



# Connecticut Disability Advocacy Collaborative Bulletin

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

**Empowerment! Opportunity! Justice!**

**September-October, 2009**

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

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

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*Because of two very important issues that have been dominating the news – one at the state level and one at the national level – the Bulletin this month will begin with a detailed look at both. Additional state and national news will follow beginning on p. 4.*

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## **Connecticut Has a State Budget!**

Connecticut has a state budget - after a long budget fight between the Governor, who wanted to balance the budget with cuts and without tax increases, and the Democratic majorities in the Legislature who proposed tax increases in order to minimize necessary cuts. On August 31, the Legislature passed a state budget, which the Governor allowed to become law without her signature. The budget took effect on Wednesday, September 9. Some issues remain to be decided or clarified in implementer bills, but the outlines of the budget are now known. (Implementer bills are expected to be passed when the Legislature reconvenes on September 23 or 24.) Although the Governor did not sign the budget, the document reflects compromises adopted by the Legislature in order to avoid a veto by the Governor.

The following is excerpted from a summary of the final state budget for the next two years produced by the very competent staff at the Commission on Aging. Threatened with elimination by the Governor, the Commission's budget was reduced by 53%, yet is continuing to fulfill its responsibilities to its core constituency. The summary includes issues relating to the needs of elders and individuals with disabilities:

- Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (protection for individuals in nursing facilities) received a 20% reduction in funding;
- CT Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE):
  - Cost sharing will increase under the state-funded portion of the CHCPE;
  - Personal Care Assistants will now be a covered service under the CHCPE and the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program, providing flexibility and lower-cost alternatives in these programs
- ConnPACE Plus: The new ConnPACE Plus program will maximize federal funds and save consumers money without reducing services by expanding the eligibility requirements for the Low-Income Subsidy program of Medicare to match those of ConnPACE;
- Medicare Part D Wrap-Around: Funding was severely cut for the Medicare Part D Wrap-Around - details for implementation changes are not provided;
- Medical Necessity: The definition of medical necessity under Medicaid will be changed, which could restrict access to prescriptions, durable medical equipment and other needed services. An oversight committee is established to advise on the amended definition.
- Medicaid Managed Care: The budget includes savings attributed to moving older adults and individuals with disabilities into Medicaid managed care (as opposed to fee-for-service). These "Special Needs Plans" are designed to coordinate care between Medicare and Medicaid; many are concerned that they will restrict access to care.
- Money Follows the Person: The administration has agreed to change the operating protocol for Money Follows the Person, bringing in an estimated \$11 million in additional federal funds (good news!).

In other good news, the State Budget did restore some supportive housing funding. After Gov. M. Jodi Rell sought to postpone funding for the development of new units of supportive housing,

the new budget restores some of that funding: \$1.8 million and \$2.3 million, respectively, were included in the FY '10 and FY'11 budgets for supportive services (DMHAS), rental payments (DSS) and debt payment (Treasurer).

## **National Health Care Reform Update**

On September 16, the national Disability Coalition on Healthcare Reform released the following statement entitled “Access and Choices”:

***“Guaranteed, affordable health coverage for all with a choice of private or public plans that cover all medically necessary services. Smarter investments for better health and a stronger economy.”***

People with disabilities need a wide range of health care, durable medical equipment, mental health and home and community-based services. Individuals with disabilities experience many barriers including costs, limits on types and amounts of benefits, pre-existing condition exclusions and lack of specialists and primary care physicians that understand specific disabilities. Proposals that offer acute care programs modeled on Medicare or rely solely on private insurance plans will not meet the needs of people with disabilities.

We support health reform that will:

- End the costly two-year waiting period for Medicare – too many hard working families spend their life savings while waiting to qualify.
- Provide Medicaid health care coverage to all Americans living at or below 100% of the federal poverty level – a person earning \$10,830 is priced out of the insurance market. The average employer sponsored insurance is \$4,600 a year for an individual. Those with chronic or disabling conditions who cannot get coverage in the individual market depend on the Missouri High Risk Pool which costs a 50 year old man, for example, \$17,160 a year. For too many, this means skipping needed care.
- Eliminate pre-existing condition exclusions and rating based on age, health status and gender – because of unfair insurance practices, many families can’t buy insurance even if they can afford it.
- Include subsidies for lower-income Americans who cannot afford health care costs – 80% of the uninsured are from working families. We need affordable options so all Americans can access care and take their child to a doctor when needed.
- Reform the long-term care system to increase choice and access to home and community-based services so individuals with disabilities can live in their own homes – taking individuals out of their homes costs everyone more money and breaks families apart.

