Appropriations

April 17: Finance, Revenue and Bonding

**PUBLIC HEARINGS\*SHORT NOTICE:** Be aware that under the rules of the legislature, only 5 days notice needs to be given before a public hearing is held on any piece of legislation. This is 5 calendar days, and it includes weekends, the first day the notice is published and the day of the hearing. So a notice could show up in the Friday, February 13 legislative bulletin, and Monday, February 16 is a State Holiday, the public hearing can be held on Tuesday, February 17. This would mean there the notice of the public hearing really only was published on that Friday. So be alert for any public hearing notices around state holidays especially.

Beth is continuing her weekly bill tracking update during the state legislation session. She will also send out e-mail notices regarding proposed legislation, budget proposals, public hearings and other legislative business affecting people with disabilities. To protect your privacy, Beth sends an e-mail to herself, and puts individual names in the "bcc" or "blind copy" section.

You can see Beth's weekly bill tracking report on the P&A website at [www.ct.gov/opapd/cwp/view.asp?a=1749&q=288622&opapdPNavCtr=#44743](http://www.ct.gov/opapd/cwp/view.asp?a=1749&q=288622&opapdPNavCtr=#44743). You can also see a list of bills by topic at: [www.ct.gov/opapd/cwp/view.asp?a=1749&q=413486&opapdPNavCtr=#49086](http://www.ct.gov/opapd/cwp/view.asp?a=1749&q=413486&opapdPNavCtr=#49086)

If the links above do not work (you should be able to "cut and paste" them into your browser) you can access the P&A website at: [www.ct.gov/opapd](http://www.ct.gov/opapd) and click on "LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION" on the left side of the website, then click on 'Bill Tracking Report' or "List of Bills by Topic".

Beth is eager to add anybody with an interest in state legislation to her distribution list. Feel free to contact her at [beth.leslie@po.state.ct.us](mailto:beth.leslie@po.state.ct.us).

### **Join the NAMI-CT Public Policy Committee on February 10<sup>th</sup>**

Interested in how the state's budget impacts mental health policy and how we can protect funding for critical mental health services? The Public Policy Committee of NAMI-CT (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) will meet on Tuesday, February 10 from 5:30 - 7:30 pm at FAVOR, Inc. (2138 Silas Deane Hwy - Rocky Hill, CT 06067 – 860-563-3232.

The 2009 Legislative Session began on January 7th and Governor Rell will release her state budget proposal for fiscal years 2010-11 on Wednesday, February 4th. The Public Policy Committee will meet shortly afterwards to review the budget and its implications on NAMI-CT's legislative priorities, especially in light of the state's current fiscal crisis. All NAMI-CT members are welcome.

To join NAMI-CT, go to [www.namict.org](http://www.namict.org) or call Iris Nazario at the NAMI-CT office at 1-800-215-3021. Dinner will be provided. RSVP to Amy O'Connor at [policyassistant@namict.org](mailto:policyassistant@namict.org) by Monday, February 9th.

## **More NAMI-CT News: Free Educational Program: NAMI Basics!**

Are you a parent or caregiver of a child or adolescent with behavioral health concerns? You are not alone! NAMI Basics is a FREE 6 week course taught by trained family members who have lived with this experience. NAMI-Basics allows families to connect to one another while learning about mental illness and empowering themselves to overcome new challenges. It provides information families and need about their child.

- When? On the following Tuesdays - March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, and April 1 from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm
- Where? 95 N. Main Street (4th floor) - Waterbury

For more information contact: Debbie at 203-592-5537 or [jamesmccusker@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jamesmccusker@sbcglobal.net) or Maria at 203-573-1061.

## **MFP Begins!**

The State's Money Follow the Person program (MFP) is up and running, and 289 referrals were screened in the first month. Eligible persons include anyone who has been in a nursing facility or similar institution for at least six months. Application to the program can be made by calling 1-888-99CTMFP (888-992-8637) or by e-mail [mfp@ct.gov](mailto:mfp@ct.gov). Additional information may be obtained at [www.ct.gov/moneyfollowstheperson](http://www.ct.gov/moneyfollowstheperson).

