

Disability Advocacy Collaborative Bulletin

Disability Rights is a Civil Rights Issue

April, 2005

“Any policy that deters or prevents full participation of people with disabilities in the economic, political, social, and religious lives of their communities is inherently suspect. It is my hope [Andrew J. Imparato, AAPD President and CEO, March 2005] that, by reframing our agenda as a question of basic human values, the disability rights movement will gain new allies, persuade more policymakers and voters, and ultimately reinforce the core tenet of many faiths and of American culture that all people are created equal and that every life has value and dignity.”

If you want something to appear in the next edition or have an article you would like us to include, please send it to us at skoslosk03@comcast.net and jayne@kleinmanconsulting.com or Jayne Kleinman, 55 Corrigan Ave., Meriden, CT 06451, 203-238-9391.

ADDRESS CORRECTIONS AND REMOVALS: If you are not interested in receiving this information or you would like this information sent to a different e-mail address, please e-mail Jayne Kleinman at jayne@kleinmanconsulting.com with your request, or simply reply to this message.

This Bulletin is supported in large part by a grant the Disability Advocacy Collaborative has received from the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities. In addition, in-kind support is being provided by the UConn Center on Disability, and Communitas, Inc. has agreed to serve as the project’s fiscal agent. To all three we extend our appreciation.

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Calendar of Events

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>	<i>Contact</i>
April 7 – 9:15 am – 4 pm	Annual Fair Housing Conference	Courtyard Marriott in Cromwell	Fair Housing Association of CT	Joe Wincze 203-576- 8323
April 8 - 10 am – 4:30 pm	New England Assistive Technology Expo	Hartford – corner of Coventry and Holcomb Sts.	NEAT Marketplace	866-526-4492
April 9 – 9 am- 1 pm	Keep Your Utilities On	South Cong. Church - Hartford	Statewide Legal Services	1-800-453-3320
April 12 3:30 – 6:30 pm	Gunnar and Rosemary Dybwad Award and Seminar—Guest Speaker Melissa Marshall	Manchester Community College	MCC Institute on Disability & Community Inclusion and Communitas	<u>Bevjackson02@aol.com</u> 860-512-2789
April 14 5:30 - 9:30 pm	Educational Options for Students with LD and ADD/ADHD	Trumbull Marriott	CT Assn for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities	CACLD 203-838-5010 www.CACLD.org
April 14 - 6 – 9 pm	CHRO Public Forum	Rm 310 – State Capitol	State Comm on Human Rts and Opportunities	
April 15	It's tax time			See p. 14 for help
April 15-17	Abilities EXPO	New Jersey Convention Center, Edison	Abilities Expo / NY Metro	Abilitiesexpo.com 800-385-3085
April 20 – 3 - 6 pm	BRS Public Meetings – the first of four throughout the state – see p. 11	ACES in Hamden	Bureau of Rehabilitation Services	1-800-537-2549 or evelyn.knight@po.state. ct.us
April 25 4 - 7 pm	The Disability Res Ctr of Fairfield County Annual Meeting	Stratford	Disability Resource Center	<u>wvalities@drfc.org</u> or 1-203-378-6977
April 29 8 am - 4 pm	Special Education in Connecticut: The Tools for your professional success	Goodwin Hotel Hartford	Lorman Education Services	888-678-5565
May 14 9 - 12	Brain Injury Resource Fair	Hospital for Special Care New Britain	Brain Injury Assn. of CT	800-278-8242

May 15 12-4:00	“Come celebrate with Communitas”	Manchester Community College	MCC Institute on Disability and Inclusion	860-512-2789 Bevjackson@aol.com
May 23 7:30	Community Building John McKnight	Farmington Library	FVGLA/CCDD	860-673-6791
May 25, 2005	Social Role Valorization Training	CCSU	CCDD/SRV	860-418-6157
Jun 3-4	Moving through Life Changes, Self Determination	Farmington Marriott	DD Council, DMR, and FAVOR	Email: yvette.johnson@po.state.ct.us (860) 418-8709
July 25-28	Youth Leadership Forum	UConn campus - Storrs	CT YLF	ctylf.org
Oct. 23-26	White House Conference on Aging	Washington, D.C.		www.whcoa.gov

Schiavo Raised Profile of People with Disabilities (Questions Swirl About End-of-Life Issues)

Excerpts from an article by Ceci Connolly. Washington Post Staff Writer, Saturday, April 2, 2005; Page A09, The Washington Post

“For many disabled Americans, seeing the final images of Terri Schiavo was like looking at a terrifying picture of themselves -- undervalued and at the mercy of others.