Too many people are going without necessary health care and are incurring medical debt. And too many businesses – large and small – are unable to compete due to the high costs of health care. In our current economy, we cannot afford not to provide guaranteed, affordable health care coverage with a choice of private or public plans that covers all medically necessary services.”

- Disability Coalition on Healthcare Reform

### **News from NC Connecticut**

In an effort to create a more collaborative approach to services in the North Central Region, Independence Unlimited (IU) has teamed up with the North Central Area Agency on Aging (NCAAA) and Connecticut Community Care Inc. (CCCI) to form the North Central Aging and Disability Partnership (NCADP). The goal of the partnership is to identify ways that they collectively can create and support a streamlined “no wrong door approach” for individuals with disabilities and elders in the north central region.

One of the first actions of the partnerships will be to identify some low and no-cost opportunities to collaborate. The first event was an educational seminar, held on September 17. IU's Candace Low was the keynote speaker on the topic of health care access and patients' legal rights.

For information about future collaborative initiatives contact Denise at Independence Unlimited, 860-523-5021, voice/TTY.

### **Of Note**

In 2000, 1,377 students, or 1.86% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in Connecticut, had a diagnosis of autism. In 2007-2008, 4,387 or 6.36% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services had that diagnosis, more than tripling the count from only seven years before. *Source: Reported by the State of Connecticut in accordance with Section 618 of IDEA to U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.*

### **KTP Offers Annual Legislative Advocacy Trainings**

The Keep the Promise Coalition will again offer training workshops for individuals wishing to sharpen their legislative advocacy skills. “Essentials of Legislative Advocacy” will be offered on Thursday, Oct. 1 & Thursday, Oct. 8 from 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. at the Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Avenue in Hartford. A box lunch will be provided. More advanced “Legislative Leadership” workshops will be held on Thursday, Dec. 3 & Thursday, Dec. 10 from 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., also at the Legislative Office Building. Lunch vouchers to the LOB Cafeteria will be provided. There is a \$10 fee to help cover cost of book and lunch for each series.

The Keep the Promise Coalition is located at 241 Main Street, 5th Floor, Hartford. Its phone numbers are 860-882-0236 and 1-800-215-3021 (toll free), and its fax number is 860-882-0240.

You may also reach them by e-mail at: [keepthepromise@namict.org](mailto:keepthepromise@namict.org) and their Website is [www.ctkeepthepromise.org](http://www.ctkeepthepromise.org).

### **NAMI to Offer Facilitator Training**

The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Connecticut (NAMI/CT) is will be offering a free NAMI Connection facilitator training on October 2, 3 and 4 in Bloomfield. Certified facilitators will be present to support those who want to learn how to run a NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group. Breakfast and lunch will be provided throughout the three day event.

A NAMI Connection support group is a free, weekly 90-minute group for people living with any kind of mental illness. It is peer run and offers support based on personal experiences, in a completely safe and confidential environment. Ten groups are currently offered throughout CT. Two trained peer facilitators who are currently living in recovery with their mental illness facilitate all groups.

Previous facilitator experience is NOT required. The primary qualifications needed to be a NAMI Connection facilitator are a willingness to help others, and be currently living in recovery from a mental illness.

To register for this three day event, contact Pete Aresco, NAMI Connection Administrative Supervisor at [connectionadmin@namict.org](mailto:connectionadmin@namict.org), (203) 715-2537 (cell), or (860) 882-0236 (NAMI-CT Office).

### **POWERFEST 2009: Future Generations**

Powerfest 2009, a statewide inclusive youth transition festival, will be held at the University of Bridgeport on Saturday, October 3, from 10:00 am – 6:00 pm. The event is sponsored by the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Disability Resource Network, the Department of Public Health, and the Statewide Independent Living Council. The target audience is youth 14-24. The primary purpose of the event is to prepare young people for adult life.

