



# Monday Morning

February 2006

[www.njcdd.org/mondaymorning.htm](http://www.njcdd.org/mondaymorning.htm)

Volume 12, No.2

## Division of Elections hosts Polling Place Accessibility Seminar

In a continuing effort to make New Jersey's polling places accessible to people with disabilities, the Division of Elections recently held its fourth accessibility training seminar for election officials, poll workers and people with disabilities. The workshop was conducted by Shammi Carr, Technical Assistant Specialist at the Northeast ADA and Accessible Information Technology Center at Cornell University.

Since the passage of the Help Americans Vote Act of 2002, and subsequent legislation which requires ADA trained individuals to be a member of the County Voting Accessibility Advisory Committees, election officials have been working with disability advocates to learn more about voters with disabilities and the federal requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act.

"HAVA is still new and many poll workers are not sure how to accommodate the voter with a disability. Even the voter is not sure what his or her rights are," said Frances Grant, facilitator for the Essex County Mon-



**Shammi Carr (background), Technical Assistant Specialist at the Northeast ADA and Accessible Information Technology Center at Cornell University, leads the workshop for election officials and poll workers.**

day Morning Network

Donald Jones, who uses a wheelchair and works as a poll worker in Irvington, Essex County, suggested that a manual be included in the voting package given to poll workers. "That way, the poll workers will have the answers with them when ques-

tions arise," said Jones.

The main topic of the workshop was a basic understanding of the Americans With Disabilities Act and how it relates to the rights of voters with disabilities.

"Some elements of physical ac-  
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## Voter accessibility seminar

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**Monday Morning's Essex County Facilitator Frances Grant (left) discusses polling place accessibility with election official Linda Von Nessi**

cess can be easy, others can be difficult," said Shammi Carr. "The issue is the removal of existing barriers versus new construction."

According to Carr, the three basic priorities are getting in the door, accessing the service and, if there are public restrooms available, making sure there are accessible ones.

Monday Morning has worked closely with the Division of Elections over the past several years to educate officials about voter accessibility.

"Five years ago, more than 60 polling places were inaccessible in

Essex County," said Linda Von Nessi of the Essex Board of Elections. "Now, we're down to 12. We're getting there." ■

## Good news for family support

Thanks to the work of families of the Regional Family Support Planning Councils, the Division of Developmental Disabilities has allocated a \$3.6 million expansion for family support services.

The expansion initially was announced in October, 2005, by former Human Services Commissioner James Davy and Assemblyman Louis Greenwald, who acknowledged the advocacy work of families. Family members rallied in September and presented petitions to the legislative appropriations committee.

"There was overwhelming input from families saying they needed these services," said Monique Wilson, Statewide Family Support Coordinator.

Services will be expanded with providers who have waiting lists for existing respite programs that provide after school, after program and Saturday drop-in and recreation programs, as well as expanding the cash option, which allows families to choose their own respite worker. Of

the expansion funds, \$1.4 million will be used for the cash option and 2.1 million will go to respite services. Approximately 1461 new individuals will begin receiving services because of the expansion.

The Regional Family Support Planning Councils consist of families of people with developmental disabilities or individuals with developmental disabilities. The nine regional councils assist and advise the Division of Developmental Disabilities on how resources can best meet the needs of families and individuals in their region.

Council members are reimbursed for reasonable and customary expenses for travel, childcare, respite and communication. For more information, log onto [www.njddc.org/familysupport.htm](http://www.njddc.org/familysupport.htm). ■

## Inclusive Child Care Conference

The Annual New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project's annual conference brings together child care staff, head start, family child care, special educators, general education teachers, early intervention, child care resource and referral staff and parents to share strategies for successful inclusion.

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**Monday Morning is published by the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities**

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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.

## Bill would toughen misuse of accessible parking spaces and placards

A bill introduced by Assemblyman Joseph Pennacchio (R-Dist 26) would help cut down on illegal parking in accessible spaces and the use of phony or expired accessible parking placards. A-340 would require the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue color coded expiration stickers for accessible parking placards and license plates when renewed every three years.

