



May 2012

Issue: 23

MetroWest Center for Independent Living, Inc.

Transportation and more

Greetings!

As you may recall, the House version of the budget funded an additional \$50,000 for Assistive Technologies, but did not add the \$1,100,000 to Independent Living that we requested. Right now, we are waiting to hear what the Senate does with the budget. The Senate version will be released May 16, and we will know then if we were successful.

This newsletter lists several opportunities to attend forums and fundraisers, and to participate in universal design. And we're also bringing you up to date on Transportation. Enjoy!

from Paul W. Spooner, Executive Director

Model Employer Update

Are there jobs for people with disabilities in state government?

You're invited to join a discussion on what state government is doing to meet its goal of becoming a model employer for people with disabilities.

Three years ago Governor Patrick proclaimed that the state should be a Model Employer of people with disabilities. The initiative has included successful efforts to promote accommodations, provide training and help people with disabilities remain in the work force.

Has the meter moved on the number of people with disabilities being hired? What affirmative steps are being made to recruit job candidates with disabilities? Is the Model Employer initiative working?

Disability Advocates requested a meeting with state officials to hear an update on what has happened so far and what the future plans are to ensure that people with disabilities are getting jobs in state government.

Where:

Ashburton Café Conference Room at One Ashburton Place

When:

Thursday, May 24 at 11:00 to 1:00

Contact:



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Summer Recreation

MNIP (MA Network of Information Providers) has compiled a long list of summer recreation opportunities. [Click Here](#) to download their newsletter.

Disability Etiquette

Do you wish your family and friends were more sensitive, or maybe less sensitive to your disability?

Share this publication: [Disability Etiquette](#) from the [National Spinal Cord Injury Association](#).

Donations

Joe Bellil at Easter Seals at jbllil@eastersealsma.org
Andy Forman at BCIL at aforman@bostoncil.org
Please [email Joe Bellil](mailto:email_Joe_Bellil) to RSVP and if you need accommodations no later than May 10.

Confirmed Attendees:

Christine Griffin, EOHHS Assistant Secretary for Disability Policy and Programs
Ronald G. Marlow Assistant Secretary for Access and Opportunity
Myra Berloff, Director of Massachusetts Office on Disability.

This is a brown bag lunch meeting so please come with your lunch or you can grab lunch at the cafeteria and join the discussion.

From the [DPC](#) Newsletter.

Two Opportunities to Participate in Universal Design

Boston Society of Architects - Almost and Fully Accessibility Project for the November ABX Conference

The BSA (Boston Society of Architects) is planning to build a 600 sq. ft. 'almost accessible' and 'fully accessible' structure at its annual conference (ABX) this November. This structure will be a prominent element in the Exhibit Hall (on the main aisle). They will offer people (1,000's attend!) to move through this structure in a wheelchair, scooter, walker, etc. and experience some of the common issues on the 'almost accessible' part and the difference that 'fully accessible' elements can make. They hope to have the MIT Age Lab join this effort and provide its age simulation suits for people to use too. The idea is to help architects understand WHY the inches of minimum design standards matter, and why meeting/exceeding them is important for many people.

They would like to have people with disabilities involved in designing and hosting this exhibit.

While the first design meeting was missed, we're hoping they continue to be interested in participation.

Katherine McGuinness
1121 Washington Street
Newton, MA 02465
617-641-2802
617-641-2812

New User / Expert Lab at Institute for Human Centered Design

With a strong interest in inclusive technology and product design, the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD) is creating a new User/Expert Lab in the Boston headquarters and is recruiting users and experts to be part of a participant database for design research projects.

A user/expert can be anyone who has developed natural experience in dealing with the challenges of our physical, information, communication or policy environment. Specifically we are looking

If you appreciate MWCIL and the support it provides you, please consider a 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!*

Got Computers?

Do you have computer parts sitting around unused? How about your employer or relative? Let MWCIL's Computer Recycling Program take them off your hands!

Donated computers are refurbished at MWCIL and given free to qualified consumers. All donated equipment **must be three years old or newer, and in working condition**, providing a charitable tax donation to the donor. Refurbished computers are given to consumers who have passed the Center's basic computer course, enabling them to better access resources necessary for independent living.

MWCIL is a licensed Microsoft reseller of operating systems, so each donated computer's hard drive is completely erased according to industry standards. MWCIL installs a new

for candidates with a variety of physical, sensory and brain-based functional limitations including the incremental systemic changes of aging.

Participants will help to review the usability and accessibility of anything from physical environments to products, services and new technologies. Many different techniques will be used as each project is different. Some projects may take just one hour while others may involve participation over a longer period of time, cash stipends will be based on the type and length of a project. There is no need to have previous experience.