Conference topics include: advocacy, education and vocational pursuits, community and socialization, transportation, recreation and leisure, independence, rights and responsibilities, inspiration and motivation, self-esteem and self-direction and empowerment. The event has been planned and directed by youth with disabilities.

Details and registration material are available at [www.ct.gov/ctcdd](http://www.ct.gov/ctcdd). Pre- registration is required. If you require any special accommodations and/or need assistance with accessible transportation, please contact Angela at 860-418-8709 or [angela.spino@ct.gov](mailto:angela.spino@ct.gov). There is no cost to attend.

## **Kristin Debonee Walk “N” Roll**

The Annual Kristen Debonee 5K Walk”N” Roll will be held on October 3 at 10 am at Manchester Community College. All proceeds from the event will benefit Communitas, Inc., an organization that has provided significant support to the Collaborative over its four year history. Registration for the Walk “N” Roll will take place between 9:30 – 10 am in the AST Building (Tower). There is a \$5 registration fee. A one mile Fun Walk will also be held, and the event will take place rain or shine.

For further information contact Joan Jakiela at 860-512-2705 or by e-mail at [jjakiela@mcc.commnet.edu](mailto:jjakiela@mcc.commnet.edu).

## **A Conversation on Visitability**

The North Central Disability Advocacy Network, an affiliate of the Disability Advocacy Collaborative, will host a breakfast conversation on the topic of visitability at the New Park Office and Conference Center, 151 New Park Ave. in Hartford . The event will take place on Monday, October 5 from 8:30 am (sign in) until 10:30 am. Call Denise at 860-523-5021 v/TTY to arrange accommodations. An interpreter will be provided.

The NC Network is facilitated by Independence Unlimited, where Candace Low is Executive Director. Sue Salters is the staff person assigned to the Network, which is affiliated with the Disability Advocacy Collaborative.

Visitability is a movement to change home construction practices so that virtually all new homes - not merely those custom-built for occupants who currently have disabilities - offer a few specific features that make the home easier for people who develop mobility disabilities to live in, and to make it possible for them to visit family and friends.

The spirit of Visitability is as important as the list of features. That spirit says it's not just unwise but unacceptable that new homes continue to be built with barriers - unacceptable, given how easy it is to build basic access in the great majority of new homes, and unacceptable given the harsh effects major barriers have on so many people's lives, especially the ever-increasing population of those who are aging in place. These easily-avoided barriers cause unsafe living conditions, social isolation, and forced institutionalization.

Second, the features list must be partly rigid and partly flexible. The inflexible features are:

- Wide passage doors (32” clear space)
- At least a half bath/powder room on the main floor
- At least one zero-step entrance approached by an accessible route on a firm surface no steeper than 1:12, proceeding from a driveway or public sidewalk
-

## **Related Federal Legislation: Support the Inclusive Home Design Act!**

The Inclusive Home Design Act, sponsored by Rep. Jan Schakowsky, requires that new, federally assisted housing have the following accessible features for people with disabilities: no-step entrance, wide interior doors, environmental controls, habitable space, and a usable bathroom. To further this, Concrete Change is partnering with the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) and Access Living of Chicago to tell Congress that people care about basic access to new homes.

The National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) has joined with Concrete Change, PVA and the Chicago ILC to strongly support this effort. In collaboration, NCIL urges advocates to sign on and support the Inclusive Home Design Act. To sign on:

1. Ask the director, or the chair of your board, or ANY designated person of your organization, including yourself, to email Susan Prokop at PVA: [susanp@pva.org](mailto:susanp@pva.org) and [concretechange@mindspring.com](mailto:concretechange@mindspring.com).
2. The email only needs the name of the signer; position; name of organization; location if not clear from name; and a phrase like "add me and my organization as strong supporters of IHDA."

The Collaborative urges you to do your part so that advocates can show a very large number of supporters signing on. Once the a significant number of signatories has been obtained it will be sent to Rep. Barney Frank and Rep. Spencer Bachus, committee heads of the House Financial Services Committee who are in charge of the Inclusive Home Design Act.