The bill also establishes the "Handicapped Parking Education Fund," administered by NJ Motor Vehicle Commission, that is to be used for educational programs about accessible parking laws.

"This law is about getting rid of the frauds," said Assemblyman Pennacchio at the February Monday Morning facilitators retreat.

Pennacchio and Janice Sangle, a constituent of the assemblyman who uses a wheelchair and drives



**Assemblyman Joseph Pennacchio and advocate Janice Sangle**

an accessible van, urged the facilitators to take on the grassroots advocacy effort to get the bill passed.

"As a person with a disability, I rely on available accessible parking spaces," said Sangle. "Many times I can't use an accessible parking space because the access area for getting in and out of my van is blocked or someone is parked there illegally."

For more information, see the "Action Alert" on the Council's website: [www.njddc.org](http://www.njddc.org).

### Highlights of A-340

- Requires information about handicapped parking laws to be included on the driver's test and in the driver's manual;
- Establishes the "Handicapped Parking Education Fund" to be administered by the Motor Vehicle Commission and used for educational programs about handicapped parking laws;
- Requires that \$5 of each fine collected for handicapped parking violations go to the "Handicapped Parking Education Fund";
- Requires that handicapped placards be renewed every three years and that, upon renewal, the NJMVC issue a color-coded sticker to the person with a disability;
- Requires that handicapped license plates also be renewed every three years and that upon renewal, a color-coded sticker be issued to be affixed on the plate to signify its continued validity.

## Inclusive Child Care Conference

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The conference will be held May 6, 2006, at the National Conference Center, Ramada Inn, East Windsor.

For information, contact Denise Bouyer of the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN), 973-642-8100, ext.108. ■

## States spread out safety net for drug coverage

Twenty-six states, including New Jersey are providing drug coverage to low-income people who are elderly and people with disabilities who fall through gaps in the nation's new

Medicare prescription drug plan.

According to a survey released by the National Association of State Medicaid Directors, states have stepped in to make sure low-income Medicare beneficiaries get their needed medicines.

The survey, which outlines wide-ranging problems with the program, said that since Jan. 1, New Jersey has spent \$15.3 million to cover 165,000 claims by the dual eligibles—people eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare—in the state. The state paid claims that could not be processed under the new



Medicare plans because pharmacists could not verify coverage, or because of some other foul-up. The state also has been paying for prescriptions for most of the people on the Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled program. PAAD recipients are supposed to get prescriptions from Medicare now.

Officials at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services have said Medicare will "facilitate" efforts by states to collect reimbursement from the private Medicare drug plans contracted to provide prescription coverage. ■

## Monday Morning Networks to advocate "Taxis for All"

**A**t the February Monday Morning facilitators' meeting, Terence Moakley of United Spinal Association detailed his organization's efforts to get more accessible taxis in New York City.

There are 12,787 cabs running in New York City. Only 29 of them are wheelchair accessible. Another 54 accessible cabs are expected to be running by the end of year. Moreover, of the 47,000 car service vehicles in the city, only 20 are wheelchair accessible.

"In New York, where taxis are considered the preferred mode of public transportation, having more accessible vans would expand opportunities for people with disabilities," said Moakley."

The Bush administration's New Freedom Initiative allocated \$78 million nationwide in Fiscal Year 2006 and will spend another \$81 million in FY 2007 to improve transportation for people with disabilities. The funds are distributed based on population, with urban areas receiving more.

New Jersey is expected to see about \$2 million.

"This is not money to comply with the ADA," Moakley explained. "It's money to go beyond what's required by the ADA. The first thing that gets mentioned is accessible taxis, because taxis are everywhere.

"If you get private industry involved, it takes the burden off of



paratransit systems."

The Monday Morning Network must first determine where the New Freedom Initiative money goes in the state and what entities have jurisdiction.

Let Monday Morning know how you feel about accessible cabs in New Jersey. Log onto [www.njddc.org](http://www.njddc.org) and send us a message. ■

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