MFP is designed to revolutionize the way federal Medicaid money is spent in Connecticut, rebalancing expenditures so that individuals needing in-home care can receive that care in their own home rather than in a nursing facility.

For more information on MFP contact Dawn Lambert, Project Director, at [dawn.lambert@ct.gov](mailto:dawn.lambert@ct.gov) or 860-424-4897.

## **Depression and Bipolar Support in Spanish**

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) has created a Spanish-language website, [www.dbsalianza.org](http://www.dbsalianza.org), to help Spanish-speaking individuals with depression and bipolar disorder and their caregivers. The website fosters an environment of understanding about the impact and management of these life-threatening illnesses by providing up-to-date, scientifically-based tools and information.

For more information contact Allyson L. Nadeau, Regional Network Manager for the Meriden, Middletown, & Torrington regional communities - Office: (860) 263-2019 - Email: [allyson.nadeau@valueoptions.com](mailto:allyson.nadeau@valueoptions.com).

## An Observation from Communitas

George Ducharme, Co-Director of Communitas, writes in the winter issue of *Communitas EST*: “Imagine - a community organizer will be our next President!! This is a truly historic moment. Historians and scholars will be dissecting the importance of this moment for years and decades to come. From our perspective the fact that he used his community organizing skills to bring out the very best in his campaign team, in his fellow Democrats, and ultimately in all of us in the national electorate is worth taking some time to ponder.

Barack Obama promises to focus the spotlight once again:

- on community
- on empowering people
- on listening
- on uniting rather than dividing
- on using the gifts of people in a positive way
- on working together for the common good
- on cooperating
- on offering all people an opportunity to fully participate

*"We must build a world free of unnecessary barriers, stereotypes, and discrimination.... policies must be developed, attitudes must be shaped, and buildings and organizations must be designed to ensure that everyone has a chance to get the education they need and live independently as full citizens in their communities."*

*~ Barack Obama*

This is truly a breath of fresh air. President-Elect Obama's challenges, both nationally and internationally, are unprecedented. Yet he is already demonstrating in word and deed a great skill to find opportunities in challenges – opportunities to move all people who have been marginalized, forgotten and dismissed into the heart of community where their gifts, abilities and contributions may be recognized and used in this unprecedented time.”

George Ducharme

## Unemployment Extension

Unemployed workers who have exhausted their regular 26 weeks of state unemployment compensation (UC) and the 13 week extension may be eligible for another 7 week extension. The state DOL has expanded its TeleBenefit phone line to the hours of 7:45 am to 6 pm. For local listings go to [www.ctdol.state.ct.us/progsupt/unemplt/unemployment.htm](http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/progsupt/unemplt/unemployment.htm). (TDD/TTY Users Call: 1-800-842-9710.)

Callers may have problems getting through to file a new claim for unemployment compensation (UC) or to file for an UC extension due to the increasing numbers of unemployed workers filing claims. When callers do get through, they should tell DOL when they first tried to call so they don't lose credit for any days that they were not able to get through. Please note that filling out the online Web application will greatly speed up the mailing of your benefits.

## **AmeriCares Free Clinics in SW Connecticut**

AmeriCares Free Clinics provide quality medical care to the uninsured in Norwalk, Bridgeport and Danbury. Volunteer doctors and nurses provide primary as well as specialty care for qualifying, low-income residents. All three clinics treat adult patients through walk-in programs. Patients with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes and asthma, can be seen by appointment. In addition, each clinic offers specialty care programs on a limited basis. The Norwalk clinic is the only location with a pediatric program. Children are examined on Wednesdays from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Lab tests and diagnostic services are available to patients at no charge through AmeriCares Free Clinics extensive network of partner hospitals and laboratories. All three clinics have also established relationships with local pharmacies and participate in Patient Assistance Programs to ensure patients get essential prescription medications at little or no charge. To be eligible you must have no health insurance, meet income guidelines, be a resident of the area, provide photo identification and provide proof of income. For more information call 1-800-486 HELP or go to: [www.AmeriCaresFreeClinics.org](http://www.AmeriCaresFreeClinics.org).