‘We do not identify with the spouse or the parents,’ Diane Coleman, president and founder of the disability rights group Not Dead Yet, explained just days before Schiavo's death. ‘We identify with her. She is one of us.’

Watching the Florida drama from the opposite coast, it looked as though Schiavo was “put to death for the crime of being disabled,” said William G. Stothers, deputy director of the Center for an Accessible Society. “Among the disability rights community, it is a generally held belief that in society at large the view is 'better dead than disabled.'”

But many others with disabilities reject the notion of victimhood. And several prominent disability organizations -- including the Brain Injury Association of America, the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation, the Parkinson's Action Network and the ALS Association -- were noticeably silent on the Schiavo case.

There remain deep, painful rifts in the community over Schiavo and right-to-die issues, said Marvin Wasserman, a New York-based activist who suffers from seizures. He was disturbed by the rhetoric labeling Michael Schiavo a murderer who ‘starved’ his wife. ‘In the absence of a living will, the spouse is often the one individual who best knows what his or her partner would want,’ Wasserman, 60, said.

Although they disagree about the Schiavo case, Marvin Wasserman and Diane Coleman both complained that politicians were quick to exploit the tragedy and slow to deliver meaningful assistance to disabled Americans. "The right wing wants to kill us slowly and painfully" with limits on health programs such as Medicare and Medicaid, Not Dead Yet's Coleman said. "The left wing wants to kill us quickly and call it compassion."

State Legislative Update

There is much going on right now at the State Capitol, with the status of bills changing from day to day. The Bulletin is not able to keep up with the status of the dozens of state legislative proposals that affect individuals with disabilities, and we therefore refer you to the website of the Office of Protection and Advocacy. There you can see updated info on state legislative actions by clicking on "Legislative Information" on the left side of the P&A home page: <http://www.ct.gov/opapd/site/default.asp>. Then just click on "Legislation Update." If you go to the very bottom of the screen there is a link for a "printable version"; if you want a hard copy of the Update it prints a lot neater this way.

The General Assembly produces its own comprehensive Legislative Bulletin on its website at <http://www.cga.ct.gov/>. To find the bulletin just look under the "Calendar" and you will see "CGA Today." Under that heading you will find "Bulletin."

Update on the Disability Advocacy Collaborative

The Disability Advocacy Collaborative is moving forward in its plans to hold a statewide Disability Convention in the fall of 2006. Here is an update:

- To reach out and involve the maximum participation possible, local disability networks will be created in six regions of the state - NorthWest, NorthCentral, NorthEast, SouthWest, SouthCentral, and SouthEast; independent living centers and other disability advocacy groups will be involved in this process
- A Steering Committee – as broadly representative as possible, and still be effective – is being created; one of the Collaborative's objectives is to create cross disability, ethnically diverse, age and gender balanced disability coalitions at the regional level, and the Steering Committee will reflect that representation
- Introductory workshops to kick off the initiative in the six regions will be held after the state legislative session ends in June
- Coalition building and empowerment workshops will take place at the regional level in the fall, winter and spring of 2006
- A disability "platform" will be developed during 2006 that will be presented at the convention; the platform will identify the critical issues facing individuals with disabilities and families, and outline a course of action to be presented to candidates for state office.

Keep Your Utilities On!

If you are facing a utility shutoff or have a payment arrangement you can't afford to keep, Statewide Legal Services may be able to help. On Saturday, April 9, from 9 am-1 pm, Legal Services attorneys will be available at South Congregational Church, 277 Main Street in Hartford to offer support. Staff will be available to assist in filling out budget sheets that help determine a reasonable payment schedule, negotiate with representatives from the utility companies, and offer tips to make payments a little easier. Remember to bring proof of income, rent receipts, and utilities with you. Call 1-800-453-3320 for more information, or if you have any questions.

