

On Target

Informing Indiana About
Disability Issues

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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.

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Indiana gears up for Disability Awareness Month

Every March, individuals, cities and organizations throughout Indiana celebrate Disability Awareness Month with various activities.

Indiana State University (ISU) in Terre Haute annually hosts many activities, and 2007 is no different. ISU's Blumberg Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Special Education, which provides service to families and educators who support individuals with disabilities across Indiana, often sponsors or co-sponsors these events.

"Each year, two of the scholarship students for the center are required to coordinate and execute a project for disability awareness," said Marlene Lu, Blumberg Center project secretary.

This year's activities include lectures, screenings, participatory activities and more. On March 22, the ISU Library will host a lecture by Dr. David M. Oshinsky, who won a 2006 Pulitzer Prize for his book, "Polio: An American Story." The lecture, from 1:30-3 p.m., is free and open to the public.

Throughout the month of March, the library will also host a series of free movie nights, with one each week focusing on a different disability.

Some of the movies include "I Am Sam," "A Beautiful Mind" and "Proof," and each screening will feature a discussion moderated by a university professor.

On March 29, Delta Sigma Omicron will host "Try on a Disability," which allows ISU students to participate in different activities that give them a perspective on what life is like with a disability.

The Blumberg Center also paired with a Terre Haute elementary school to design a logo for the ISU disability awareness month activities, which furthers their goal of community outreach. "We want them and other residents to be involved, so our disability awareness month activities include the Indiana State and Terre Haute communities," said Lu.

Another community that is highly involved in Disability Awareness Month is Kokomo. Russ Ragland, a member of the Kokomo Mayor's Advisory Council for Disability Issues, named three activities the city planned for the month of March.

On March 5, 6 and 7, fourth grade students from all Kokomo elementary schools will participate in a Mayor's Story Hour, which features people with disabilities reading to the students. "The panel will include someone in a wheelchair, someone who is blind, someone with a speech-related disability and others so that the students are exposed to different disabilities," said Ragland.

Also, on March 15, Kokomo High School will hold a wheelchair obstacle course, which is designed to give participants a different outlook on life with a disability. The high school is also hosting a basketball game on March 23 that features local "celebrities," including Mayor Matt McKillip, YMCA Executive Director/CEO Dave Dubois and Kokomo High School Principal Harold Canady. The money

raised at the game will be donated to local rehabilitative agencies for people with disabilities.

Indiana University Kokomo is also planning activities for students and the public. There are six events planned, starting Feb. 28 with a showing of "I Am Sam" in the Kresge Auditorium at 7 p.m. This event is followed by a showing of "Rain Man" on March 1, guest speaker Ally Matt on March 5 and guest speaker Landon Turner on March 22. Matt is a graduate of Purdue University who is currently working on her doctorate in psychology. Matt has been blind since birth and now has an assistance dog to aid her in her daily routine. Turner is a former IU basketball player. Four months after his team won the NCAA Championship, Turner was paralyzed from the chest down in a car accident. For more information or to attend, contact Carolyn Hildebrandt at (765) 455-9309 (voice).

Last year, Indiana State University and the City of Kokomo were both nominated for the Governor's Council's Community Spirit Award in the Disability Awareness Campaign category. In 2006, ISU was given the award for "An Expansion of Perspectives," a series of seven major events designed to celebrate Awareness Month and to involve the entire ISU campus and the Terre Haute community. Activities were planned by a steering committee made up of the Blumberg Center, the Cunningham Memorial Library and Delta Sigma Omicron.

If your organization or community is participating in exemplary disability awareness activities, the Governor's Council wants to know about it. See the Of Note section for more information about reporting your events.

Building Leadership Series starts second year

The Building Leadership Series is a five-year project designed to build leadership and advocacy skills in people with developmental disabilities. Twenty Hoosiers were selected to take part in the pilot series in 2006, and recruitment has begun for 20 new participants for the fall 2007 series.

The 2007 series will consist of three two-day workshops over a three-month period in Bloomington at the Convention Center. Those participating will receive a daily stipend, meals and overnight lodging. Support staff, where needed, will also receive a fee, meals and lodging.