## **Other Upcoming Events**

Thursday, January 29, 1 p.m. - “The Importance of Bus Transit: Transit-Oriented Development in Connecticut” at the Greater Hartford Transit District at Union Station-Hartford. Learn more about transit-oriented development (TOD); how it benefits you, employers, and your community; and best practices to promote development that features the use of transit at all times of the day, excellent pedestrian facilities, housing, access to jobs and effective land use. The event is sponsored by the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation (CACT) in conjunction with Connect-Ability. There is no fee to attend, but space is limited so registration is required. For more information contact Gloria Mills at 860-844-8594 or [gmills.cact@snet.net](mailto:gmills.cact@snet.net).

Wednesday, February 11, 2009 - 7:00 to 9:00 pm - The research on how children learn to read and what works for those who struggle is abundant. However, the research on interventions for adolescents is not as clear. Find out what is known about interventions targeted for specific reading difficulties. The presenter will be Dr. Margie Gillis, Senior Scientist at Haskins Lab, the New Haven research institute that specializes in language and literacy. The forum will take place at Norwalk City Hall, 125 East Ave., 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Common Council Chambers and is co-sponsored by NorwalkSEEKS and SmartKids with Learning Disabilities. It is free and open to the public. Questions or RSVP at [info@norwalkseeks.org](mailto:info@norwalkseeks.org) or (203) 846-2501.

Tuesday, February 17, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm (Registration & refreshments at 9:30 am) “Introduction to the ADA Amendments Act” - held at the Newington Senior and Disabled Center, 131 Cedar Street (also Rte 175), Newington. The new Act will bring some very significant change to the area of employment and people with disabilities, especially those with hidden disabilities. The workshop is sponsored by the ADA Coalition of Connecticut. The presenter will be Stan Kosloski, former ADA Coordinator for the State of Connecticut and Project Director for the Disability Advocacy Collaborative. You must register by Feb. 9 as

attendance is limited to 50 people. Mail the registration form and fee of \$20 to Lisa Caron, ADACC, 60-B Weston St., Hartford, CT 06120. Checks should be made payable to: "ADA Coalition of CT." (A small number of subsidies are available upon request.) If you will require communication accommodations please contact Lisa Caron immediately at 860-297-4383 or email her at [adacoalition@sbcglobal.net](mailto:adacoalition@sbcglobal.net).

While the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has not yet completed the regulations for the new legislation, the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) has developed a publication and resource page regarding what information is currently available about the Act. The new publication is called JAN's Accommodation and Compliance Series: The ADA Amendments Act of 2008 ([www.jan.wvu.edu/bulletins/adaaa1.htm](http://www.jan.wvu.edu/bulletins/adaaa1.htm)) and will be periodically updated as additional information is made public. JAN's ADA Amendments Act of 2008 resources can be found at: [www.jan.wvu.edu/LINKS/adalinks.htm](http://www.jan.wvu.edu/LINKS/adalinks.htm).

Friday – Saturday, April 17-18, Free Dental Care sponsored by the Connecticut Mission of Mercy (CTMOM) project of the CT State Dental Association – free dental care will be available at the New Haven Public Field House - 480 Sherman Pkwy - New Haven - volunteers are needed. Visit [www.csda.com](http://www.csda.com) for more information.

### **Accessible Taxi Service for Passengers that use Wheelchairs**

The City of New Haven Disability Resource Department is working with the New Haven Transit District and the Regional Council of Government to use New Freedom Initiative funding to purchase two accessible taxis for the New Haven area. The Disability Advocacy Collaborative is working with the Greater Hartford Transit District and the Capitol Region Council of Governments to purchase accessible taxis for the Hartford area. Will Connecticut soon have accessible taxi service available to residents that use wheelchairs?

