



## June

Dear Paul,

Our requested budget items have not (yet) been funded as negotiations continue. The latest version has the Independent Living line item restored which is good news. We will keep you posted.

We have included articles on employment and some of the barriers for people with disabilities. [Disability Scoop](#) reported on the current unemployment rate. And we encourage you to take action on MA House Bill 136.

Sincerely,

Paul W. Spooner, Executive Director  
MetroWest Center for Independent Living

## Gubernatorial Forum

The Disability Policy Consortium, The Arc of Massachusetts, Easter Seals of Massachusetts, Boston Center for Independent Living, Bay State Council of the Blind and the Arlington, Somerville and Watertown Disability Commission (more

## 2014 ADA Celebration!

When:

Friday, July 25, 11-3

Where:

Dunn Pond State  
Park, Gardner

Download the [flyer](#) for  
more information.



## In This Issue

[Governors Forum](#)

[College for Students with  
Disabilities](#)

[Action Needed](#)

[New Employment Rules](#)

[Red Tape](#)

[False Stereotypes](#)

[NH vs. CS](#)

[NH vs. CS in NY](#)

[Got News?](#)

[Traveling](#)

[Emergency Preparedness](#)

[Singing Out Loud](#)

[Get Outdoors](#)

MWCIL

sponsors expected) are hosting a Gubernatorial Forum.

When:

Thursday, June 26 at 1 p.m.

Where:

Perkins (School for the Blind)  
175 North Beacon Street  
Watertown

All seven candidates are committed to appear.  
The schedule is:

1:00 PM - Evan Falchuk  
1:30 PM - Don Berwick  
2:00 PM - Jeff McCormick  
2:30 PM - Mark Fisher  
3:00 PM - Charles Baker  
3:30 PM - Steve Grossman  
4:00 PM - Martha Coakley

This promises to be a great event. We look forward to seeing you there. Please plan to arrive no later than 12:45. Download the [flyer](#) for more information.

(Thank you to John Winske at the DPC!)

If you missed the weekend's Democratic Convention news - Candidates Joe Avellone and Juliette Kayem did not receive 15% of the delegate votes, so they will not appear on the September Democratic primary ballots.)

## Information Night for College for Students with Disabilities

Sponsored by Rep. Tom Sannicandro

You're invited to learn how Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE) enables students with intellectual and developmental disabilities to enhance their educational opportunities through college.

When:

Monday, June 23, 6 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Where:

MassBay Community College  
Main Auditorium  
19 Flagg Drive, Framingham



MetroWest Center  
for Independent  
Living

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RSVP:

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Download the [flyer](#) for more information.



State Rep. Sannicandro at IL Education Day

## Action Needed

HOUSE Bill 136

An Act to Increase the Commonwealth's  
Compliance with Federal Law Meeting  
Requirements of the Americans with  
Disabilities Act,

is awaiting action in the House Ways and Means  
Committee.

*This legislation will create more employment  
opportunities for people with disabilities in  
Massachusetts than any other piece of legislation  
in the state!* The bill will require companies  
contracting with the Executive Offices of the  
Commonwealth to commit to hiring people with  
disabilities and training all employees involved in  
hiring decisions on the requirements of the ADA.

Please contact:

Ways and Means Chairman Dempsey  
[Brian.Dempsey@mahouse.gov](mailto:Brian.Dempsey@mahouse.gov)

Speaker DeLeo  
[Robert.DeLeo@mahouse.gov](mailto:Robert.DeLeo@mahouse.gov)

and urge them to take action on HB  
136! *If you have a personal story about barriers  
to employment in MA, include it in your email.* As  
John Winske points out, this bill will not solve the  
employment crisis, but it's an easy step in the  
right direction.

From John Winske at DPC:

"House 136... would also require these  
employers to train employees involved with hiring

decisions on the requirements of the ADA. ...It merely requires organizations and companies which accept our tax dollars to make a good faith effort.

...The federal government now requires employers who contract with agencies to aim for seven percent of their employees to be people with disabilities. We make up about twelve percent of working age adults in the United States. The goal is not at all unreasonable. "

## New Rules May Mean Jobs for Nearly 500,000 with Disabilities

We've reported before on the new rules requiring federal contractors to hire people with disabilities. Madasyn Czebiniak from the [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/MCT](#) is hopeful that these new regulations will make a difference.

## Held Down by Red Tape, Not Disability

Thank you to John Winske at the DPC for providing the link to this story written by Shawn Murinko and published in [The Hill](#). We are providing an overview, but strongly suggest that you read the whole article. We have lots of work left to do on Disability Rights!

