

July 2012

Issue: 25

MetroWest

Center for Independent Living, Inc.

22nd Anniversary of the ADA

Greetings!



Anjali Forber-Pratt will be competing for Team USA in the Paralympic Games in London. Anjali grew up in Natick. We have watched her race in the Boston Marathon (2011 above), and are excited that she has placed on the Track team. She competed against 250 athletes to secure one of 19 spots. The games are at the end of August, and we will be watching! You can follow her progress at anjaliforberpratt.com. PBS and WGBH have a [web page](#) devoted to the Paralympics.

On another topic, the state continues its ever-so-slow closing of institutions. Read Gary Blumenthal's (Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers) thoughtful perspective on the closing of the Galvin Regional Center in Shrewsbury, published at Telegram.com.

from Paul W. Spooner,
Executive Director of MWCIL

ADA Celebration

Celebration of the 22nd Anniversary of the
Signing of the Americans with Disabilities
Act

Join us for the annual celebration at Dunn Pond State Park.



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Donations

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**

When: Thursday, July 26, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Where: Dunn Pond State Park, Gardner

Dunn State Park is among the state's most accessible recreational areas, with swimming, kayaking, and trails. We will enjoy a relaxing day with recreational opportunities, music, food, and great company!



Executive Order 530 - Community, Social Service, and Paratransit Transportation Commission

FINAL REPORT

It took over a year, but the Community, Social Service and Paratransit Commission has released its final report. You can download and read the entire report at the [MBTA website](#).

The report is long, and is fairly complete in terms of documenting transportation issues, and offering solutions.

Thanks to Bill Allan for his thoughts on this report:
"There is no grand plan outlined in the document.

The principal "policy recommendation is to establish a Statewide Coordinating Council on Community Transportation (SCCCT), which would develop a strategic and operating plan to implement and manage the recommendations of the Commission and to further advance the Patrick-Murray Administration's agenda to provide responsive, comprehensive, coordinated, and efficient community transportation systems".

The Report does not address how the SCCCT will be established. It doesn't recommend legislation or include language. It may be possible to establish it within the Dept. of Transportation without legislative authority, but there is not a discussion of that either.

Nine suggested objectives were listed as being "Near Term" in feasibility of being implemented:

- Improved Trip Coordination

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 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](#)

Facilitating Paratransit Transfers between Transit Authorities

- Establishing and Enforcing Service Quality Levels
- Volunteer Drivers
- Consistent Customer Eligibility, Application and Screening Mechanisms
- Accessible ADA Applications
- Commingling Trips
- Efficient Vehicle Utilization
- Sponsorships and Partnerships

The Report does emphasize that state resources are low with several references saying "Unfortunately the state continues to face unprecedented budget challenges caused by the recession, and state government is forced to continue to do more with less. The current level of funding is insufficient to fully meet the demands of critical state services, including social service and paratransit transportation. The MBTA alone faces an annual structural deficit of at least \$100 million".

It will be interesting to see if the EO530 Report recommendations are moved for action status on schedule."
... from the DPC newsletter.

(past issues are available at our website)

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40 Years of Special Education

Massachusetts Advocates for Children reminded us of the 40th Anniversary of the historic signing of the landmark legislation, Chapter 766, that opened school-house doors for all children with disabilities across the Commonwealth and that served as the model for the federal special education law.



The law was developed after the Director of the Roxbury Multi-Service Center, Hubie Jones, in 1968, noticed that parents were being told that their children should not return to school. A Task Force in 1970 found out that "ten thousand or more children were either being systematically excluded from Boston's public education system or warehoused in classrooms or schools that provided inferior or custodial care.. The bulk of these children were Spanish-speaking, mainly from Puerto Rico. Thousands were misclassified as mentally retarded. Others had behavior problems too difficult to handle or had been branded as "unteachable" because of their physical handicaps or other disabilities. Some were girls who had been barred from school simply because they had become pregnant."

In 1972, MA passed the nation's first special education law, Chapter 766, which, in turn, served as the model for the first federal special education law, passed in 1975.

Visit [Mass Advocates for Children's website](#) for a more detailed history.