News from a neighbor: in New York City the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) has launched an Accessible Dispatch Program. It is a temporary pilot project to try out a central dispatch system that matches passengers who use wheelchairs with accessible taxis. This project tests dispatching technology, measures demand for wheelchair accessible vehicles, and helps the City determine how to best provide accessible service. This system links passengers that use wheelchairs with accessible vehicles through a central dispatcher. Passengers call 311 for pre-arranged service. 311 connects the passenger to the dispatcher. The dispatcher collects the passenger's pick-up location and communicates electronically with participating drivers. The closest available driver accepts the dispatch and picks up the passenger. Fares charged for Accessible Service are the same as the metered rate of all NYC yellow cabs. TLC has partnered with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, the Mayor's Office of Operations, and the Department of Information Technologies and Telecommunications to create this program.

### **Number of Americans with a Disability Reaches 54.4 Million**

About one in five U.S. residents - 19 percent - reported some level of disability in 2005, according to a U.S. Census Bureau report released earlier this month.

[[www.census.gov/hhes/www/disability/sipp/disable05.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disability/sipp/disable05.html)] Both the number and percentage of

people with disabilities were higher than in 2002, the last time the Census Bureau collected such information. At that time, 51.2 million, or 18 percent, reported a disability.

In the latest survey, nearly half (46 percent) of people age 21 to 64 with a disability were employed, compared with 84 percent of people in this age group without a disability. Among those with disabilities, 31 percent with severe disabilities and 75 percent with non-severe disabilities were employed.

A portion of people with disabilities — 11 million age 6 and older — needed personal assistance with everyday activities. These activities include such tasks as getting around inside the home, taking a bath or shower, preparing meals and performing light housework.

Other important findings:

- Among people 15 and older, 7.8 million (3 percent) had difficulty hearing a normal conversation, including 1 million being unable to hear at all. Although not part of the definition of disability used in the report, 4.3 million people reported using a hearing aid.
- Roughly 3.3 million people, or 1 percent, age 15 and older used a wheelchair or similar device, with 10.2 million, or 4 percent, using a cane, crutches or walker.
- Nearly 7.8 million people age 15 and older had difficulty seeing words or letters in ordinary newspaper print, including 1.8 million being completely unable to see.
- More than 16 million people had difficulty with cognitive, mental or emotional functioning. This included 8.4 million with one or more problems that interfere with daily activities, such as frequently being depressed or anxious, trouble getting along with others, trouble concentrating and trouble coping with stress.
- The chances of having a disability increase with age: 18.1 million people 65 and older, or 52 percent, had a disability. Of this number, 12.9 million, or 37 percent, had a severe disability. For people 80 and older, the disability rate was 71 percent, with 56 percent having a severe disability.
- Among people 25 to 64 with a severe disability, 27 percent were in poverty, compared with 12 percent for people with a nonsevere disability and 9 percent for those without a disability.
- Median monthly earnings were \$1,458 for people with a severe disability, \$2,250 for people with a nonsevere disability and \$2,539 for those with no disability.
- Parents reported that 228,000 children under age 3, or 2 percent, had a disability. Specifically, they either had a developmental delay or difficulty moving their arms or legs. In addition, there were 475,000 children 3 to 5 years, or 4 percent, with a disability,

which meant they had either a developmental delay or difficulty walking, running or playing.

The Survey of Income and Program Participation produces national-level estimates for the U.S. resident population and subgroups, and allows for the observation of trends over time, particularly of selected characteristics such as income, eligibility for and participation in transfer programs, household and family composition, labor force behavior and other associated events.

### **Tell the Senate to Provide Health Insurance to Low Income Kids!**

Last week (January 12-16), the U.S House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved legislation to revise the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) last. SCHIP provides health insurance to the children of working families who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but may not be able to purchase health care insurance on their own. The Senate will vote on its version very soon, and President Obama has indicated he would immediately sign the measure. Advocates are encouraged to contact Senator Christopher Dodd and Senator Joseph Lieberman and urge them to support the bill.

### **House Stimulus Package Includes Disability Initiatives**

News from Justice for All: The U.S. House of Representatives has released its version of the economic recovery package. The Senate is likely to unveil its version this week (January 19-23). That bill will be S.1. Both versions are being worked on in close cooperation with the Obama Administration.

