

Subject **MWCIL Newsletter - December News correction**
From MetroWest Center for Independent Living <srorke@mwcil.org>
To <srorke@mwcil.org>
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Readers, please accept my apology for inadvertently misspelling Pam Burkley's name in the previous version of this email. from Sue R.

December 2020

What a year this has been and it's not over yet. I just looked back over old emails and found this sentence from our February 2020 newsletter: *"2020 promises to be an intense year with an impeachment trial, elections, issues needing advocacy, and the 30th Anniversary of the Signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act."* Intense is an understatement!

Covid-19 continues to be a train wreck; yesterday Massachusetts confirmed a daily infection record (6477) and death toll of 49. Experts are unsure if this is due to Thanksgiving but expect this trend to continue. Nationally, total Covid-19 deaths is listed at 251,428 as of December 1 (from [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)).

Meanwhile, vaccines are on the horizon, and both the federal government and the state government are coming up with distribution guidelines.

We also honor two great disability rights advocates who recently passed away: John Winske and Pam Burkley. I knew both advocates well as part of a group of Massachusetts advocates from the early 1980s. Both were strong voices in the IL movement in mass and both were great friends to work with.

Today, December 3, is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Accessibility and civil rights for persons with disabilities vary around the world.

We will not host our Holiday Open House this year, but are hoping to be back to normal next year! Stay safe!

MWCIL is ready to work with you on any important issues. We will resolve as much as possible remotely to protect both our staff and consumers. We understand that most services and safety nets have been disrupted, and we will try to help.

Best wishes for a happy and safe holiday season!

Paul Spooner,
Executive Director

Remembering John Winske

John Winske was a force in disability rights, bringing his intelligence to the table to cut through the nonsense with solutions. His contributions to the Disability Policy Consortium are epic.

Here is part of Colin Killick's, ED of Disability Policy Consortium, thoughts on John: " ...That, above all else, was the kind of man John was, that mix of caring, committed, and confident. He was a character in the best way, the kind of cowboy-style leader who was unafraid to make it up as he went along because he knew his instincts would not lead him astray. He had no tolerance for bullshit, but he was also an enormously kind man, and someone utterly unafraid to give opportunities to people he thought deserved them. It is thanks in no small part to his passion, dedication, and tactical skill that we now have an accessible State House with an ADA coordinator, curb ramps on street corners throughout Boston, a pioneering healthcare program like One Care that was built around the needs of people with disabilities, and My Ombudsman, the nation's only healthcare ombudsman program run by people with disabilities themselves. His biggest legacy, however, was in the people he built up. Decades from now, there will still be an army of disability advocates who can say that it was John Winske who gave them the chance and the belief that they

needed to lead our community. I'm proud as hell to be one of them."

View John's obituary at [legacy.com](https://www.legacy.com).



Remembering Pam Burkley

From the Cape Cod Times:

"Pamela Kelley Burkley, of Hyannis, used to joke that she was known in the national media as "that girl" — the teenager paralyzed in 1973 when a Jeep driven by Joseph P. Kennedy II on Nantucket flipped over and tossed her to the ground.

Those who knew Burkley, who died Nov. 20 at age 65, said her real legacy lies in her work as an advocate for disability rights, her love of family and her irreverent sense of humor."

"Pamela was a front-line activist," said Bill Henning, whom Burkley succeeded as executive director of CORD (Cape Organization for the Rights of the Disabled).

"She was articulate. She was also as personable as the devil" and brimming with chutzpah, Henning said.

Burkley was a founding member of CORD and "a tireless advocate for people with disabilities, literally fighting in the streets for equal access to all aspects of

life, including transportation, housing and employment," said CORD's current CEO Coreen Brinckerhoff.

Read more about Pam Burkley's life in the Cape Cod Times: [Pamela Kelley Burkley fought for disability rights](#).

Vaccination Plans

Massachusetts

The first vaccines are expected to be available this month. The state should be releasing more information today or tomorrow. Below are current expectations. According to the Arc, Massachusetts, the vaccine has not been well tested on people under 18, and school mandates for vaccination are not expected.

December 1 in the Patch: [First COVID-19 Vaccines Expected In Massachusetts This Month](#) ..." The limited supply of early doses, however, will likely be used first for frontline health care workers, adults over 65 or with underlying health conditions and other essential workers. The state is preparing to submit its final plan for vaccine acceptance and distribution to the Centers for Disease Control on Friday"

Read the October 16 draft Department of Public Health [Covid-19 Vaccination Plan](#). A new document is expected tomorrow.

FYI: Weekly numbers at [mass.gov](#).