The Lab will have a physical space at IHCD headquarters in downtown Boston but some research may be done on location. We would work to coordinate timing with your availability. If you are interested in becoming a part of our User/Expert Database please email userExpertLab@IHCDesign.org or fill out an online [application form](#).

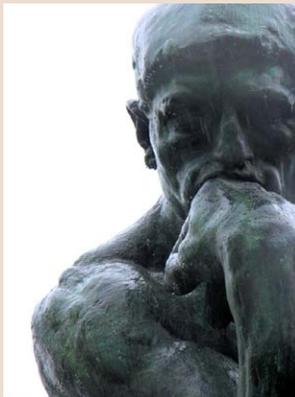
Contact:

Willa Crolius, Coordinator,
Public Programs & User-Expert Lab,
Institute for Human Centered Design
wcrolius@ihcdesign.org
200 Portland Street
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 259-1655

An Interactive Discussion on the Assisted Suicide Ballot Question

[Second Thoughts](#) - People with Disabilities Opposing the Legalization of Assisted Suicide, are presenting a discussion on the proposed ballot question. Join disability rights advocates and allies to discuss:

- What would legalized assisted suicide mean for people with disabilities and for the society at-large?
- What does the Oregon experience teach us about legalization?



When:

Saturday, May 19 from 2 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Where:

Cambridge Citywide Senior Center
860 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge
(Central Square, across from City Hall)

Contact:

secondthoughtskelly@gmail.com

[Click Here](#) to download the flyer.

This is a scent-free event. Out of consideration for people with

Microsoft operating system. Worried about your old information? Don't be! Past donations have come from schools, law firms, and even the Internal Revenue Service, which were satisfied with MWCIL's security precautions. For more information, contact Michael Gentile, Computer Services/Systems Administrator. 508-875-7853.

About Us:

MWCIL website
(past issues are available at our website)

Email

Phone: 508-875-7853
280 Irving Street
Framingham, MA
01702

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environmental illness or multiple chemical sensitivity, please refrain from using perfume or other scented products. ASL interpreters have been requested.

Hosted by Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Local Fundraising

Boston Walk for Epilepsy

Join the Epilepsy Foundation of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Maine for a 2.5 mile walk along the landscape of the scenic Charles River. After the walk, enjoy a fresh BBQ lunch, entertainment, and fun activities for children and adults of all ages. The event will help the foundation support and expand essential epilepsy programs and services in your community.

When:

Saturday, May 19, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Where:

DCR's Artesani Park in Brighton

Registration:

www.firstgiving.org/efmri

or call 888-576-9996

Cost:

\$10 preregistered for 13 years old and older, \$20 at event (Pre-registered folks are certain to receive event t-shirts and lunch.)

ABILITY Walk-A-Thon for Mass Advocates Standing Strong

Walk or roll with friends, neighbors, coworkers and families for a morning of music, raffles, refreshments and more! Support the education and empowerment of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to improve and enrich their lives. Your contribution will help send Regional Leaders to the National Self Advocacy Conference in St. Paul, Minnesota and is fully tax deductible.

When:

Saturday, June 23, 9 a.m. - noon

Where:

Haverhill High School Track
137 Monument Street
Haverhill

Registration:

Call Bridget at 781-789-4274

or email

bridget.mass.northeast@gmail.com

[CLICK HERE](#) to download the flyer.

Issues with the MBTA

As we've reported before, the MBTA has been studying, proposing and planning changes, particularly for people with disabilities.

Information and justifications for the changes have been vague. The disability community has tried to stay involved, to help decision makers understand the impact of changes, and to help solve problems, but from what we can decipher, we have had little or no impact on decisions affecting the disability community.

As John Winske outlines in his DPC newsletter editorial, there are several fronts. "We have been hit with a 100 percent increase in RIDE fares, implementation of a premium service area and now the probable implementation of an in-person assessment requirement." On top of that, the governor tasked a commission to "find solutions to stem the rise in paratransit costs, to look at issues such as better service coordination and changes, and to discover potentially innovative ways to meet these goals."

Fare Increases:

The fare increases have been described as a done deal, with the standard RIDE increasing 100%, and the new complication of a Premium Service area. The ADA territory fee will double from \$2/ride to \$4/ride, and if you're in a Premium Service Area, \$5/ride will be charged. (Other fares also are increasing - a single ride fare is going up from \$1.25 to \$1.50, but if you're a senior, the single fare is jumping from \$0.40 to \$0.75 - almost double.)

[The Premium Service Area](#) is defined as when the origin and/or destination is greater than 3/4 miles from or outside of operating hours for MBTA bus or subway, or for same-day trip requests. The distance - 3/4 mile - is tough enough to understand: Is it 3/4 mile from the bus route or from the bus stop? From the curb of the route, or from the yellow center line? Is it to your driveway, is it to your door? Is it to the sidewalk? How do you find out which? Is it as the crow flies or as the driver drives? If you can get to your neighbor's house which is closer to the bus route, can you get the regular fee? But totally mind-boggling is the "outside of operating hours for MBTA bus or subway" piece that will change your address into an intermittent Premium Service Area. Don't worry, when you call to reserve your ride, they will tell you how much it will be... I doubt they will be able to tell you why, though!