In addition to \$275 billion in tax cuts, the House bill, entitled the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, will provide \$550 billion for myriad domestic programs to spur the economy, job growth and help state and local governments cope with rising deficits.

This bill and a similar one in the Senate are expected to move quickly through the legislative process so that it can be signed into law by President Obama in mid February.

There are many provisions in the bill to increase spending on disability programs. Many other funding increases to states and communities could also be utilized to provide numerous types of assistance to people with disabilities and the programs that support them:

Medicaid: \$87 billion - all states receive a 4.8% increase in Title XIX reimbursement rates with higher rates for states with high unemployment rates

Special Education: \$13 billion for the IDEA State Grant Program and \$600 million for the IDEA Part C Early Intervention Program

Vocational Rehabilitation: \$500 million through the VR State Grant for construction and rehabilitation of facilities that prepare persons with disabilities for gainful employment

Centers for Independent Living: \$200 million to assist people with disabilities to live in their communities.

Once this legislation becomes law, all advocates will have to work closely with state agencies and our local communities to maximize the use of these new funding sources to protect and expand services to our constituents.

### **Petition Signers Needed**

A petition drive has been launched to object to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' announcement that it will give Jerry Lewis its Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award at the Oscar Awards ceremony on February 22. Mike Ervin, long time disability activist, is leading the initiative.

During his decades of hosting the Labor Day Telethon, Jerry Lewis has helped to perpetuate negative, stereotypical attitudes toward people with muscular dystrophy and other disabilities. Jerry Lewis and the Telethon actively promote pity as a fundraising strategy.

In 1990, Lewis wrote that if he had muscular dystrophy and had to use a wheelchair, he would "just have to learn to try to be good at being a half a person." During the 1992 Telethon, he said that people with MD, whom he always insists on calling "my kids," "cannot go into the workplace. There's nothing they can do." Comments like these have led disability activists and their allies to protest against Jerry Lewis. Here's how Lewis responded to the Telethon protesters during a 2001 television interview: "Pity? You don't want to be pitied because you're a cripple in a wheelchair? Stay in your house!"

Jerry Lewis has also made derogatory comments about women and gay men. His outdated attitudes and crude remarks are dehumanizing, not humanitarian.

The petition asks the Academy to cancel its plans to give Lewis the Hersholt Humanitarian Award. To sign the petition, go to [www.petitiononline.com/jlno2009/petition.html](http://www.petitiononline.com/jlno2009/petition.html)

### **New Website for Family Caregivers**

To improve the working relationship between family caregivers and health care providers, the United Hospital Fund has launched the Next Step in Care website: [www.nextstepincare.org](http://www.nextstepincare.org). The website offers a range of guides and checklists - most intended for family caregivers of persons with serious illness - designed to make transitions between care settings smoother and safer.

The website is the first stage of a larger campaign which will engage hospitals, nursing home rehabilitation facilities, and home health agencies, as well as patient advocacy groups and other family caregiver-focused organizations, in addressing a range of transition-related challenges. Many studies have shown that miscommunication and lack of coordination in transitions lead to

errors, particularly around medication changes. The tools are expected to reduce confusion and anxiety for family caregivers, as well as improve patient outcomes and reduce unnecessary rehospitalizations.

The website may be of use to individuals transitioning out of nursing facilities and their families.

### **National Resource Directory for Veterans Website**

The U.S. Department of Labor has joined with the U.S. Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to launch a Web-based directory to help wounded warriors identify resources available to assist them in transitioning back to civilian life. The National Resource Directory encompasses more than 10,000 services and resources, including information on benefits and compensation, education, training and employment, family and caregiver support, health, housing and transportation, services and resources. For more information go to <http://www.hcbs.org/moreInfo.php/nb/doc/2456>.

### **Social Security Update**

The latest edition of the Social Security Update includes information covering a wide variety of topics, ranging from retirement planning to health insurance to SSI to the Medicare drug benefit. To read the December issue of Social Security Update or to review previous issues go to: [www.socialsecurity.gov/newsletter](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/newsletter).

