

On Target

Informing Indiana About Disability Issues
Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities
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Enclosed in this issue of On Target is a materials form, which better describes the campaign materials available, and an order form so advocates can easily request this year's awareness kit. If you are planning a significant Disability Awareness Month community activity and need assistance promoting it in your local news media, please contact the Council at (317) 232-7770.

2010 Disability Awareness Month materials available

March 2010 is Disability Awareness Month, and it's not too early to begin planning activities to spread the awareness message in your community. Take advantage of the free Disability Awareness Month materials provided by the Governor's Council to get a jump start on your activities.

"Disability Awareness Month is a perfect time to engage the community in a myriad of activities that span the entire year," said Suellen Jackson-Boner, executive director of the Governor's Council. "Awareness fairs, policy seminars, ADA training, essay contests and displays in schools, government agencies and businesses are just a few of the activities Disability Awareness Month has inspired."

There are more than 1 million people with disabilities living in Indiana. The Governor's Council coordinates Disability Awareness Month to promote community inclusion, independence and employment for these Hoosiers, which are part of the 54 million Americans with disabilities.

From 20 packets filled with grassroots activities — to colorful posters, stickers and bookmarks — it's easy to implement ideas to help those with and without disabilities be more sensitive and inclusive. Disability Awareness Month activity packet topics range from special event planning to building awareness in classrooms to library story hours. Materials can be ordered any time from now through the end of January 2010.

The 2010 Awareness Month theme is "Free Your Mind." The campaign poster features people of different ages and ethnicities — with and without disabilities — lying on the grass and gazing at the sky with optimism and enthusiasm. The text reminds us that by embracing people's differences, we open ourselves to a world of new possibilities. When we free our minds and see the potential inside everyone, we'll expand our horizons — and our circle of friends. This year's campaign materials are sponsored by Duke Energy.

To learn more about Awareness Month, download 2010 campaign materials, sign up for Council publications, as well as view past Disability Awareness Month themes, please visit www.IndianaDisabilityAwareness.org or call (317) 232-7770.

2009 Disability Poll seeks opinions about transportation

People with disabilities and others in the disability community can share their opinions about public transportation by participating in the 2009 Disability Poll on Transportation. The poll is sponsored by the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, in conjunction with the Governor's Council for People with Disabilities and Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services.

Transportation is necessary for all citizens to seek and maintain employment, access health care services and participate in community activities. The Disability Poll asks Indiana citizens how they view the state's public transportation options, accessibility and reliability.

"Transportation is a critical topic that we must continue to address so people with disabilities can be fully included in society," said Suellen Jackson-Boner, executive director of the Governor's Council. "Being able to access daily necessities like health care, education and employment is the first step to inclusion."

People with disabilities, their family members and other advocates in the disability community are invited to participate in the online survey at www.thepollingplace.org. To request the survey in an alternate format, or for additional information, contact Vicki Pappas at (800) 825-4733 (voice) or cpps@indiana.edu.

Study reveals crime rates against people with disabilities

Findings from the first national study on crime against people with disabilities, part of the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), have been released by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) in a report titled "Crime Against People with Disabilities 2007." The survey reveals that during 2007, people with disabilities ages 12 and older experienced approximately 716,000 nonfatal violent crimes and 2.3 million property crimes.

According to the report, nonfatal violent crimes include rape, sexual assault, robbery, simple assault and aggravated assault. Property crimes include household burglary, motor vehicle theft and property theft. The report reveals that 34 percent, or about one-third, of the crimes against people with or without disabilities in 2007 were serious violent crimes. People with disabilities were victims of about:

- 47,000 rapes;
- 79,000 robberies;
- 114,000 aggravated assaults; and
- 476,000 simple assaults
(Aggravated assault is a stronger crime than simple assault based on the offender's intent, extent of victim injury and use of a deadly weapon.)

