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## MetroWest Center for Independent Living, Inc.

### October is Disability Employment Awareness Month

Greetings!

Employment opportunities for people with disabilities continue to be far below the average. The recent "Products and Technologies That Change People's Lives Expo and Conference" showed us many new technologies and devices that can help even the playing field, and improve productivity for everyone. We need to continue to work at getting these technologies into the right hands, to provide skills training to match the existing job markets, and to educate employers to value *abilities* when hiring. Attached is the [Presidential Proclamation for National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#). Maybe next year it can evolve into National Disability Employment Action Month... Awareness is positive, too.

We've also included some reports on "Dual Eligibles" - individuals who are eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare. The topic is very complex, and is being examined closely by both the state and federal governments with goals of reducing costs and improving the quality of services. These goals should be possible under the Affordable Care Act, but getting there is not simple.

The new documentary "Lives Worth Living" will be shown on the Independent Lens program on PBS on October 27 at 10 p.m. Fred Fay is among those featured in the film.

from Paul W. Spooner, Executive Director



### Rally for REAL MEDICAID REFORM

Capitol Hill, Washington D.C., September 21.

MetroWest Center for Independent Living, Independence Associates, Boston CIL and other MA IL center staff participated in the rally. The rally was held on the lawn outside the Capitol, giving activists easy access to legislators' offices.



#### In This Issue

[Rally for Medicaid Reform](#)

[Assistive Technology Expo](#)

[PCA Awards](#)

[Transportation Commission](#)

[MA Dual Eligibles](#)

[National Dual Eligibles](#)

[International White Cane Day](#)

[Documentary October 27](#)

[Service Animals](#)

[Donate](#)

[MA PCA Program](#)

#### Service Animals



As of May 15, 2011, the ADA was revised regarding which service animals and which disabilities gave individuals the right to bring them into public places. Dogs and miniature horses are the only animals which business owners have to allow. The individual's disability has to be physical. Business owners may ask what services the animal provides. And

David Correia from MWCIL visited House Representatives Stephen Lynch and Barney Frank's offices, and Senator John Kerry's office. Staff members assured David of their legislators' support. David also spoke with Rep. John Tierney, another supporter of Medicaid.



Steve, Dave, William and Lorrie outside Kerry's office.

Participants at the rally came from all over the U.S.

The people from MA were able to do a (very long) day trip. The main message of the speakers was that Medicaid support is needed to maintain an acceptable quality of life for low-income people with disabilities. PCA's and other Medicaid services are not luxuries, they are necessities for many people.

In addition to speaking with legislators, the rally was an opportunity for people from all over the country to share their experiences. The rally focused on federal dollars which end up in the hands of the states. Each state implements health and social services differently, even when using federal dollars.



Going forward, MA residents should continue to contact their legislators in Washington, and ask them to support Medicaid reform, not cuts to services. Even the legislators who are on board need to know how their constituents feel because it is going to be an extremely tough battle. Here is contact information for the [House of Representatives](#) (scroll down to MA) and the [MA Senators](#). As a member of the Super Committee, calls to Senator John Kerry are especially important.

animal owners are still required to keep their animal under control. Apparently people who were bringing their pets everywhere, and claiming non-existent disabilities were the impetus for these new rules.

The law says that Service Animals are working animals that have been trained to perform tasks for disabled persons such as guiding the blind, alerting the deaf, pulling wheelchairs, providing seizure alerts, and calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack. Comfort animals are whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support are no longer considered Service Animals.

For more information, read the official revised rule at [ada.gov](http://ada.gov) and an overview of what it means to hotel owners at [mondaq.com](http://mondaq.com)

### MWRTA Rides



Starting on November 10, the MWRTA will offer rides to the West Roxbury and Jamaica Plain Veterans Administration Hospitals.

Rides must be booked in advance, and will cost riders \$2 each way.

Buses will make three trips a day on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Buses will leave Framingham at 9 a.m. and noon, with a final trip at 3 p.m.



ADAPT - My Medicaid Matters Rally in DC  
09/21/11



Disabled Advocates Take To D.C. To Protest  
Medicaid Cuts

## Products and Technology that Change People's Lives: Assistive Technology and Universal Design in Massachusetts

The first (annual, we hope!) expo and conference on assistive technology was a success. The expo was well attended, and visitors were able to examine many technologies that they previously could only read about. The expo underscored the need for more hands-on opportunities for people to explore available technologies.

The conference and plenary sessions were also well attended, with highly qualified speakers for each topic. Like the expo, the conference sessions underscored the need for more information getting to the right people.

Most sessions are now posted at:  
[www.changepeopleslives.org](http://www.changepeopleslives.org)

Call Lisa Long at 508-820-4650 to register.



Thanks to  
[MetroWest Daily News](#)  
for the info!

### Online Donations

Have you or a friend or relative been helped by MWCIL? Would you like to give back and help the next person who needs support? If so, our secure online donation page is for you! Check out the PayPal button option for donating any amount to make sure that MWCIL is still here when you or a loved one needs help. Go to [MWCIL Webpage](#) or click on the Donate button.