The workshop topics are:

- Sept. 26-27: Choice: What choices am I really making? What are my rights and responsibilities?
- Oct. 17-18: Self-determination/self-advocacy: I hear these words, what do they mean for me?
- Nov. 7-8: Person-Centered Planning: What does it mean for me and what is a good plan?

For more information and applications for the program, contact Jennie Todd at jeptodd@indiana.edu or (812) 855-6508 (voice).

Indiana legislative update

Indiana legislators are midway through this year's session, which is longer due to the passing of the state's two-year budget. There are bills and highlights that directly affect people with disabilities.

One of the bills moving forward is Senate Bill 94. SB 94, the bill which will change language throughout Indiana statutes that refer to individuals with disabilities to "people-first"

language, was introduced by Senator Sue Landske (R-Cedar Lake). SB 94 passed the Senate on Feb. 6. Now, it is going to be transferred to a House committee. Please contact your local representative and request support for SB 94.

Currently, the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) is looking for ways to keep the money saved from the closures of Fort Wayne State Developmental Center (approximately \$30 million) and Silvercrest (approximately \$5 million). Mitch Roob, secretary of FSSA, asked that the money saved from the closure of these facilities remain with the developmental disabilities service system to help take people off Medicaid waiver waiting lists. Furthermore, FSSA would like to use additional money to implement a crisis system for children with behavioral issues.

House Bill 1356, introduced by Representative Joe Micon (D-Lafayette), was unanimously passed by the Ways and Means Committee. HB 1356 is a bill that will create a state business tax credit for businesses that employ people with developmental disabilities. To qualify for the credit, businesses must offer health insurance and pay compensation equal to minimum wage or a wage comparable to employees without disabilities. As of press time, HB 1356 was waiting to be voted on by the House. Check www.in.gov/apps/lsa/session/billwatch/billinfo to see the status.

There are 20 new legislators in the Indiana House and Senate this year. If you are not familiar with your representatives, please visit www.in.gov/legislative/legislators/listing.html. The General Assembly Web site can also be used to look up bills of interest, view committee schedules and watch videos of the House, Senate and key committees, including House Ways and

Means.

Indiana receives MFP grant

Indiana now has the opportunity to help the elderly and individuals with disabilities move out of institutional care and into the community. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced Indiana as one of 17 states to receive a grant to take part in the Money Follows the Person (MFP) Rebalancing Demonstration. Indiana will receive more than \$21 million over the course of five years to build a Medicaid long-term care program to keep people in their communities and out of institutions.

The MFP is included in the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) of 2005 and is an initiative that will allow financing, services and other supports to move with individuals when they transfer from institutional care into the community. The demonstration is expected to help states reduce their reliance on institutional care and enable these individuals to fully participate in their communities.

An initial award of \$860,514 is being granted to Indiana for fiscal year 2007. During this first year, demonstration planning will be underway. CMS is requiring that operational protocols be submitted prior to delivering services under this demonstration, which is expected to take the first full year.

In addition to the MFP initiative, the DRA has made changes to Medicaid that will allow states to add home- and community-based services to permanent benefit options without the hassles of a waiver process. Traditionally, Medicaid has only supported individuals living in institutions, and states had to set up separate waiver programs for funding any services outside institutions.

The MFP demonstration and other changes made by the DRA reflect a growing consensus that long-term supports need to be controlled by consumers to best suit their needs. For more information on the grant, visit CMS' Web site at www.cms.hhs.gov and search for Money Follows the Person.

Disability groups release Congressional goals

The first session of the 110th Congress is in full swing, and a group of disability related organizations, including the Arc of the United States, United Cerebral Palsy, the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) and the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), has released a list of legislative goals for the session.

One main goal is to ensure that reconciliation instructions in the Fiscal Year Budget Resolution (BR) do not restrict eligibility, services or benefits to people with disabilities for the sole purpose of achieving a balanced budget.