## **Planning for the Future: What Parents and Students Need to Know**

Parents, students and professionals are invited to attend three free workshops and learn how to prepare for success in the future:

- Exploring the Tools of Self-Advocacy  
Presented by Beth Reel, Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center  
Tuesday, October 6  
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
- Preparing Students for Work  
Presented by Paul Harvey, ARC of New London County  
Thursday, October 22  
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
- Helping Students Transition to College  
Presented by Joseph Madaus, Ph.D.  
Center on Postsecondary Education and Disability, Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut

Saturday, November 14  
9:30-11:30 a.m.

Registration is required. All sessions will be held at Dime Savings Bank, 290 Salem Turnpike in Norwich, Connecticut. Contact Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center for more information or to register at 1-800-445-2722 or [cpac@cpacinc.org](mailto:cpac@cpacinc.org).

## **News from SW CT**

The SouthWest Disability Advocacy Network is hosting their yearly advocacy seminar on Wednesday, October 21 from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm at the Norwalk Inn and Conference Center on East Avenue in Norwalk. Three workshops will be offered, one on self-advocacy, one on federal legislation, and one on the recently passed ADA Amendments Act. Contact regional coordinator Carol Kana at [pkana@snet.net](mailto:pkana@snet.net) for more info.

### **Wednesday, October 21: Disability Mentoring Day**

This is one of many activities commemorating Disability Employment Awareness month sponsored by the CT Business Leadership Network. Throughout the morning, people with disabilities throughout Connecticut will have an opportunity to job shadow at a local business. The Connecticut Business Leadership Network (CTBLN) will be coordinating one of the efforts to match people with disabilities with participating companies.

Who should participate? People with Disabilities of working age, who would like to explore the workplace, should join us on the 21st. Colleges students, high school seniors, and jobseekers as well are welcome. Although the event includes companies from Wallingford, Trumbull, Stamford, Wilton, Windsor and New London, there is a concentration of businesses participants in the Hartford area. So, we will be looking for even more people with disabilities who can get to the Hartford area. How can you help? You can assist by passing this information on to people with disabilities who may be interested.

Those who would like to participate should contact Melissa Marshall at [melissa.marshall@snet.net](mailto:melissa.marshall@snet.net) or 860-561-1232.

### **AAPD Celebrates Ten Years of Disability Mentoring Day**

This year marks the 10th anniversary of Disability Mentoring Day (DMD), a large-scale national effort coordinated by American Association of Persons with Disabilities (AAPD) to promote career development for students and job seekers with disabilities through hands-on career exploration, on-site job shadowing, and ongoing mentoring leading to internship and employment opportunities. DMD connects nearly 20,000 job-seekers with disabilities with thousands of employers in more than 300 locations in every U.S. State and Territory and in more than 24 countries worldwide each year. Over 2,000 participating Public and Private Employers hosted mentees at their places of employment, with many continuing the mentoring relationships for long-term periods. DMD connects nearly 20,000 job-seekers with disabilities with thousands of employers in more than 300 locations in every U.S. State and Territory and in more than 24

countries worldwide each year. Over 2,000 participating Public and Private Employers hosted mentees at their places of employment, with many continuing the mentoring relationships for long-term periods. A grassroots network of more than 350 volunteer Disability Mentoring Coordinators work nationally and internationally to connect their local disability and business communities.

For more information visit [www.aapd.com](http://www.aapd.com).

## **KTP Offering Housing/Medication Training**

Research shows that access to medications and housing are intrinsic to successful recovery, stability, health, and community integration for people with mental illnesses. On October 22 and 27 the Keep the Promise Coalition will offer training events that will address these two critical areas. Entitled “Access to Medications and Housing: Current Status and Future Advocacy” the training will cover recent state & federal public policy changes and issues impacting the mental health community:

- Restricting Access to Medications
- Funding for Supportive Housing Units
- Other Medicaid and Healthcare related Issues
- How to engage and effectively communicate with your policymakers
- How to strengthen your voice by connecting with a coalition
- Brief overview of the legislative process

On Thursday, October 22, the training will be held from 1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. in the Old Judiciary Room of the State Capitol, 210 Capitol Avenue, Hartford. On Tuesday, October 27, the event will be held from 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at the Fairfield Public Library, 1080 Boston Post Rd, Fairfield. Both workshops will be facilitated by Alicia Woodsby, MSW, Public Policy Director, NAMI-CT, and Jan VanTassel, Esq., Executive Director, CT Legal Rights Project.