“This report comes at a much-needed time to raise awareness about crimes involving people with disabilities,” said Kim Dodson, associate executive director at The Arc of Indiana. “Over the last few years, Indiana has closed all of its institutions and we’ve thankfully seen more people with developmental disabilities living in the community. However, with this transition, we’re becoming increasingly concerned, as people with developmental disabilities are sometimes easy targets for crime. We need to educate these individuals to help them protect themselves as much as possible.” According to Dodson, The Arc of Indiana is also very involved with efforts to ensure that people with developmental disabilities who commit crimes are treated fairly in the justice system.

Administered by the DOJ’s Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the study adopted questions from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) to identify respondents who had a disability. For the purpose of this survey, disability was defined as a long-lasting (six months or more) sensory, physical, mental or emotional condition that makes it difficult for a person to perform daily activities.

The study estimated how often — or the rate at which — people with and without disabilities experience crime. According to the report, the population of people with disabilities is generally older than people without disabilities, and the victimization rate generally decreases as age increases. To more accurately compare crime among people with and without disabilities, the study accounted for these discrepancies by generating an adjusted rate for people with disabilities.

Using this adjusted rate, the study found that people with disabilities experienced crime at an age-adjusted rate that was 1.5 times higher than the rate at which people without disabilities were victimized. More specifically, the report identified that 32 out of 1,000 people with disabilities (3.2 percent) were victims of a crime, compared to 21 out of 1,000 people without disabilities (2.1 percent).

Additional key findings from the NCVS include:

- The age-adjusted rate of people with disabilities who experienced rape or sexual assault was more than twice as high as the rate of people without disabilities.
- Females with disabilities had a higher victimization rate, 3.5 percent, than males with disabilities at 3 percent. Among those without disabilities, males had a higher rate, 2.4 percent, than females at 1.9 percent.
- People with disabilities ages 12 to 19 and 35 to 49 experienced violence at nearly twice the rate as people without disabilities in the same age groups.
- People with a cognitive functioning disability had a higher risk of violent victimization than people with any other type of disability.

This study is a result of the Crime Victims with Disabilities Awareness Act of 1998, which mandated the NCVS measure the victimization of people with disabilities. To read the full report, go to www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/cvict_c.htm.

Veterans Day recognizes Iraq and Afghanistan soldiers

Nov. 11, 2009, marked a monumental day in the United States — a day for honoring the 23.4 million war veterans who risked their lives to serve our country, including 509,000 Hoosier veterans. In recognition of Veterans Day, the Governor's Council salutes our troops and their families for their patriotism and honorable service.

The ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan remind us that taking care of our veterans has never been more crucial. According to the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) National Service Foundation's 2008 annual report, more than 1.7 million American soldiers have served in Iraq and/or Afghanistan, and more than half of them are now veterans. Almost 23 percent of these veterans, including nearly 4,200 Hoosiers as of 2008, have sought treatment through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and at military medical facilities for a variety of disabilities and illnesses.

Of the veterans who served in these current wars, one in four file claims for disability benefits. According to VA, more than 53,000 Hoosier veterans, of current and past wars, receive monthly disability compensation. However, obtaining disability benefits can be difficult, as VA is struggling to keep up with claims. The backlog has exceeded 400,000, and the average wait for a claim to begin processing is six months.

Veterans who incurred injuries or diseases while on active duty, or whose pre-existing injuries or diseases were made worse by active duty, are eligible to receive disability compensation. To apply, visit www.va.gov and click on "Benefits."

Results for Money Follows the Person Initiative

In 2008, the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured surveyed states to elicit an early snapshot of the progress of the Money Follows the Person (MFP) initiative. MFP is a Medicaid initiative designed to rebalance long-term care programs by providing more services in the community and fewer services in institutional settings.

The Bush administration announced grant awards to 31 states in 2007 with a goal of transitioning nearly 38,000 people out of institutions and into the community during the initial five-year period. Indiana was allotted \$21,047,402 to transition 1,039 people (768 seniors, 200 people with physical disabilities and 71 people with developmental disabilities) over five years to community-based services.