The group also encourages Congress to enact sufficient funding to address the needs of people with disabilities that are currently unmet, including housing, employment, Medicaid, health care, and long-term services and supports.

Specific objectives include:

- Ensure that Medicaid fully meets the health and long-term care needs of all eligible people with disabilities.
- Improve the home- and community-based services option so that states will use it to serve more people in the community.
- Create a national, premium-based, non-

means-tested, long-term supports insurance program.

- Support plans to ensure the solvency of Social Security.
- Increase funding for federal housing programs to increase the availability of affordable and accessible housing for people with disabilities.
- Improve employment-related services to people with disabilities by reauthorizing the Workforce Investment Act and the Rehabilitation Act.
- Enact ADA restoration legislation and reject attempts to weaken any of the ADA provisions.
- Ensure that people with disabilities have accessible, affordable and comprehensive health care that addresses their physical and mental health needs.

For more information, visit www.thearc.org.

RHI Pacers included in All-Star weekend

The Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana (RHI) has a sports program that has served youth and adults with physical disabilities throughout Indiana since 1993. This program is the RHI Pacers, a Division II team that is part of the National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA).

In addition to participating in NWBA tournaments throughout the Midwest, the RHI Pacers also sent a team representative to participate in the NWBA All-Star Game, held Feb. 16, prior to the NBA All-Star Weekend. This year, Audi Kemp, who lives in the Indianapolis area, was selected to represent the RHI Pacers.

The RHI Pacers are entering their fifth season of competition in the National Wheelchair Basketball Association. Having finished last year's season as the nation's 16th-ranked team, the Pacers hope

to improve on their standing in the NWBA with the addition of several new players to this year's roster. The RHI Pacers will play nearly 30 games this season, traveling to such places as Charlotte, N.C.; Rockford, Ill.; Birmingham, Ala.; and Gainesville, Fla.

The RHI Pacers practice at Conseco Fieldhouse once a month and also participate in on-court demonstrations during halftime of select Pacers games. Each year the Indiana Pacers also host the RHI Pacers Wheelchair Basketball Invitational at Conseco Fieldhouse, which features RHI Pacers and regional wheelchair basketball teams.

For more information on the RHI Pacers or other RHI sports programs, please call Patrick Dean at (317) 329-2281 (voice).

Of Note

Submit DAM evaluations and nominations

Those conducting Disability Awareness Month activities are encouraged to submit an evaluation form. Evaluations should be returned to Kim Dennison at (317) 631-6499 (fax) or 47 S. Pennsylvania St., Suite 500, Indianapolis, IN, 46204. Those returned by April 15 will be entered into a prize drawing. Also, remember to nominate exceptional DAM campaigns for the Council's Community Spirit Awards, which recognize one individual and one group/organization for exemplary campaigns. Nomination forms can be found on the Council's Web site at www.in.gov/gpcpd.

Vision Expo: April 28

On April 28, the Talking Book and Braille Library and Easter Seals Crossroads will host the second annual Vision Expo, a showcase of adaptive

equipment available to people who are visually impaired. The event, which will be held from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Indiana State Library, will feature representatives from companies that offer adaptive equipment, as well as service and resource information from nonprofit and state agencies. For more information, call (317) 232-0609 (voice) or visit www.Indianavisionexpo.org.

Part D fee removed

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has eliminated the 2007 late enrollment penalty for any beneficiary eligible for the low-income subsidy for a Part D plan. Those who qualify for the low-income subsidy can now join a prescription drug plan penalty free anytime throughout 2007. If they do not enroll on their own, Medicare will choose a plan for them. For more information, call the Social Security Administration at (800) 772-1213 (voice) or (800) 325-0778 (TTY).

Submit "On Target" survey

The deadline to complete the "On Target" readership survey has been extended to March 31. To download a copy of the survey, visit the Council's Web site at www.in.gov/gpcpd.

Reminder: voter registration deadline April 9

Indiana's voter registration deadline for the May 8 primary election is April 9. For more information on ways to register, visit www.in.gov/sos/elections/vote_reg.html or call the Indiana Secretary of State's Office at (317) 232-6531 (voice).

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