Talking Prescriptions

[American Council of the Blind](#) announced that the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, under Ed Markey (D-MA), Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Mike Enzi (R-WY) passed legislation that will allow for a greater level of privacy and independence for blind and visually impaired Americans of all ages who take prescription medications

"More than 21.5 million Americans experience vision loss that renders them unable to read prescription drug labels or other medication information independently. With the incidence of vision loss expected to increase with the rapidly aging American population, the consequences of being unable to read prescription information pose a significant public health challenge. People who are blind or visually impaired can mistakenly consume the wrong medication, the incorrect dose, or an expired drug because they are unable to read the label or to distinguish between medicine containers.

Under S.3187, representatives of the blind and aging communities along with pharmacies and the U.S. Access Board will convene a working group. This group will establish best practices for pharmacies to ensure that people who are blind or visually impaired have access to prescription drug labeling. The group's recommendations would provide guidance to pharmacists on actions they can take to ensure that the blind or visually impaired understand the information on their prescription and to enable independent access to that information.

The guidelines will provide pharmacies a range of options they can choose to offer consumers. Many of these options are low-cost, widely available, and compatible with equipment already in pharmacies."

Dual Eligible Demonstration Open Public Meeting

MassHealth will hold another open public meeting on the Duals Demonstration.

When: Friday, July 27, 10 AM - 12 PM

Where: State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 1-3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

The purpose of this meeting will be to give an update on the Demonstration, and to focus on consumer issues. We welcome attendance from all stakeholders and members of the public with interest in this proposed Demonstration. Reasonable accommodations will be made for participants who need assistance. Please send your request for accommodations to Donna Kymalainen at Donna.Kymalainen@state.ma.us.

Upcoming Target Dates

RFR responses due

July 30, 2012

Anticipated date for ICO selection	August 31, 2012
Anticipated ICO contract execution date	December 15, 2012
Enrollment and outreach period begins	January 2013
First ICO self-selected enrollments effective	April 1, 2013

Tour Boston

MNIP has provided a list of online resources for the Boston tourist. We've copied their sites below:



[AbilityTrip.com](#) - a travel guide for the community of disabled travelers and their companions. This website has information for other places world-wide!

[MassVacation.com](#) has an accessibility page.

[MA Department of Conservation](#) has pages for Universally Accessible state parks, events and activities.

[Explore Boston](#) was created by Nora Nagle during her Gopen Fellowship through the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Network. This website lets you know what to expect before you head to museums, theaters, zoos, and other tourist destinations.

Sports - [TD Garden ADA Seating](#), [Fenway Park Access Guide](#), and [Gillette Stadium ADA Info](#).

[Everyone Outdoors](#) is a blog with many outdoor, accessible activities.

[Adaptive Sailing](#) at Piers Park Sailing Center in Boston.

[Community Boating](#) in Boston

[Boston City Parks](#) - we could not determine (from the website) the accessibility of individual events and sites, and suggest you call first.

Human Services Salary Reserve

Led by Representative David Linsky, the House had at least 108 signatures to override Governor Patrick's veto of an annualized salary increase for direct support professionals providing supports and services



in the human services field.

The House and Senate both voted unanimously last week to override Governor Deval Patrick's veto of the Salary Reserve. The Legislature's action maintains the \$20 million annualized Salary Reserve lawmakers proposed in their FY '13 budget. The direct care staff members who provide essential services to one in 10 in the Commonwealth will receive an annualized raise of between 1 and 2 percent -- about \$635/year.

Employment for People with Disabilities

Senator Tom Harkin from Iowa recently wrote in the [Huffington Post](#) about the sorry state of employment statistics for people with disabilities. He has released a report: [Unfinished Business: Making Employment of People with Disabilities a National Priority](#). ..."When we passed the ADA in 1990, the Congress announced four public policy goals for people with disabilities: 1) equality of opportunity, 2) full participation, 3) independent living and 4) economic self-sufficiency. Those goals are as critical today as they were in 1990, and they are more within our grasp. Yet we will not realize the promise of the ADA and those policy goals if we do not get serious about boosting employment rates for people with disabilities....

With the goal of significantly increasing employment of people with disabilities in mind, I plan to introduce bipartisan legislation that will:

- help young people with disabilities transition successfully from school to higher education and competitive, integrated employment that can lead to quality careers and economic security;
- help disability-owned businesses compete effectively for contracts within all levels of government and the private sector;
- create incentives for States to develop and test new models of providing income support, rewarding work and offering long-term services and supports that will better enable people with disabilities to live in the community, work and earn to their full potential, and remain employed after the onset of a disability;
- encourage saving and asset development for people with disabilities so that they can become more economically secure and join the middle class."

