

January 2011

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MetroWest

Center for Independent Living, Inc.

Happy New Year!

Greetings!

Happy New Year!

We hope you all were able to enjoy our Christmas blizzard, as well as the January snowstorms. We have a lot of snow on the ground... remember, keep those emergency preparedness plans up-to-date, and your supplies fully stocked!

The elections are over, and the winners are now in place. In Washington, Health Care Reform is under attack, and decreases in spending are on the agenda. Federal decreases impact the states, and will surely affect Massachusetts's predicted \$1.5 billion deficit adversely.

People with disabilities and advocates need to stay extremely vigilant and active in order to preserve necessary services. A seemingly small reduction in services can mean a huge difference to an individual's quality of life. A small reduction in costs can have a huge impact.

The first attack on programs for people with disabilities is \$15 million in proposed cuts including reductions to the day habitation programs for the developmentally disabled, adult foster care rates and adult day health rates. Read the budget news below.

What can you do? First, contact all of your elected officials and share your opinions! You can find their contact information via www.wheredoivotema.com - Enter your address, and scroll down for links to each official's website. Write letters to the newspapers. And finally, we will try and keep you informed about any Advocacy Actions taking place in Boston and MetroWest.

We also would like to share our sorrow for the victims of the Arizona shooting. This tragedy has brought negative attention to mental illness. Below, read a rational opinion from Mental Health America.

from Paul Spooner, Executive Director

State Budget Troubles

Human service providers were informed of the Patrick Administration's plan to cut **\$15 million from programs that serve the elderly and developmentally disabled**, at a January



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Emergency Preparedness
Visit our new [Emergency Preparedness web page](#) at mwcil.org for online resources.

Anyone who has life-dependent power needs or other medical requirements should register at their Town Hall with the Civil Defense Emergency Preparedness staff.

Make sure that you have extra food on hand, that you have back-up plans for services and medical needs, and that your friends and family can easily get in touch with you. Track down emergency numbers and put them in a visible, easily found location. Prepare!

11 meeting with Jean McGuire, assistant secretary of health and human services; Ann Hartstein, secretary of elder affairs; and Rachel Richards, director of the MassHealth Office of Long Term Care. Among the proposed cuts: a \$5 million a year reduction in rates paid to day habitation programs for the developmentally disabled, a \$4 million a year cut to adult foster care rates and a \$3.3 million a year cut from adult day health rates.

ADDP and The Arc Request Meeting with Governor Patrick. Gary Blumenthal, executive director of the Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers, said he will protest the cuts directly to the governor. "It's just very, very regrettable. When you cut \$5 million or \$15 million from these programs, the only way to take it is by reducing staff and that makes it difficult to meet all of the health and safety standards," Officials from EOHHS also suggested that the state would relax some regulations to make the cuts more tolerable. More tolerable to whom??? ADDP officials are concerned about the ability to maintain health and safety for all Day Hab participants and worry which regulations the state may consider relaxing.

The state Division of Health Care Finance and Policy will hold hearings on the proposed reduction to adult foster care on Feb. 22 in Boston, on the proposed reduction to day habilitation Feb. 23 in Shrewsbury, and on the proposed reduction to adult day health on Feb. 24 in Boston. If approved, the reduced rates would take effect mid-March.

The participants in these threatened programs are among the state's most vulnerable and fragile citizens, including people with disabilities who utilize molded wheelchairs, feeding tubes, and may have challenging health and incontinence issues that require individual assistance. Since the largest part of the operation of these programs is staffing, reduced funding may make it fiscally challenging to deliver all needed therapies and assistance.

Thanks to [Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers](#) for this information from their newsletter.

Arizona Tragedy

"... It will likely take many days to understand the reasons and motivations behind this national tragedy. Many have pointed to mental health as an issue.

It must first be emphasized that people with mental health conditions are no more likely to be violent than the rest of the population. And we have science-based methods to successfully treat persons with even the most severe mental illnesses. A very small group of individuals with a specific type of mental health symptoms are at greater risk for violence if their symptoms are untreated.

ADDP Conference and Expo in Worcester March 18, 2011

The Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers and the Hanover Insurance Group will sponsor the annual conference with Judy Woodruff as keynote speaker.

