



January 25, 2012

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MetroWest

Center for Independent Living, Inc.

Happy New Year

Greetings!

We hope everyone is enjoying the weather! While we missed having a white Christmas, the lack of snow certainly made getting around easier. We're also enjoying the lower-than-normal heating costs.

In MA, several commissions and projects are ongoing that will directly impact people with disabilities. Dual Eligibles held two public hearings about very dramatic proposed changes. Transportation has recommended large fee increases and service reductions for The RIDE (You should have been emailed a Transportation News Flash). We're waiting to hear from the Paratransit Commission. And eligibility determination for The RIDE is also undergoing change.

We will keep you informed, and hope that you will be able to participate in public hearings, and keep our elected and appointed officials informed as to your opinions and needs.

January is the beginning of the state budget season. Governor Patrick's budget is expected Wednesday, January 25.

from Paul W. Spooner, Executive Director

Dual Eligibles

Work on the Dual Eligibles Demonstration Grant continues.

On December 7, The EOHHS released their [PROPOSAL](#) for integrating Medicaid and Medicare for Dual Eligible people.

Two Public Hearings have occurred. These hearings provided members of the public an opportunity to comment on the draft Demonstration Proposal (see "Related Information" section on [MassHealth's duals website](#)). Over 400 people attended the two sessions and testified.

Two MetroWest staff members testified:
Jini, Director of Services at MWCIL, was concerned about how people will be moved to the Integrated Care Organizations (ICOs). Will people still be able to go to their current doctors? How will individuals be assigned to an ICO - will they be able to choose? Will Mass Health Customer Service be improved? Trying to



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MWRTA VA Rides

[MWRTA](#) offers rides to the West Roxbury and Jamaica Plain Veterans Administration Hospitals.

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



navigate Mass Health today can be a nightmare for some, with slow or no response times, little accessible information, and differing responses as to eligibility and benefits. Why will the Dual Eligible support be any better? While a goal of integration is to make the system simpler, services for dual eligible people are complex by definition (**66 percent have three or more chronic conditions).

Balancing care coordination with historical knowledge and understanding will make or break the program. As Jini said, the whole system rides on the quality of the care coordination: "I am most concerned of the care coordination that is mentioned throughout this proposal. I feel this needs to begin with the day a customer is notified of the PCMH (person-centered medical home) he/she has been enrolled in and continue throughout the process..."

Tina, a Peer Counselor at MWCIL, gave testimony about her personal experience as a dual eligible. Tina has three doctors, a primary care physician, a neurologist and a cardiologist who have successfully worked together. Tina is able to work because of this coordinated care. She is concerned that her three doctors may not all be in the same dual eligible plans. Losing the relationships and history she has with these three doctors could put Tina's health at risk.

DPC-MA and Boston CIL published a [Flyer](#) and [Talking Points](#).

* Leading Advocacy Groups:

[Association of Developmental Disability Providers](#)
[ARC of Massachusetts](#)
[Disability Policy Consortium](#)

** "[A Guide for Advocates: State Demonstrations to Integrate Medicare and Medicaid](#)" by Families USA.

Note: these statistics are national, not statewide.

SSI Changes

The Patrick Administration has stated that the Commonwealth will take over the administration of the MA portion of SSI checks on April 1, 2012. This change means that SSI supplement recipients will now receive two checks instead of one. Presumably the Federal check will get smaller, and the additional MA check will make up the difference. Eligibility for the State checks may differ from Federal, and will have to be (re)-applied for.

UMASS Medical was contracted to administer the supplement on behalf of The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA). UMASS Medical will determine eligibility for the state supplement.

During the middle of February, Massachusetts will issue conversion letters to recipients, and open a customer service center with telephone representatives.

In early March, Social Security will issue notices to all recipients, notifying them of the change.

Concerns voiced by the Disability Policy Consortium are:

Donations

If you appreciate MWCIL and the support it provides you, please consider a year-end gift of any amount. By showing your appreciation and giving back, MWCIL can provide more services for the community. We thank you! 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!*

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(past issues are available at our website)

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- confusion to the recipients when the first check to arrive is not the expected or usual amount
- confusion to the recipients when the second check appears
- cost to the individuals having to appear for a second eligibility exam
- cost to the case management, care takers, legal aid, and other agencies which will have to respond to calls from frightened and confused recipient.