National

CDC guidelines from December 1: [Phased Allocation of Covid-19 Vaccines](#).

Phase 1:

- a. Health Care Personnel and Long Term Care Facilities residents
- b. Essential Workers (education, food, first responders, etc.)
- c. Adults with high risk medical conditions or over 65

New York Magazine (December 2) provides information on the planned allocations and distribution via Operation Warp Speed: [What We Know About the U.S. Covid-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan](#).

From Kare11.com (December 1) provides more insights into the allocation planning: "The committee voted 13-1 to offer the vaccine to healthcare workers as well as residents of long-term care facilities...This, as far as we could tell,

was the first time a committee had to make a decision like this, regarding a limited supply of vaccines.": [CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices votes on who is in Phase 1a of COVID-19 vaccine rollout](#)

Another opinion on distribution from statnews.com on December 3 recommends initial focus on everyone in highly infected areas. The author maintains that the supply chain for the CDC recommendations is too stretched: [A Better Way to Roll Out Covid-19 Vaccines: Vaccinate everyone in several hot zones.](#)

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

From a Disability Law Center Facebook post:

December 3 is the annual observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD), proclaimed in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly. IDPD promotes the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities and takes action for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development. The theme this year is "Building Back Better: toward a disability-inclusive, accessible and sustainable post COVID-19 World".

People with disabilities are disproportionately affected by the health, social and economic consequences of the global COVID-19 pandemic. This year's theme emphasizes the importance of strengthening collective efforts for universal access to essential services, including immediate health and social protection, education, digital infrastructure, accessible information, employment and other socio-cultural opportunities in order to ensure that persons with disabilities are not left behind in times of crisis and beyond.

Visit [un.org](https://www.un.org) for more information.

Protests at Fernald School

Watham Patch, December 1, [Advocates Vow To Continue To Protest Light Show At Fernald](#): Advocates for preserving the Fernald Developmental Center as a disability museum continue their protests at the light show. Chris Hoeh said "We need a museum acknowledging the history of the site, remembrance of how fragile the rights, the dignity of persons with disabilities always is, and to value the ongoing struggle being waged by activists to protect the dignity of the disabled."



The Sandy Houghton Story

From Daniel Shannon, ED at the MA Developmental Disabilities Council:

Sandy Houghton served the MA Developmental Disabilities Council in multiple roles for over 20 years. She was appointed as a citizen member of the Council in the 1990s, where she helped establish our first self-advocacy group, then was selected as the first Barbara Wilensky Gopen Fellow, where she created

the original Self-Advocacy Leadership Series. She later served as lead trainer for the Council, teaching the SALS across the Commonwealth, and travelling the country to share the curriculum with others. Sandy retired from the Council in 2016.

A documentary of Sandy's amazing life premiered on November 10, 2011 at the Landmark Theater in Cambridge, MA. Since then more than 1000 copies of the documentary have been distributed throughout the world. The Council recently had the film remastered and rendered for upload to YouTube. This 40-minute documentary recounts the life of a woman born with severe cerebral palsy, who overcame endless barriers to become a renowned leader in disability advocacy, awareness and education. Sandy was bullied as a child, discriminated against as a parent of a child with a disability, and ignored as a woman of intelligence. This story pieces together the emotional memories and experiences that shaped Sandy's life, her strength and perseverance, and how she achieved her ultimate goal to teach others how to overcome the obstacles facing a person with a disability.

You can watch the film on Youtube: <https://youtu.be/H7jrqdLUjno>

Partner Websites and Organizations



[REV UP Massachusetts](http://www.revupma.org) - Increasing the Disability Vote!



[MA Tales of Independence](#) - a collection of videos by people who are successfully living independently.



[Dignity Alliance of Massachusetts](#) is dedicated to secure fundamental changes in the provision of long-term services, support, and care.

About MetroWest Center for Independent Living

We provide an array of independent living services that enable people with disabilities to live in the community. The center was created by people with disabilities seeking full integration into society. We empower people with disabilities by teaching the practical skills and confidence to take control over their lives and become active members of the communities in which they live. We promote access and change within society while advocating for programs and services needed by people of all ages with a wide range of disabilities. MWCIL is a consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential private nonprofit agency.

We enable people with disabilities to gain freedom from nursing homes and other institutional settings.

If you have a disability, live within our area (26 towns in Metrowest section of Massachusetts) and have needs, goals, or barriers related to your living independently, then contact us at 508-875-7853.

MetroWest Center for Independent Living is a scent-free environment. Please keep this in mind when you plan a visit.

View our Services



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