Communitas Team Marathon

Communitas, Inc. of Manchester is planning two ½ marathons in 2005, both dedicated to the memory of Regina DeMarasse, with whom they “walked” for eighteen years. The first ½ marathon will take place in the Black Hills of South Dakota in June, the second at Schroon Lake in New York's Adirondack Mountains in September. Funds raised will be used by Communitas to continue their work to support full community inclusion for individuals with disabilities. Anyone interested in making a pledge may mail checks made out to Communitas, Inc. to PO Box 358 – Manchester, CT 06045.

Communitas provides supports to individuals with disabilities that are not often found at a traditional bricks and mortar service agency. Unfortunately this means that Communitas does not qualify for traditional funding sources and must depend on generous donations and events like the ½ marathons. Give if you can!

Gunnar and Rosemary Dybwad Award and Seminar

The Gunnar and Rosemary Dybwad Award and Seminar will be held Tuesday, April 12 from 3:30 – 6:30 pm in the Fireside Commons Room in the campus library at Manchester Community College. Guest speaker will be Melissa Marshall, long time disability rights activist, attorney, author, wife, and mother. Melissa's talk is entitled “Beyond Mr. Magoo and Tiny Tim: Learning to see Ability First, and Disability Second.”

The event, co-sponsored by the MCC Institute on Disability and Community Inclusion and Communitas, Inc., will also feature an announcement of the Rosemary and Gunnar Dybwad Award honoree for 2005. In order to attend you must register with Bev Jackson at bev.jackson02@aol.com, or call 860-512-2789.

Connecticut's Own Stan Kosloski, Hall of Famer

After a long and distinguished association with wheelchair basketball that continues to this day, Stan Kosloski will be inducted into the National Wheelchair Basketball Hall of Fame on April 9, 2005. The NWBA has a section at the Hall of Fame in Springfield dedicated to wheelchair basketball.

Those of us who know Stan realize that his involvement in wheelchair basketball far exceeds these modest criteria. For starters, we'll quote the NWBA Hall of Fame summary of his accomplishments: "Stan's wheelchair basketball career spanned 33 years playing for the Connecticut Spokebenders. He was an outstanding Class II player averaging twenty-one points a game and scoring over 15,000 points in his career. Stan was a member of two international teams. In 1971 he competed in the Pan American Wheelchair games in Jamaica and in 1972 competed in the Paralympics in Heidelberg, Germany. Stan has won MVP awards at the 1982 NWBA Eastern Sectional Tournament, at the 1984 New Jersey Invitational Tournament, 1989 Bordentown Elks Tournament, 1994 Philadelphia Tournament and 1996 Connecticut Tournament. Stan also received the 1972 and 1976 Jack Gerhardt Sportsmanship Award and 1989 Sportsmanship Award NWBA Eastern Sectional Tournament."

Stan continues his role in athletics to this day, serving as coach of the Connecticut Spokebenders and as Commissioner of the Northeast Basketball Conference.

Retiring in 2003 from the state Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, Stan now works part time at the UConn Center on Disabilities promoting community inclusion for adults and children with disabilities. He is also organizing the Disability Advocacy Collaborative and working as lead facilitator of this summer's Youth Leadership Forum.

NEAT Expo

The NEAT Marketplace (New England Assistive Technology) is hosting a free Expo on Friday, April 8, 2005 from 10:00 am – 4:30 pm at the NEAT facility, corner of Coventry and Holcomb Streets in Hartford. The latest assistive technology products will be displayed, including computer software and mobility equipment, and technology professionals and vendors will be present as well. Call toll free 1-866-526-4492 with any questions.

KASA Coordinator Needed

The Council on Developmental Disabilities is looking for a part-time Coordinator to support the development of KASA (Kids as Self-Advocates), an advocacy group of young adults with disabilities. Interested parties should check out the KASA web site (www.ctkasa.org) to learn more about the organization. The position is for ten hours a week, and applications must be received by April 14. A one page proposal outlining experience and salary expectations, along with a cover letter, should be sent to Yvette Johnson – DD Council - 460 Capitol Avenue – Hartford, CT 06106.

CHRO Public Forum

The Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities will hold a public forum on Thursday, April 14 from 6-9 pm in Room 310 of the State Capitol. The Commission is interested in hearing about the critical civil rights issues facing Connecticut residents, including people with disabilities and families.

Mammogram Focus Groups

Qualidigm, a non-profit healthcare quality improvement organization, is collaborating with the Connecticut Women and Disability Network (CWDN), to conduct focus groups to learn more about what women with disabilities think about breast cancer screening. The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation is providing funding for the project.