In Indiana, MFP specifically assists individuals transitioning from a nursing facility or hospital to a residential setting. According to the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), the MFP program has transitioned 22 Hoosiers with disabilities into the community, and more than 70 transitions are underway. The FSSA projects that nearly 700 individuals will be transitioned by the end of 2010.

Kaiser Commission survey responses indicating successes and challenges were received from 29 of 31 states in summer 2008. Eleven states reported they had completed 349 transitions, and 13 states reported that 465 transitions were currently in progress.

In addition, 26 of 29 states reported that their plans had been approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Of the 14 states that had started enrolling participants, 10 became fully operational.

In early 2009, the Kaiser Commission followed up with participating states to ask about the impact of the economic downturn on their programs. Most states reported no changes to date, although the serious economic situation could result in future cuts.

Visit www.kff.org/medicaid/upload/7928.pdf to read the Kaiser Commission report. To learn more about Indiana's MFP program, visit www.in.gov/fssa/da/3475.htm or call (888) 673-0002 (toll free, voice).

Indiana voter ID law declared unconstitutional

Considered one of the nation's toughest voter identification laws, the Indiana law requiring voters to show a state or federal photo ID card at the ballot box has been declared unconstitutional by the State Court of Appeals.

The three-judge panel unanimously ruled that the law violates the state's equal protection clause and regulates voters in a way that is not "uniform and impartial." However, the Indiana Supreme Court will make the final decision, which will be applied to elections in 2010.

The State Court of Appeals argued the law gives special privileges to two groups of people:

- **Absentee voters** — It is irrational to require those who vote in person to verify their identities when mail-in absentee voters are not required to do so.
- **Nursing home residents** — The law gives preferential treatment to people who vote in the nursing homes where they live because they aren't required to show a photo ID, even though other elderly voters elsewhere must.

Supporters argue that the law is needed to prevent voter fraud at the polls, while critics have said it disenfranchises voters who are less likely to have an ID, including people who are low-income, elderly, minorities or have disabilities.

To read the full decision, visit www.in.gov/judiciary/opinions/pdf/09170901par.pdf.

Of Note

Advisory Council on Education accepting applications

The Indiana State Advisory Council on Education of Children with Disabilities is currently accepting applications. A majority of Advisory Council members must be people with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities. Members must be Indiana residents

who are representative of the state's population and are selected based on their involvement in or concern with the education of children with disabilities. Other applicants can include teachers, state and local education officials, program administrators, representatives of state agencies, representatives of nonpublic schools, and representatives of vocational, community or business organizations concerned with the provision of transitional services to children with disabilities. To apply, send resumes to Becky Reynolds at breybold@doe.in.gov.

Poster contest for ADA 20th anniversary

The Great Lakes ADA Center is hosting a poster contest to recognize the monumental 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in July 2010. Anyone is invited to create a poster and enter it into the contest by Jan. 15, 2010. All poster designs must be created around the theme "How the ADA has Changed the Face of Your Community." First-, second- and third-place winners will receive gift cards ranging from \$100–\$300. Posters should be mailed to the Great Lakes ADA at 1640 West Roosevelt Rd., Rm. 405, Chicago, IL 60608. To get more information and requirements for the poster contest, call (800) 949-4232 (voice/TTY) or e-mail adata@adagreatlakes.org.

Get vaccinated!

Flu season is taking off full force. Now is the time to get your annual vaccination. Young children, elderly and people with other health problems are more likely to suffer from complications of the virus. To learn more about the flu and vaccinations, including the H1N1 immunization, visit www.cdc.gov/flu.

On Target is a monthly publication of the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities. We welcome your suggestions for newsletter content and ideas concerning the actions of the Council. on target is made available in accessible formats upon request.