



Monday Morning

Celebrating 10 years of grassroots advocacy

December 2005

www.njcdd.org/mondaymorning.htm

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Human Services announces \$12.5 million expansion of services for people with developmental disabilities living at home

Department of Human Services Commissioner James M. Davy and Assemblyman Louis D. Greenwald (D-Camden) announced a \$12.5 million expansion for Family Support at a news conference in Trenton on October 19. The expansion was attributed to the advocacy work of families who testified, rallied and presented petitions to the legislative appropriations committee.

“More than 70 percent of the families waiting for services told us they want their loved one to stay at home in their own communities—and we heard them” said Commissioner Davy.”

This expansion provides additional funding for respite services, transitional services for people graduating from high school and other self-directed service options (Real Life Choices).

■ \$3.6 million will be available for respite services. An additional 1500 people will receive services. People who are under 22 and still in school receive the majority of their services from the school system. Traditionally they request respite services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). Respite can be a camp

program or recreational services, to provide the family with relief from care giving.

■ \$4.55 million (\$2.73 million state, \$1.82 million federal) will be available for 200 indi-

viduals who are graduating and transitioning out of special education. Following graduation from the educational system, day activities are needed to support the transition to adult life. Without these services graduates will be at home full time with their families

■ An additional \$4.38 (\$2.63 million state, \$1.75 million federal) will allow an additional 300 people to participate in Real Life Choices, the self-directed option in which the individual and family have a budget and can purchase services and supports. Self-directed service options like Real Life Choices give developmentally disabled adults creative



L-R: Assemblyman Greenwald, Commissioner Davy and Family Support Coordinator Monique Wilson

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

service options while living at home.

Traditional community-based residential programs cost \$90,000 to \$146,000 per year. Through Real Life Choices family members are given a budget between \$14,000-\$63,000 for home renovation, transportation or aides to help with daily living activities, so they can stay at home.

“This funding will provide support for the families of approximately 2,000 people with developmental disabilities who live at home,” said Assemblyman Greenwald, Chairman of the Assembly Budget Committee. “Not only is this the right thing to do—it’s the fiscally sound thing to do.” ■

Availability of funding for 2005 Mainstream Housing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Program

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has announced the availability of funds to provide vouchers under the Housing Choice Voucher Program to enable persons with disabilities (elderly and non-elderly) to access affordable private housing.

Public housing agencies (PHAs) and nonprofit organizations that provide services to the disabled are eligible to apply. Approximately \$10.2 million is available in a five-year budget and is anticipated to fund approximately 250 vouchers. The available funding is derived from Fiscal Year (FY) 2005 Section 811 funding, and previously unobligated Mainstream funding from FY 2000 and FY 2003.

Organizations interested in applying should carefully review the General Section of the The Federal Register, number FR-5002-N-01, published March 21, 2005. For additional guidance and other helpful information log on to www.hud.gov and click on "Grants" and then click on "Funds Available." ■



Americans With Disabilities Act *Supreme Court Hears Oral Arguments in Goodman*

In November, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the *Goodman v. Georgia* case. The *Goodman* case challenges the constitutionality of requiring states to pay monetary damages to inmates for discriminatory acts by the state under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Goodman is a prisoner with paraplegia who alleges that, because he uses a wheelchair, he has not been given the same treatment as other non-disabled prisoners, such as being excluded from classes, counseling and religious services. Goodman also alleges that he

has been kept confined for more than 23 hours in a space too small to turn his wheelchair.

This case is another "11th amendment" case the Court has had to review which questions whether a state can be sued for discrimination under Title II of the ADA or whether the state is protected by sovereign immunity. This long-running debate before the Supreme Court is of critical interest to disability advocates. The issue before the Court in *Goodman* is a narrow one, but the decision is critical at a time when the rights and protections conveyed by the ADA slowly are being whittled away by recent Court decisions. The National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities has joined numerous national disability rights groups in signing on to a *friend of the court* brief, in this case in support of the prisoner with a disability.