[Donate](#)



All online gifts are tax deductible. ***We couldn't carry out our important mission without you!***

### MA PCAs

MWCIL has partnered with other organizations to create the [PCAForever.org](http://PCAForever.org) website devoted to providing information about the Massachusetts Personal Care Attendant



## Home

The "Home" focus was on universal access and advanced technology. We look forward to the day when homes have a gentle path right up to the front door, and not a "handicap access" ramp hidden on the side. Josh Safdie mentioned that some towns have made visitability(\*) a requirement for all new home construction, with little or no impact on costs. For some individuals, advanced technology (new Leonard Florence Center) and attention to design has allowed independence. Steve Saling, a Landscape Architect, worked on the green design of a new house at the Leonard Florence Center, which is now the home to ten individuals with ALS, including Steve. The new home is beautiful inside, and allows the residents to live with choices in their daily activities. The Expo had several booths on Universal Design.



Barry Berman, Josh Safdie, A.J. Caputo and Steve Saling spoke at the Home sessions

## Work

The Work sessions began with a focus on accessible information technology. From cell phones to machines with Braille display, the technology exists so that literally anyone can access today's communication methods and internet information. Unfortunately, finding and affording the technology is another story. Mobile communication features continue to be confusing, with restrictive service plans and few if any employees available to help. There are multiple screen readers available, but again, navigating and affording the choices can be daunting.

The Expo had booths with several very cool internet devices, including a sight/eye directed screen reader - just the motion of the person's eye controlled what was visible on the screen. We did not notice any cell phone vendors with any expertise in accessibility.

## Life-Long Learning

The Learning sessions were geared towards teachers, and offered valuable information for others. Our staff especially appreciated Megan Wilson's talk promoting universal (as opposed to "special") and inclusive learning, with practical implementations of her ideas. The Expo displayed all kinds of technologies such as touch pads and even robots to improve learning outcomes.

## Fitness/Recreation/Sport

The Fitness/Recreation/Sport sessions focused on opportunities for people with physical disabilities. The accessible opportunities are almost improving daily, with skiing, kayaking, bicycling, and even zip lines.

The Expo was very impressive in this area, with approximately 10 different bicycles for people to try. We were also surprised at the

program as well as publicizing advocacy opportunities and needs.

We have posted three [videos](#). Thanks very much to Amy, Tom and Jean for sharing their experiences and thoughts.

We are actively seeking stories from consumers.

[Email us](#)

## About Us:

[MWCIL website](#)  
(past issues are available at our website)

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number of different organizations specializing in various outdoor recreational events.



Hosted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Governor Deval Patrick, Lt. Governor Timothy Murray, Secretary JudyAnn Bigby, MD (EOHHS), Secretary Gregory Bialecki (EOHED) and Secretary Paul Reville (DoE). Convened by the [Institute for Human Centered Design](http://www.changepeopleslives.org)

More Information at: [www.changepeopleslives.org](http://www.changepeopleslives.org).

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\* Visitability - The conventional definition means that a person in a wheelchair can visit your home, and use the bathroom.

The must have features of Visitability are:

- Wide passage doors
- At least a half bath/powder room on the main floor
- At least one zero-step entrance

## Paul Kahn PCA Service Awards

The Paul Kahn PCA Service Awards were presented on Thursday, September 15, 2011 at the Massachusetts State House. Five PCA's from across the Commonwealth were honored. These awards honored not only five individuals but the dedicated work of the more than 27,000 PCAs working in the MassHealth program throughout the Commonwealth.



Award winners

The award winners are Terri Morris, Johanna Montalvo, Luci Johnson, Noah Zizinga and Patricia Peles.

For more information about the awards and to see photos of the

day, visit our [PcaForever.org](http://PcaForever.org) website.

## Commission for the Reform of Community, Social Service and Paratransit Transportation Services

The general public is invited to give input at the remaining Listening / Comment Sessions. ASL, CART and Spanish language interpreters, along with listening devices, will be available. All locations are accessible to persons with disabilities and by public transit. If you need additional accommodation, please submit an email to: [execorder@mbta.com](mailto:execorder@mbta.com), or call (617) 222-6260 or (617) 222-5415 TTY.

ALL MEETINGS ARE SCHEDULED from 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Wednesday, October 12, 2011 in Springfield  
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 60 Congress Street

Thursday, October 27, 2011 in Pittsfield  
BRTA Intermodal Center, 1 Columbus Avenue

Monday, November 7, 2011 in Boston  
State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza

Paratransit users, community and social service users and providers, as well as other interested stakeholders and the general public, are encouraged to participate in any of these sessions, to speak to Commission members, provide input, and offer recommendations. If you are unable to attend a Public Comment and Dialogue session in person, you may

- Email a message to: [execorder@mbta.com](mailto:execorder@mbta.com)
- Call the comment line (617) 222-6260 or (617) 222-5415 TTY,
- Mail a letter to MBTA, EO530, 45 High Street, 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02110.