The training will also review why access to medications and housing are critical components for recovery and reducing costs on multiple state systems; and provide information about resources for people with mental illnesses and their families seeking medications and housing. A take home advocacy resource booklet will be provided.

To register, contact Cheri or Maura at 800-215-3021 or at [keepthepromise@namict.org](mailto:keepthepromise@namict.org). The training is free to the public with limited seating available.

## **and Celebrates Ten Years of Legislative Advocacy**

The Keep the Promise Coalition will celebrate 10 years of legislative advocacy on Thursday, November 5 from 11:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at the St. Thomas Seminary, 467 Bloomfield Avenue in Bloomfield. There will be well-deserved awards presentations, a delicious lunch, and awesome entertainment. Invitations will be sent out in October.

The Keep the Promise Coalition is located at 241 Main Street, 5th Floor, Hartford. Its phone numbers (for Cheri and Maura) are 860-882-0236 and 1-800-215-3021 (toll free), and its Fax is 860-882-0240. You may also reach them by e-Mail at: [keepthepromise@namict.org](mailto:keepthepromise@namict.org) and their Website is [www.ctkeepthepromise.org](http://www.ctkeepthepromise.org) .

### **NEAT Workshop on Adapted Equipment**

On October 29 the New England Assistive Technology Center (NEAT) will present a three hour workshop exploring the current use of adaptive equipment for severely-involved children with disabilities in both the school-based and early intervention therapy practice settings. Use of upright positioning equipment for standing and walking, and the use of adaptive seating, tricycles, and toileting equipment will be described. Acquisition of equipment under IDEA will be outlined. Break-out sessions with adaptive equipment for demonstration and hands-on discovery will follow the educational presentation. Therapists from CT will receive a certificate of completion of the course, for CEU credits.

The event will run from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and the fee for members is \$50 (\$65 for non-members). The NEAT Center is at 33 Coventry Street in Hartford, and their contact information is 860-243-2869 and [info@neatmarketplace.org](mailto:info@neatmarketplace.org).

### **Working it Out: AT and Individuals with Brain Injury**

The Office of Protection and Advocacy, the CT Tech Act Project, and the NEAT Marketplace are combining their resources to produce a workshop on Assistive Technology and individuals with brain injury. Do you know what assistive technology options exist? Do you know what it is you need and how to get it? Do you want to be able to test the different products?

November 19 is the date and 9 am-1 pm is the time for this important event. Enjoy snacks, giveaways, and resource information all in a fun and accessible environment. The NEAT Marketplace is at 33 Coventry Street in Hartford. Space is limited, so RSVP to Jessica Rival at P&A at (860) 297-4362 (local voice) or 1-800-842-7303 (Toll free Voice or TTY).

### **Advocacy Needed for Mental Health Parity Regs**

After years of hard work by addiction and mental health treatment advocates, consumers, and providers, Congress passed the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 on October 3, 2008. The bill requires the Departments of Labor (DOL), Health and Human Services (HHS) and Treasury to issue regulations before the effective date for the Act which is January 1, 2010. It is essential the regulations are issued to avoid misinterpretation of the law and to ensure access to critical mental health and addiction services.

Don't let years of hard work and advocacy go to waste! Make sure regulations addressing the concerns of the mental health and addiction field are issued by January 1, 2010. . Advocates are encouraged to contact the following CT Congressmen and ask them to move the regulatory process along: Joe Courtney (the House Education and Labor Committee), Chris Murphy

(Energy and Commerce Committee), and John Larson (Ways and Means Committee). Call 202-224-3121 to be connected with your Member of Congress' office today.

### **New Data on the Employment of People with Disabilities**

In June 2008, questions were added to the Current Population Survey (CPS) to identify persons with disabilities in the civilian non-institutional population age 16 and older. The addition of these questions allowed the Bureau of Labor Statistics to begin releasing monthly labor force data for persons with disabilities. The collection of this data is sponsored by the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy.