Visit the [Fare and Service Changes: MBTA Staff Recommendation page](#) for more details. What we don't see on this page is any testimony from the public forums. There is one report called Preliminary Public Comment Analysis, but it's all charts with *no actual comments*. They received 163 emails, 30 general public letters and 6 elected and organizational letters about the RIDE... and ??? What did they say? Apparently the MBTA heard nothing.

In-Person Assessment Requirement:

Next is the "probable implementation of an in-person assessment requirement." Again, this change to the process appears to have had very little input from people with disabilities. And much of the information is vague - a certification is said to last 3 years, but "generally, after the initial term of eligibility is up customers will not have to return for another in-person assessment." Vague. They don't hesitate to ask people with disabilities "to give up a few hours of one's day to participate in an assessment", but it's considered "extremely costly for the assessors to make individual trips to every applicant's home." Read the [webpage](#) - they expect 95% to continue to be eligible. Where are the savings? It's hard to believe

that adding in a whole new expensive process will save even one dollar.

Governor Patrick's 530 Commission:

Many organizations put a lot of effort into developing testimony for the [530 Commission](#) "including two DPC members, Jini Fairley and Denise Karuth. It was tasked by the Governor to find solutions to stem the rise in paratransit costs, to look at issues such as better service coordination and changes, and to discover potentially innovative ways to meet these goals. We acted in good faith by participating in the dialogue, believing this process would yield substantive changes which would be implemented statewide...We have not heard yet from the 530 commission, so there has been no time to implement their ideas to see if systemic changes could be made. What happened to all the good ideas we and others suggested? " The commission was supposed to release their report in January, 2012.

Read John Winske's full editorial at the [DPC website](#). Everything above in quotes is from his article.

Federal Developmental Disability Report

The National Council on Disability has released a new report called:

[Exploring New Paradigms for the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act](#), as a supplement to the 2011 NCD publication *Rising Expectations: The Developmental Disabilities Act Revisited*. The supplement expands on the challenges identified in *Rising Expectations* and offers specific recommendations for aligning systems and statutes both within and beyond the scope of the DD Act.

"The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act , signed into law in 1963 and reauthorized most recently in 2000, is the nation's policy and civil rights framework for more than 4.7 million Americans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. When the law was passed in 1963, Congress established a set of principles and programs focused on improving the lives of people with ID/DD; protecting their civil and human rights; and promoting their maximum potential through increased independence, productivity, and integration into the community. Today, these goals must be revitalized and translated into a coordinated federal strategy focused on supporting citizens with ID/DD in achieving optimal self-sufficiency, economic advancement, and full participation in the community."

Thanks to Dan Shannon, Executive Director at MA Developmental Disabilities Council for the information.

MRC, MCB, MCDHH and SILC Consumer Conference

Employment, Independence, and Empowering

Technologies: ***Making It Work!***

You're invited to this conference of consumers, employers, advocates, and all people with disabilities. Attendees network with one another and with agency staff in an educational environment. Many of the suggestions voiced at the conferences have a direct impact on policies and practices. Through the process of involving the constituency, programs can evolve and become more meaningful.

The conference is two days of workshops, as well as an exhibition area with employers and other organizations.

When: Tuesday, June 19 and Wednesday, June 20

Where: Four Points Sheraton in Norwood

Contact: (617) 204-3638 or email at consumer.involvement@mrc.state.ma.us

Register by Friday, May 18

[CLICK HERE](#) to download registration materials.

Workshop Topics may include the following:

- Successfully Entering the Workforce
- Driving Your Way to Independence
- Money Follows the Person Project and HCBS MFP Waivers
- Interview/Disclosure Workshop
- Legal Planning: Legal Issues in Protecting People with Disabilities
- Successful Housing Search Strategies: Overcoming Barriers
- Thinking Like an Employer
- MRC District Consumer Advocacy Councils
- SSA Benefits and Employment
- Mentoring Youth with Disabilities
- Developing Good Financial Habits: Managing Your Money and Organizing Your Finances
- MOD and CAP Services
- How Healthcare Reform Affects You
- Independent Voices: Consumers Speak to the PCA Council
- Explore, Prepare, Act: Finding the Job You Want
- How to Pay for the Assistive Technology You Need

Hosted by:

Charles Carr, Commissioner of the MA Rehabilitation Commission
Janet LaBreck, Commissioner of the MA Commission for the Blind
Heidi Reed, Commissioner of the MA Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Janet Shaw, Chairperson of the Statewide Independent Living Council

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