Resources:

[Commission Webpage](#)

Governor Patrick's [Executive Order 530](#)

About the Commission:

As people's transportation needs change, so do their expectations of their public transportation system. As a result, the demand for services keeps growing, costs continue to rise and resources remain limited. The goal of the Commission is to develop detailed recommendations for reform and maximize efficiencies in the provision of these critical services utilized by persons with disabilities, persons with low incomes, persons with Limited English Proficiency, and seniors and visitors to the Commonwealth.

### MA Dual Eligibles Profile Report

"Duals" (aged 21-64, eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare) receive coverage under the Medicare and Medicaid programs because they meet Medicaid financial eligibility rules and also have significant disability due to chronic illness, physical disability, behavioral health problems, or developmental disability.

Under the Medicaid and Medicare programs, duals receive access to a comprehensive set of services. Medicare is the primary payer for acute services, such as hospital and physician services. Medicaid pays for long-term support services (LTSS) provided to duals living in the community and in long-term nursing facilities. Medicaid also acts as the secondary payer for some Medicare-covered services when it helps beneficiaries with payment of Medicare deductibles and copayments.

Attached is an in-depth report data on approximately 105,000 enrollees, age 21-64, who were simultaneously enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid during calendar year 2008, and whose providers were paid on a fee-for-service (not managed care) basis: [DUAL ELIGIBLES IN MASSACHUSETTS: A PROFILE OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND SPENDING FOR NON-ELDERLY ADULTS ENROLLED IN BOTH MEDICARE AND MEDICAID.](#)

The purpose of the report is to aid MassHealth (MA Medicaid program) in developing a proposal to integrate care and financing in order to improve coordination, quality and cost-effectiveness of care.

The report showed that while the average per person combined spending was \$23,700, there was a very wide variation. Medicaid and Medicare expenditures were fairly even. Also of interest was that the majority of duals live in their communities and not in institutions. The per capita spending for duals receiving a high level of support services while living in the community was \$56,200, while duals in institutions averaged \$101,900 per year.

## National Report on Duals

A national report claims that the 9 million dual eligibles spend 40% (\$319.5 billion) of the Medicare and Medicaid (federal) dollars. More than two thirds of this money went through Medicare. The report concludes that the federal government should drive the improvement of Medicare-financed services (Affordable Care Act's payment and delivery reform) and lowered costs, instead of relying on each state to find solutions.

### Main recommendation:

Improved Medicare-financed care will control spending. Prevention of unnecessary hospitalizations is a key way to reduce spending and improve quality of care for duals. Better coordination of Medicare-financed care for beneficiaries at high risk of hospitalization is at the heart of payment and delivery reforms promoted by the ACA (Affordable Care Act).

### The Risk From Putting States and Medicaid in the Lead

The report goes on to explain the problems with state solutions: "States' expenditures on dual eligibles focus overwhelmingly on long-term supports and services-not medical care. Although states

have developed managed care for Medicaid's younger enrollees, they lack experience in managing dual eligibles' medical care, and face continued incentives to substitute federal Medicare for state Medicaid spending, in order to control their expenditures."

Read the complete report by the Urban Institute and the Robert Johnson Foundation: [Refocusing Responsibility For Dual Eligibles: Why Medicare Should Take The Lead](#)

## International White Cane Day

Friday, October 14, 2011

Celebrate the independence of white canes and raise public awareness of the White Cane Law!

Where: Grand Staircase at the State House, Boston MA  
When: 10 a.m. - Noon

Show Your Independence!

White Cane and Guide Dog Users Bring Family, Friends, Orientation and Mobility Specialists, Vision Professionals and Others to raise White Cane Awareness!

For more information on this celebration contact the Orientation and Mobility Department at the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind 617-626-7581 or 800-392-6450x 7581

White Cane Law:

Massachusetts White Cane Law: General Law Chapter 90 Section 14A: Yield to White Cane and Dog Guide Users at Street Crossings. Massachusetts White Cane Law states that All motorists, when they see a pedestrian who uses a dog guide or white cane at a street crossing, must come to a complete stop.

White Cane Information:

The white cane is a symbol of independence for Individuals with blindness. The white cane allows a legally blind Individual to travel independently. In 1931, the Lions Club began promoting the use of white canes as a national identification program.



All states and many other counties have White Cane laws, which allow pedestrians, who are legally blind, the right of way at street crossings. Most people who are legally blind have some usable vision.

When in doubt, ask if the person needs assistance.  
Do not grab the person, cane or dog guide!  
Do not pet a dog guide.

Source: Disability Policy Consortium Weekly Update from September 19 and MNIP.



## For Your Calendar!

October 27 at 10 p.m. - The Independent Lens program on PBS will show a documentary on the history of America's Disability Rights Movement called "Lives Worth Living". Fred Fay is featured.



Trailer to the movie: "Lives Worth Living"

For more information about the film, visit the [Independent Television Service website](#).

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