Publication of CPS disability data began in February 2009 with the issuance of labor force data for January 2009. These materials provide information on comparisons with other data sources, variability of the data, and the types of data available.

In August 2009, the unemployment rate of persons with a disability was 16.9 percent, compared with 9.3 percent for persons with no disability, not seasonally adjusted. The employment-population ratio for persons with a disability was 18.4 percent, compared with 64.6 percent for persons with no disability

Explanatory materials are available on the Bureau of Labor Statistics Frequently Asked Questions page: [www.bls.gov/cps/cpsdisability\\_faq.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsdisability_faq.htm) .

### **CMS Places Strict Limits on Relationships between DME Suppliers and Health Professionals**

On August 7, 2009 the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a transmittal that states that healthcare professionals will not be allowed to have more than one Durable Medical Equipment (DME) provider sell items at their office. An administrative contractor must verify "that no more than one enrolled DMEPOS supplier shall be enrolled and/or located at the same practice location" CMS claims to be acting to combat fraud, but advocates have expressed concern that CMS is likely to save dollars at the cost of providing quality care and skepticism that this policy would be able to address fraud.

This new regulation seems to follow the general DME trend with competitive bidding and the first month purchase option. Limiting one DME provider to a doctor's office and having that office provide services concerning fitting or use of the DME and problems regarding the DME, may have the potential to create more red tape and delays for people with disabilities.

### **Regs on the ADA Amendments Act of 2008**

On September 16 the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission voted to approve a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to conform its ADA regulations to the Amendments Act of 2008. The NPRM is expected to be published in the Federal Register during the week of September 21, 2009. The Commission has also issued a question and answer guide on the

NPRM. Below is a summary of the changes made by the Amendments Act, which became effective on January 1, 2009.

The Act makes important changes to the definition of the term "disability" by rejecting the holdings in several Supreme Court decisions and portions of EEOC's ADA regulations. The effect of these changes is to make it easier for an individual seeking protection under the ADA to establish that he or she has a disability within the meaning of the ADA.

The Act retains the ADA's basic definition of "disability" as an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment. However, it changes the way that these statutory terms should be interpreted in several ways. Most significantly, the Act:

- directs EEOC to revise that portion of its regulations defining the term "substantially limits";
- expands the definition of "major life activities" by including two non-exhaustive lists:
  - the first list includes many activities that the EEOC has recognized (e.g., walking) as well as activities that EEOC has not specifically recognized (e.g., reading, bending, and communicating);
  - the second list includes major bodily functions (e.g., "functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions");
- states that mitigating measures other than "ordinary eyeglasses or contact lenses" shall not be considered in assessing whether an individual has a disability;
- clarifies that an impairment that is episodic or in remission is a disability if it would substantially limit a major life activity when active;
- changes the definition of "regarded as" so that it no longer requires a showing that the employer perceived the individual to be substantially limited in a major life activity, and instead says that an applicant or employee is "regarded as" disabled if he or she is subject to an action prohibited by the ADA (e.g., failure to hire or termination) based on an impairment that is not transitory and minor;
- provides that individuals covered only under the "regarded as" prong are not entitled to reasonable accommodation.

EEOC will be evaluating the impact of these changes on its enforcement guidances and other publications addressing the ADA.

### **Senate Passes Transportation-Housing Bill**

On September 17 the U.S. Senate voted 73 to 25 to pass H.R. 3288, the FY 2010 Transportation-Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies appropriations bill. The bill provides a

\$15 million increase for the Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities Program. Section 811 is the only federal program that produces affordable and accessible housing units for persons with disabilities who have extremely low incomes. On the transportation side, the bill provides for level funding (\$92.5 million) for the New Freedom program which provides funding for projects that expand transportation options for people with disabilities. It also gives \$140.7 million for the Section 5310 program which assists nonprofits serving people with disabilities and the elderly with their transportation needs. This is a \$7.2 million increase over FY 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 four years the Collaborative was supported in a number of different ways by Communitas, Inc. To George, Pat and Bev we extend our deep appreciation.**