In the Huffington Post, Senator Harkin concludes:

"During my lifetime, I have seen the workforce open up for women, older workers, minorities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans. I believe our country's ability to tap into the talent of its diverse population has spurred innovation and made us a global leader in so many areas. It is time to take the next step, to

open wide the doors to the workplace for our citizens with disabilities. In doing so, we will increase our workforce diversity; tap into a valuable, talented, underutilized population; and marshal all of our available resources to maintain America's leadership in the global economy."

Here are a few other recent news articles about Employment for People with Disabilities:

- Rodger DeRose, president and CEO, Kessler Foundation, N.J., has written about this issue in [The Hill blog](#). He states: "It has been more than two decades since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed. Since then, people with disabilities have proven they have what it takes to get the job done when given the chance. " He talks about Walgreen's successful drive to hire more people with disabilities. At the company's distribution center in South Carolina, more than 40 percent of the facility's employees have a physical or cognitive disability. Walgreen's is in the process of expanding this program worldwide.
- [The Disability Scoop](#) describe some new federal efforts to increase employment for people with disabilities.
- [The Law Firm Newswire](#) describes a recent lawsuit, filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, that was settled for \$50,000. "The lawsuit alleged that the company refused to hire a paraplegic man because of his disability. The man had applied for positions in management. "The EEOC only files lawsuits against employers in a very small percentage of the matters in which employees file charges of discrimination," said Gregory D. Jordan, an Austin employment lawyer. "The pursuit of this disability lawsuit suggests the EEOC may be becoming more involved in disability claims now that the 2009 amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act have become better understood." "

We are encouraged by these stories, showing that this discrimination problem is finally getting attention.

HB52 - Hearing Aids

An Act to provide access to hearing aids for children

HB52 mandates the following coverage for people under 21:

- One hearing aid per hearing impaired ear every 36 months upon a written statement of medical necessity by the minor's treating physician. Hearing aids are described as 'a wearable aid or device... designed for or offered for the purpose of aiding or compensating for hearing loss.' This definition explicitly excludes surgical implants, including abutments or cochlear implants; however, devices inserted directly into the ear or worn with an ear mold, as well as air conduction receivers and bone oscillator attachments (equipment only) are included. Coverage is limited to \$2000 per device.
- All related services prescribed by a licensed audiologist or hearing instrument specialist, including an initial evaluation, fitting and adjustments, and related supplies including ear molds and batteries. These services and supplies are not

subject to a coverage cap.

- The insured is permitted to choose a higher priced hearing aid device and "may pay the difference in cost above the two thousand dollar (\$2000) limit as provided... without any financial or contractual penalty to the insured or to the provider of the hearing aid."

The Division of Health Care Finance and Policy has estimated that adding this benefit will add from \$15K to \$157K, causing no more than a 0.015 percent increase in insurance premiums. The Bill has broad support, and seems like it will pass... as it should! Next year, let's add all ages to the bill.

United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

We are in the final stretch on the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Senate needs to hear from you so that people around the world can enjoy the same rights as their non-disabled peers.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee is expected to approve the convention next Thursday, July 26th (which is also the 22nd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act). After the Committee vote, the treaty must be "ratified" by the full Senate. We can't confirm now that we have all the votes we need.

Contact Senators John Kerry and Scott Brown, and ask them to support the convention.

Thanks to the Easter Seals for this information.

Mosquito Spraying

In Southeastern MA, the Department of Public Health completed spraying pesticides over 14 communities on July 22. We advise that you pay attention to any upcoming spraying and follow some basic precautions.



- Stay indoors, keep your windows closed, and turn off window fans during the time spraying occurs. If your air conditioner has a fresh air intake feature, you may want to shut off the intake during the time of spraying.
- Keep pets indoors when spraying is occurring in your immediate area to minimize their risk of exposure.
- If skin or clothes or other items are exposed to the sprayed pesticide, wash with soap and water.
- If the spray gets in your eyes, immediately rinse them with water or eye drops, and call your doctor.
- If you have a small ornamental fish pond, you may want to cover it during the night of spraying.
- Following the aerial spray, rinse any homegrown fruits and vegetables with water.

Weather conditions including temperature, wind speed and precipitation can impede aerial spraying activities. Residents are urged to check the DPH website at www.mass.gov/dph for updates. Residents can also get a daily 5 p.m. update on spraying activities by calling 2-1-1.

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