The goal of the conference is to provide professional development and management tools for executive staff, directors and managers who support individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities or brain injuries.

[ADDP Web Info](#)

Forget Carol King! It's Not Too Late!

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If our recent direct mail appeal got lost in your drawer, fear not! It is not too late to make a contribution, with or without our fancy reply envelope.

Gifts of any amount are very appreciated, and will help MWCIL continue its important work for people with disabilities in the MetroWest region. Help us to help you. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you!

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Fuel Assistance

Cold Relief
Hotline: 1- 800 -
632 - 8175

Funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Low Income Home Energy

At the same time, we must recognize that the nation's mental health system is drastically under-funded and fails to provide Americans living with mental health conditions with the effective community-based mental health services they need. Sadly, in the current environment of strained state budgets, mental health services have been cut drastically just as demand for these critical services has risen dramatically... " Read the [full statement](#) by Mental Health America.

PCA Program in MA

Personal Care Attendants are at the heart of the Independent Living Movement. By performing and helping with Activities of Daily Living and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living that not everyone can do on their own, PCA's give people with disabilities the freedom to work, to play, to live in the community and home of their choice, and to be independent.

MWCIL has partnered with other organizations and created the [PCAForever](#) website devoted to providing information about the Massachusetts PCA program as well as publicizing advocacy opportunities and needs.

With budget sessions and presumably budget cuts looming on the horizon, MWCIL anticipates that the Personal Care Attendants program in Massachusetts and the country will need our advocacy.

Don't miss any opportunity to highlight the effectiveness of the program with your elected officials!

Accessible Sports and Recreation

The [Adaptive Sports and Recreation Program](#) in Sudbury offers year round recreation and leisure opportunities to community members of all ages and abilities. There are over 20 programs (some indoor, some outdoor) running this winter. All of the programs that Anna Wood (recreational therapist) runs are open for people from any community.

And don't forget about the state's Department of Conservation and Recreation's [Outdoor Recreation Program](#). Their activities are scheduled all over the state. Scroll down to see their whole schedule of adaptive and accessible activities.

State Budgets

[ADDP](#) and [The Arc of MA](#) (and MWCIL!) will be watching the budget process closely to ensure that the following line items are protected. 5920-2025 DDS Day/Employment Services:

This program serves 9,194 people and allows people with disabilities to work and earn money.

5920-3000 DDS Respite and Family Support:

This cost-effective program serves nearly 11,000 people and their families, keeping families intact and saving the state millions of

Assistance Program assists low-income individuals and families with the cost of heating their homes during the winter season. The program is managed by the DHCD in conjunction with 22 regional nonprofit and local government organizations. Visit the MA Housing and Economic Development's [Cold Relief Information page](#) for details.

Charlie Cards for MetroWest



MetroWest Regional Transit Authority will now accept Charlie Cards. Customers can add stored card value at all ticket machines and through the [MBTA website](#).

About Us:

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(past issues are available at our website)

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dollars that otherwise would be spent on out-of-home placements. Day/Employment and Family Support accounts were cut by a total of \$20 Million two years ago with thousands losing some services.

5920-2000 DDS Community Residential:
This program provides homes to 10,466 who live in group homes or supported housing. Without this service, individuals face homelessness.

5920-3010 DDS Autism Services: This program serves 130 people and is desperately needed as the number of children and adults with autism continues to skyrocket.

4000-0300 MassHealth Day Habilitation: This program serves 7,616 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and 1,000 individuals with brain injury, mental health conditions, and/or other disabilities.

4000-0300 MassHealth Personal Care Attendant: 18,000 individuals with disabilities receive in-home assistance to remain in the community. Without it, individuals would be at-risk or moved to institutional settings.

7061-0012 DESE/DDS Family Preservation Support: This program serves over 350 families, with 193 families on the waiting list, helping families keep their children in their local school system and within the family home. Similar to the Family Support line item, this program is cost-effective, but focuses exclusively on keeping children enrolled in their local school system.

Not highlighted here but also key to community services and supports are DDS Transportation, MassHealth Adult Foster Care and Nursing Services.

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