One focus group will be held Monday, April 11 in North Haven for women who are deaf or hearing impaired. A second focus group, for women with physical disabilities or chronic pain from stroke, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injury, fibromyalgia or lupus will be held on Monday, May 2, 2005. Qualidigm is especially interested in talking with women who have never had a mammogram.

If you or anyone you know would be interested in participating in either focus group, call (860) 613-3685 or (800) 842-9710 (Relay Connecticut) for more information and to see if you are eligible to participate. Please request possible accommodations or transportation assistance when you call. Women who are eligible and who participate in the focus group will receive \$50. If you have any questions, please call (860) 632-6335.

Update on P.A.T.H.S. (Plan for the Achievement of Transportation Coordination in Human Services)

In December 2000 the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities conducted a survey of people with disabilities on transportation to which respondents reported feeling isolated due to the lack of transportation. It was also clear that people with disabilities in CT “want an inclusive transportation system and should be considered in the future plans of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT).”

Working under a grant from the Council on Developmental Disabilities, the University of Connecticut A.J. Pappanikou Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Education, Research, and Service will be conducting six forums for individuals with disabilities around the State on transportation. There will be two in May, two in July and two in August. These forums will be an opportunity for consumers to help identify what

programs/services work well; identify the gaps/barriers/obstacles experienced by people with disabilities using various local bus services and specialized transportation services; determine needs for training and customer service; and establish priority areas for action.

The long term plan of for the Developmental Disabilities grant will be to become transportation partners with other organizations and individuals to ensure the interests of people with disabilities are represented in the DOT State Action Plan. The CT Department of Transportation is committed to designing and implementing a responsive, comprehensive, coordinated transportation system for people with low incomes, older adults and people with disabilities. They have received a grant from **United We Ride** and presently are in the process of selecting a transportation consultant.

For more information or to become involved please contact Jayne J. Kleinman, MS, CRC, Transportation Project Facilitator, University of Connecticut A.J. Pappanikou Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Education, Research, and Service, 263 Farmington Avenue - MC 6222, Farmington, CT 06030-6222, phone: (860) 679-1575, fax: (860) 679-1571, TTY: (860) 679-1502, Toll free: (866) 623-1315.

Social Role Valorization Training

The Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Social Role Valorization (SRV) Implementation Project in Worcester, Massachusetts, are pleased to announce a training event entitled "The Use of Restraints as a Human Service Technique." It will be held on Wednesday, May 25, 2005 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Institute of Technical and Business Development, Central Connecticut State University, 185 Main Street, New Britain. This workshop will explore moral questions raised by the use of restraints with people with disabilities in human services. There is no charge for the event, and the registration deadline is May 11, 2005.

The workshop presenter will be Marc Tumeinski, Training Coordinator of the SRV Implementation Project. Marc works in a variety of settings with people with disabilities, many of whom are subject to restraints. Advanced registration is required. Send your name, agency affiliation (if any), address, telephone and e-mail (if any) to: CT Council on Developmental Disabilities - 460 Capitol Avenue - Hartford, CT 06106-1308. With your registration, please let the Council know if you will need sign language interpreters, taped materials, dietary foods or other accommodations. For further information contact: Ed Preneta (860) 418-6157 or ed.preneta@po.state.ct.us

Asset-Based Community Development Workshop

John McKnight, Professor of Education and Social Policy, and co-Director of the Asset-Based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University, will present a workshop on community building at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, May 23, 2005 at the

Farmington Public Library, 6 Monteith Drive, Farmington. The workshop is co-sponsored by the Farmington Village Green and Library Association (FVGLA) and the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities.

The Asset-Based Community Development Institute (ABCD), established in 1995 by the Community Development Program at Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research, is built upon three decades of community development research by John Kretzmann and John L. McKnight. Theories based on nationwide data gathered from over 100 neighborhoods in 20 cities on the community development potential of local assets such as schools, churches and parks, were refined and published in the book *Building Communities from the Inside Out*.

Mr. McKnight is returning to Connecticut to provide technical assistance on the Council's current initiative on community building with FAVARH in Canton. Mr. McKnight's workshop at the Farmington Public Library will be on his broader work in asset-based community development. The workshop is free and open to the public but seating is limited. Call to register (860) 673-6791.