—NACDD *Legislative Advocacy Weekly*

Initiative to improve hospital accommodations for people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing

Attorney General Peter C. Harvey and the New Jersey Hospital Association (NJHA) announced



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Monday Morning is a compilation of news stories from various sources, organized to provide information about proposed federal and state policies, programs and laws to New Jersey's grass-roots disability community. The opinions expressed are not necessarily representative of the opinions of all or a majority of the members of the N.J. Council on Developmental Disabilities. **Monday Morning** is an initiative of the "Monday Morning Project," an

effort by disability community advocates to mobilize people with disabilities to preserve the rights they are entitled to under current federal law; to preserve vital support services; and to give people with disabilities and their advocates a major role in determining how federal funds and matching state dollars are used.

a joint initiative designed to ensure that patients who are deaf or hard of hearing are provided with assistance by hospitals to ensure their ability to communicate effectively with nurses, doctors and other hospital personnel.

This reasonable accommodation may include such services as qualified sign language interpreters, amplified phones and computer-assisted real time transcription. Owing to a number of factors, the provision of services to help deaf and hard of hearing persons communicate with hospital staff has been inconsistent throughout the New Jersey hospital community. As part of the initiative, a new fact sheet will be distributed to New Jersey hospitals and a variety of health care websites.



Senate Passes Budget Reconciliation Legislation

The U.S. Senate approved its FY 2006 Budget Reconciliation bill (S. 1932) with approximately \$35 billion in savings over five years. Although cuts were made to entitlement programs, disability advocates were pleased that the feared severe cuts to Medicaid did not occur and will not

directly harm beneficiaries. Cuts also were made to Medicare.

The bill also includes Family Opportunity Act and Money Follows the Person programs. Several health-related amendments were offered during the process, but most failed. An amendment by Senator Jeff Bingman (D-NM) to restore a scheduled decrease in Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) to 29 states did pass. FMAP is the Medicaid payment formula used to determine federal reimbursement rates for states.

House Introduces Concurrent Resolution to Affirm IDEA

In November, the House introduced a concurrent resolution (H.Con.Res.288) to recognize the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 and to reaffirm support for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The legislation affirms the right of all children with disabilities to a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

Survey on budget issues affecting people with disabilities and their families

The Disability Budget Coalition, composed of over 20 statewide and local organizations, has posted an online survey to share the views of people with disabilities and their families with New Jersey's elected officials and administrative agencies.

The coalition's mission is to promote budget policies that (1) protect the human and civil rights of people with disabilities and ensure their equal participation in democratic processes; (2) include people with disabilities in schools, workplaces, and communities with needed supports, regardless of their age, age of onset of disability, or specific disability and (3) empower people with disabilities by fostering their economic self-sufficiency, self-determination, and control over the resources, supports, and services needed for independence.

To access the online survey, log on to www.spannj.org.

Medicare Prescription Drug Finder available online

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released the long-awaited Plan Finder tool to assist Medicare beneficiaries with reviewing their prescription drug plan options. Users should be aware that while the initially released tool could not search multiple medications simultaneously, that function has been corrected. CMS is aware of several functional problems and continues to refine the site. While this can create confusion for many users of the site, this bulletin tries to clarify the links and point out some specific information of interest to individuals with mental illnesses.

Log on to www.medicare.gov.



Monday Morning celebrates 10th Anniversary

The Monday Morning networks celebrated ten years of grassroots advocacy at their December facilitators retreat and annual holiday party at the Marriott in Trenton. A special PowerPoint presentation reviewed the history of the project with past members and new, and the many events in which the group had participated. Annual Awards were given out for service, accessibility advocacy and voting. A special "10th Anniversary Award" was presented to Anita Clavering of the Middlesex County Network, who has been with Monday Morning since its inception.

Additional awards included:

Monday Morning Service Award

Ellen Brockman—Passaic

Stan Soden—Monmouth

Jane Tallman—Jersey Shore Network

Jim Corbett—Bergen

Marianne Valls—Hudson

Nancy Penrod—Ocean

Karen Inserra—Ocean

Monday Morning Voting Award

Ocean County Monday Morning Network

Monday Morning Network Accessibility Award

Monmouth County Monday Morning Network

Monday Morning Individual Accessibility Award

Nancy Mangold—Burlington

Monday Morning Outstanding Achievement

Frances Grant—Essex County

Paulette Eberle—Hudson County

Team Spirit Award

Linda Leitch—Ocean County

Congratulations to everyone associated with the project.

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