When we get more information on this change, we will email you a News Flash.

Spinal Cord Injury Newsletter

Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) in partnership with the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Spinal Cord Injury at the National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH) has started a SCI Focus - a quarterly newsletter about secondary conditions with spinal cord injury. The first issue has fact sheets and video training in how to prevent and treat pressure ulcers. The issue also has information about ongoing studies. To sign up for the newsletter, [CLICK HERE.](#)

The April 2012 issue will focus on cardiometabolic risk factors and how to decrease the risk of cardiometabolic disease.

The [NRH/RRTC](#) website has more valuable resources.

MWCIL Statistics - FY 2011

MetroWest Center for Independent Living had another successful year (Fiscal Year 2011 is from October 1, 2010 - September 30, 2011) as we supported consumers with their efforts to live independently.

311 Consumers were served.
Of these, 147 have multiple disabilities.

15 people moved from nursing homes, and 12 more are in the process.

463 goals were achieved to increase independence in a significant life area and another 442 goals are in progress.

Consumers improved their access to transportation, health care services and assistive technology in 285 instances, and 251 more are in progress.

In addition to work with individuals, MWCIL staff spent 811 hours on community advocacy activities such as MetroWest transportation, PCA council, outreach and community education.

MWCIL continues to promote the provision of the 4 core services, promote the civil rights of individuals with disabilities, and support the rights of individuals with disabilities to live in the community of their choosing. MWCIL is active in community activities promoting disability rights and IL philosophy, such as the PCA Work Council,

the Legislator's Forum, and the IL Statewide Education Day that further the choices individuals with disabilities have to live in the community.

Spaulding Adaptive Sports Ski Club

January 14th was the first Spaulding Ski Club outing and everyone had a tremendous time working with the skilled New England Disabled Sports Staff up at Loon Mountain! If you have imagined getting out on the slopes and enjoying winter sports but thought your illness or injury stood in your way, think again!

Whether you are a beginner, intermediate, or advanced skier or snowboarder, they have a program that will likely accommodate your needs and get you out on the slopes! In collaboration with New England Disabled Sports (NEDS), your snow sports session will be customized to meet your needs and goals. NEDS coaches, trained in the latest teaching techniques, in conjunction with Spaulding coaches will provide a fun and safe environment in which you can experience the excitement of adaptive snow sports. Come and experience skiing or snowboarding with the Spaulding Adaptive Sports Ski Club at Loon Mountain.

2012 Saturdays at Loon Mountain:

January 28
February 11
February 25
March 10
March 24

Transportation:

Carpools depart from Spaulding Hospital, 1575 Cambridge Street, Cambridge at 6 a.m.

Returns at approximately 7 p.m. (4 p.m. Departure from Loon)

** Spaulding Ski Club functions as a community based ski group and will seek to connect adaptive skiers with appropriate "skier drivers" to the best of our ability, but we cannot, at this juncture, guarantee transportation opportunities. When you register, you will be asked if you plan to be a "driver," a "passenger," or an "I'll meet you at the mountain" participant.

Cost: \$65 (includes equipment, lift ticket and coaching) plus \$10 for carpool.

To register, contact: Mary Patstone
Spaulding Adaptive Sports Centers
mpatstone@partners.org
508-833-4004

PCAForever.org

Have you visited our website supporting the MA PCA Program? In addition to a detailed program description, and supporting resource links, we have added pages for Employers and PCAs.

New to the website:

- Liz Casey wrote a great article titled "Making It Work" (See [For Consumers](#) page) to help new and seasoned

employers with expectations, boundaries, and the development of working relationships with their PCA's.

- The [Careers](#) page guides people who are interested in becoming PCA's.
- The [Videos - MA PCA Support](#) page stars local PCA employers (most recently Liz Casey) talking about their experiences with PCA's.
- The [Videos - Anti-Institution](#) page has compelling videos on why people should not live in institutions. The latest video from People First of New Hampshire is amazing.



Winter!

Remember last winter? It was hard to imagine even one more flake of snow. Well, Cordova, Alaska, which is inaccessible in the winter by road, has received 18 feet already! Needless to say, residents "have had it!". The National Guard has been called in.



Medway January 2011

Keep your fingers crossed for continued mild weather for us. It's not over until it's over!

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