BIA CT Offers Workshops

The Brian Injury Association of Connecticut is offering a series of workshops this spring entitled "Eye Opening Strategies and Treatment in Brain Injury." Topics to be covered include multi-level treatment of agitation, aging and brain injury, mild brain injury, long term care, understanding neuropsychological evaluation scores, emotional issues, and mental inertia. To get the schedule, location and costs of the workshops call the Brain Injury Association at 860-721-8111.

BRS Wants to Hear from You!

The State Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) is hosting public meetings for consumers, family members, advocates, service providers, and other interested parties to discuss BRS policies and programs in an open forum. A public meeting will be held in each BRS region:

- In the Southern Region, the public meeting is on Wednesday, April 20 at ACES, Staff Development Building, 205 Skiff Street, Hamden.
- In the Northern Region, the public meeting is on Wednesday, April 27 at Easter Seal Rehab Center, 100 Deerfield Avenue, Windsor.
- In the Western Region, the public meeting is on Wednesday, May 4 at Goodwill Industries, 165 Ocean Terrace, Bridgeport.
- All meetings will run from 3:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.

All meeting sites are accessible, and sign language and Spanish language interpreting will be provided. Other accommodations must be requested by April 13. To ask for special accommodations, directions or public meeting notices in alternate formats,

contact Evelyn Oliver Knight at 800-537-2549 or 860-424-4871 or evelyn.knight@po.state.ct.us. Persons who are unable to attend the public meetings may provide written comments by e-mail (listed above) or by fax: 860-424-4850 to Ms. Knight's attention by May 12, 2005.

And from our readers

I am writing in regards to the controversial issue of the reuse of catheters. I feel there is an urgent need to educate anyone without personal experience who may be influential to the decision making process. I would like to share my own story of when I went from external catheters to intermittent catheterization.

At that time, my urologist had me try to re-use catheters. Being a c-5, c-6 quad the frustration of cleaning and managing used catheters soon became overwhelming. With my active lifestyle, often on the road or traveling, this was impossible. Within one week of re-using catheters I came down with the worst and my first UTI in years. My urologist said I should try to use a new catheter every time. This was extremely successful. I have had a few minor UTI s in the past 12 years and have had much less frustration not wondering where and how to clean and store used catheters. I have become an advocate for the non-reuse of catheters, based not only on urinary health, but also the impact that the re-use of catheters has had on every day living and quality of life, especially for quads with limited hand function. [Lexi Pryor, e-mail lamamama100@yahoo.com]

A Reminder from the March Bulletin

Franscesca Martin is attempting to learn about the experiences of women who have been in public psychiatric hospitals (such as CVH, Fairfield Hills or Norwich) and then left and re-established themselves in community settings. If anyone is interested, has any questions, or would like additional information, please contact her by cell phone at (203) 506-1657.

Congressional Proposal for Universal Home Design

[Scripps Howard News Service Wednesday, <http://www.SFGate.com> March 9, 2005]
Ninety-five percent of federally supported homes are not required to meet any standard of accessibility. Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) cited that shocking fact two years ago when she introduced the Inclusive Home Design Act (HR 2353). The bill has been referred to the Subcommittee on Benefits by the House Committee on Veterans Affairs.

The term visitability incorporates three requirements: at least one no-step entrance; doors and hallways wider than usual; and at least a half- bathroom on the first floor big enough to accommodate a person in a wheelchair and allow that person to close the door. Experts

in architecture and design estimate the total average cost per dwelling is \$98 (on a concrete slab) and \$573 (for a dwelling with a basement or crawl space) when incorporating visitability at the initial construction.

To comment on Schakowsky's bill contact the subcommittee's members. A list of those members can be found at www.veterans.house.gov/benefits/members.html .

Medicaid—The Work isn't Done

On March 17, the U.S. House and Senate voted to approve differing versions of an FY 2006 budget resolution by votes of 218-214 and 51-49, respectively. Before final approval, the Senate adopted amendments striking proposed cuts to the Medicaid program and adding funds for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and higher education. This sets up what is likely to be a contentious conference committee debate as legislators from each house try to reconcile differences between the two plans.