### **Medicaid: a Primer**

Key information on the federal Medicaid program is contained in a new primer developed by the Kaiser Family Foundation. Everything from program structure, eligibility, services, financing and expenditures are covered in concise summaries in a publication released earlier this month. The updated edition also contains graphics showing expenditures by service and the growth of Medicaid acute care spending as compared to private health plans. The tables at the end present data broken down by state. For more information or to view the report in its entirety go to [www.hcbs.org/moreInfo.php/nb/doc/2448](http://www.hcbs.org/moreInfo.php/nb/doc/2448).

### **Public Policy and Aging Report: Aging Services Network**

Four articles published in October, 2008 provide an update of where the Older Americans Act (OAA) and the Aging Network stand in the face of demographic, economic and health care issues. The articles are available through the Clearinghouse for the Community Living Collaborative. The first two cover the history of the legislative and budgetary developments of the network and report on a national survey of Area Agencies on Aging. The third summarizes political vagaries that network agencies encounter. The last advocates that civic engagement efforts must expand to cover disadvantaged and vulnerable older adults.

Background: In 1965, when Medicare, Medicaid, and the Older Americans Act were enacted, people age 65 and older represented slightly more than 9 percent of the nation's population. By 2006, the number of elderly had more than doubled, reaching 37.3 million people and 12.4

percent of the U.S. population. The first wave of the baby boom generation turned age 60 in 2006 and will turn age 65 in 2011—the year the Older Americans Act is due for reauthorization. By 2020, almost one in six people will be age 65 and older.

The purpose of the Older Americans Act is to help older people maintain maximum independence in their homes and communities, with appropriate supportive services, and to promote a continuum of care for the vulnerable elderly. Today, the ‘aging services network’ is comprised of 56 state agencies on aging, 655 area agencies on aging, 233 tribal and Native American organizations, and two organizations serving Native Hawaiians as well as nearly 30,000 local service provider organizations.

For more information or to read the report in its entirety go to [www.hcbs.org/moreInfo.php/nb/doc/2454](http://www.hcbs.org/moreInfo.php/nb/doc/2454).

### **Disability and Health in the United States--2001-2005**

Also available through the Clearinghouse for the Community Living Collaborative is a report from the National Health Interview Survey. Charts and data illustrate health-related differences between disabled and non-disabled non-institutionalized adults. Data are from the National Health Interview Survey. One section illustrates differences in access to care and health insurance coverage. Numbers on the prevalence of disabilities, demographics, and health behaviors and risks are also given. Source: National Center for Health Statistics. To read the report in its entirety go to [www.hcbs.org/moreInfo.php/nb/doc/2426](http://www.hcbs.org/moreInfo.php/nb/doc/2426).

### **2009 Through the Looking Glass Scholarship Announcement**

Through the Looking Glass and its National Center for Parents with Disabilities and their Families have announced new scholarships specifically for high school seniors and college students who have parents with disabilities. These scholarships are part of Through the Looking Glass' new federal grant (New National Center for Parents with Disabilities and their Families). There are two separate scholarship awards, and each has separate eligibility requirements:

1. High School Seniors. To be eligible, a student must be a high school graduate (or graduating senior) by Summer 2009, planning to attend college in Fall 2009 and have at least one parent with a disability. Five separate \$1000 awards will be given out in Fall 2009. Individuals may submit only one application per award period.
2. College Students. To be eligible, a student must be currently enrolled in a college or university, be 21 years of age or younger as of March 16, 2009, and have at least one parent with a disability. Five separate \$1000 awards will be given out in Fall 2009. Individuals may submit only one application per award period.

Selection criteria for all scholarships include academic performance, community activities and service, letters of recommendation and an essay describing the experience of growing up with a

parent with a disability.

Go to [www.lookingglass.org](http://www.lookingglass.org) for more information, including the application form, complete application directions and a FAQ page. All application materials must be completed and postmarked by Monday, March 16, 2009.

## **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

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

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

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

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

**For three years the Bulletin was 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.**