Technical Assistance on Medicaid and Mental Health Issues

The Centers of Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) have published technical assistance papers on Medicaid and mental health issues. The papers are entitled: “Best Practices in State Medicaid and Mental Health Program Collaboration” and “Utilizing the Section 1115 Health Insurance Flexibility and Accountability Act (HIFA) Waiver Option.” In 2004 CMS published a paper “Psychotropic Medications: Addressing Costs Without Restricting Access.”

The papers are posted on the CMS website www.cms.hhs.gov/newfreedom .

The 2005 White House Conference on Aging

A White House Conference on Aging is held every ten years with the goal of making aging policy recommendations to the President and Congress, and to assist the public and private sectors in promoting dignity, health, independence and economic security of current and future generations of older persons. This year the conference will be held in Washington, D.C. from October 23-26.

The 2005 White House Conference on Aging occurs as the first wave of the baby boom generation prepares for retirement, creating an important opportunity to creatively assess aging in America and improve the lives of older Americans. Go to their website for more information: <http://www.whcoa.gov/> .

Lane v. Tennessee Plaintiffs Reach Settlement with the State of Tennessee

On Wednesday, March 23, 2005 the Plaintiffs in the Lane v. Tennessee lawsuit announced that they have entered into a full settlement agreement with the State of Tennessee. The settlement comes after a landmark victory at the United States Supreme Court last May.

In 1998, plaintiffs George Lane and Beverly Jones filed a lawsuit alleging that the State of Tennessee and twenty-five Tennessee counties were in violation of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by failing to ensure that State courthouses were accessible to individuals with disabilities. In addition to reaching settlement with the State, the plaintiffs have reached a settlement with the twenty-five County Defendants. Each defendant county has agreed to take actions to ensure that the State's court program as conducted in their county will be accessible to people with mobility disabilities.

In addition, the State of Tennessee agreed to recommend to the Tennessee Supreme Court that an ADA policy regarding access to judicial programs be implemented, and on March 21, 2005, Tennessee Chief Justice Frank Drowota III signed an order implementing that policy.

“Making Your Case”

The Arc of the United States has made available a free, Internet-based learning program called "Making Your Case." Whether working with boards, policymakers, individuals, agencies, funders or other stakeholders, there is always a need to clearly convey the Who, What, When, Where, and (especially) Why of activities.

This self-paced learning program takes about three hours to complete, and is available 24 hours per day, seven days a week. "Making Your Case" was developed after many years of research on effective advocacy methods at the local, state and federal levels, and incorporates the best that "e-learning" tools have to offer.

Participants will learn to effectively "tell their story" to policymakers; identify which policymakers would be most helpful in bringing about positive change; write effective letters and emails; conduct productive meetings with policymakers; give effective testimony and answers to questions; and organize with others to address important issues. This program can be accessed any time by going to <http://www.partnersinpolicymaking.com/makingyourcase>.

Important Fact Sheet on Proposed Social Security Reforms

[The Arc and UCP Public Policy Collaboration share the following announcement about important fact sheets available on the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) website, <http://www.c-c-d.org>]

The federal Social Security Administration provides a variety of benefits to forty seven million Americans, including seven million people with disabilities, their spouses and children. When most people talk about the President's proposed Social Security changes, they only discuss retirement benefits. This is a very serious concern for people with disabilities and their families because changes in the retirement side of the program will have a huge impact on the SSDI side of the program - not just on people who retire.

The CCD Social Security Task Force has created a set of seven Fact Sheets to educate people about the potential devastating effect of major program changes. The Fact Sheets discuss the following topics: What Benefits Do People with Disabilities and Their Families Get from Social Security?, How Does Social Security Help People with Disabilities & their Families?, How Does Social Security Protect Young Workers and Their Families?, How is Social Security Funded? How Will Individual Private Accounts Affect Social Security?, How Are the Social Security & SSI Disability Programs Different?

It's Not Too Late To Get Tax Assistance!

The Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, is offering a publication for use in preparing 2004 Returns (Publication 907, Cat. No. 15308H, "Tax Highlights for Persons with Disabilities"). You can get whatever forms and other information you need by going to www.irs.gov. This publication gives you a brief introduction to parts of the tax law of particular interest to people with disabilities and those who care for people with disabilities. You will find most of the information you need to complete your tax return in your form instruction booklet. If you need additional information, you may want to order a free tax publication. You may also want to take advantage of the other free tax help services that IRS provides.

AARP Tax-Aide is a service for people who need assistance with their taxes. Have questions, concerns, or suggestions for AARP Tax-Aide? Email them at taxaide@aarp.org. From February 1 through April 15th each year, the AARP Tax-Aide program offers free one-on-one counseling, as well as assistance on the telephone and internet to help individuals prepare basic tax forms, including the 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ and other standard schedules.

Tax Help at the World Institute on Disability

To review their Access to Assets Program go to www.wid.org/equity.

State Data on Developmental Disabilities

According to “Supporting Connecticut’s Citizens with Developmental Disabilities” - the final report from the “Advisory Commission on Services and Supports for Persons with Developmental Disabilities who do not have Mental Retardation” - of the 56,000 citizens in Connecticut with a developmental disability, approximately 24,180 people do not have intellectual disabilities.

An Educator's Guide to Autism

An Educator's Guide to Autism, the second book in the *Life Journey through Autism* series of resource guides published by the Organization for Autism Research (OAR), is now available. OAR, a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to apply research to the daily challenges that people living with autism and their families must face, is distributing the *Guides* free of charge to education professionals and parents of children with autism as part of their national autism education initiative. *An Educator's Guide to Autism* provides parents, teachers and education professionals with a six-step plan for teaching a child with autism in the general elementary classroom setting. To request a hard copy of *An Educator's Guide to Autism* or *A Parent's Guide to Research*, email OAR@researchautism.org?subject=Educator'sGuide and include your name and mailing address, or call 703-351-5031. The Guide can also be viewed online by visiting OAR's website, <http://www.researchautism.org/educators.asp> and clicking on the Educator's Guide to Autism cover.

Navigating Medicare and Medicaid, 2005

[Spinalcord.org/news March, 2005] The Kaiser Family Foundation has released new guides, prepared by Bob Williams and Henry Claypool of Advancing Independence and Jeff Crowley of the Georgetown University Health Policy Institute, that explain the role of Medicare and Medicaid for roughly 20 million children, adults and seniors with disabilities.

These guides offer a basic introduction to the Medicare and Medicaid programs, including answers to questions such as: How do people with disabilities apply for coverage under Medicare or Medicaid? What is Medicare's policy for covering durable medical equipment? Where can people with disabilities turn if they need help in applying for Medicaid? How do people with disabilities appeal Medicare coverage decisions? Can a person with a disability who has Medicare and/or Medicaid be employed and still keep their coverage? To get more information on the guides go to:

www.kff.org/medicare/med020705pkg.cfm .

NCD Bulletin

The National Council on Disability (NCD) publishes a monthly free newsletter on the latest issues and news affecting people with disabilities. Go to their website at www.ncd.gov for more information.

Free News Over the Phone

The National Federation of the Blind has introduced a free service called NFB-NEWSLINE, a program designed to read newspapers over the telephone. To register call the Talking Books Library 410-659-9314 or go to their website at www.nfb.org/newslines1.htm.

News from the National Rehabilitation Association

As reported in the March Bulletin, the U.S. Department of Education, specifically the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), has decided to close the regional offices of the Rehabilitation Services Administration before the end of 2005. The National Rehabilitation Association has distributed the following appeal to all those interested in the federal vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs:

“Rather than conduct an impact study, the powers-that-be in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services -- which does not have the expertise in the programs administered under the Rehab Act -- chose to make an arbitrary decision to consolidate or eliminate 66 jobs, 43% of those positions held by individuals with disabilities.

Members of Congress need to know that U.S. Department of Education and, in particular, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, did not conduct a feasibility study on the impact these closings would have on individuals with disabilities, on the integrity of the monitoring and technical assistance that the individuals in RSA’s regional offices provide to the states, or on the sixty-six dedicated individuals who have provided these services for years.”

The Association urges interested parties to contact their U.S. Senators and Congressmen/women to oppose the closings.

Please relay this Bulletin to your membership including those who do not have e-mail access. Make this available in large print, tape and for others who have difficulty accessing information. View and print this Bulletin in [RTF format](#) (compatible with most word processing software). Suggest your membership go to the library and go onto www.kleinmanconsulting.com to view or print a copy. If you would like to see previous issues of the Bulletin, read about the background of the

Collaborative or if you would like to be added to the mailing list, you may also go to www.KleinmanConsulting.com.

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