"I've never been able to walk... Recently, I've been confronted with the stark reality that laws don't guarantee equality. My awakening started when I was offered a job with the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, DC. If a perfect job did exist, this was it. The opportunity to use my skills and expertise to assist individuals with disabilities in achieving equal opportunity in the workplace was more than just a worthy pursuit, it was a passion."

Unfortunately, the support services offered in Maryland meant that Mr. Murinko would be left with \$10,000 to support his family. He currently lives in Washington state where he is eligible for Medicaid. Benefits vary widely from state to state. Ok, we get that, but here's the kicker. "Maryland bureaucrats told me they were sorry for my predicament. They even made this apology

with a staffer from Sen, Maria Cantwell's (D-Wash.) office on the phone. And, in an attempt to console me, ***I was told not to despair - that by already being successful, I had "won".***

Please - *read the whole article* - it's a call to action.

## False Stereotypes of People With Disabilities Hold Employers Back

Thanks to John Winske at the DPC for this article, by Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi of respectAbility.org, in the [Huffington Post](#). In hiring, the divide between perception and fact is all-important.

Perception: Two studies are cited which both showed that people with disabilities are not seen as competent. And one study showed that employers also fear costs for accommodations.

Fact: Walgreens, Ernst and Young, AMC Theatres, Lowes and other large companies have found that *the opposite is true* - "employees with disabilities are more productive and loyal than their non-disabled peers! And Most accommodations? Either free or cheap."

The new Federal Contractor guidelines, the experiences of these large employers, and more education and advocacy should start to lessen the divide.

## Nursing Homes vs. Community Services

[The Disability Scoop](#) recently reported on Medicaid Funds Increasingly Going to Community-Based Services. The shift is small with a 2.4 increase in community-based, and a 2.3 decline in institution funding. "Overall Medicaid Funding for long-term services and supports remained largely stagnant in 2012 but increasingly that money is being directed to services in the community." The spending varies dramatically from state to state. At MWCIL, we agree with the shift.

The National Council on Disability has a [Deinstitutionalization Toolkit](#), with a section that compares the costs of institutions vs. community-based services. The figures are from 2009, and dramatic - "the average annual expenditure for state institutions was \$188,318, compared to an average of \$42,486 for Medicaid-funded home and community-based services".

Meanwhile, according to the [Boston Globe](#), over the last 10 years, 50 nursing homes in MA have closed, including 4 in the last 5 months. Nursing home owners complain that Medicaid spending has been cut as more money is diverted to community-based services. The House budget this year included an additional \$27 million, but the Senate budget did not. The gap between Medicaid reimbursements and cost of care per patient per day is estimated at \$37. According to [Cape Cod Today](#), "Approximately 70% of nursing home residents have their care paid for by the state, according to Tara Gregorio, vice president of government relations for the MA Senior Care Association." [Senior Homes](#) estimates that the average cost of nursing homes in MA is \$345/day (or \$125,925/year).

The Boston Globe goes on to say that "Madeleine Biondolillo, associate commissioner at the state Department of Public Health, said the state has roughly 5,000 empty nursing home beds, and the industry must shrink."

Unfortunately the transition is difficult for residents of institutions that close. However, at MWCIL, we fully support moving the money away from nursing homes and back into the community. And we will help anyone in our 26 town service area to make the move out of the nursing home and into the community.

## Nursing Homes vs. Community Services in New York State

New Yorkers recently held a protest in Albany over this same issue. They want a "Community First Choice" program to be voted in.

You can't make this stuff up - "As the protesters shouted and changed into the chamber, the

Assembly voted to make yogurt the official state snack".

You can read more about this [online](#).

## Got News?

*Send us your ideas!*



Julie, Jim and David at 2013 NICL Conference

We are adding a monthly section with news and comments *from our readers*. You can suggest something for us to pursue, or give your opinion on a topic (relevant to people with disabilities of course), or let us know of what is working and what needs improvement in the community. Please email Sue at [srork@mwicil.org](mailto:srork@mwicil.org).  
*Thanks!*

## Traveling with Disabilities

We enjoyed this [NPR story](#) by Rachel Martin about a world traveler, Carol Zoom (in a wheelchair with a ventilator). She has been all over the world - China, Argentina, Ireland and more. Everything does not always go smoothly, but Carol thrives on the adventures. Carol has a blog - here is a link to her [Activism page](#).

## Emergency Preparedness

Some emergency forums and reports (this [NCIL report](#) is not good!) have popped up over the last month. We encourage everyone to create a plan.

If we're lucky, no one will need the plans. Your plan should include letting your town know now if you would require specific help getting to a safe place, as well as lists of items and strategies that you rely on. If you have specific people who need to be with you, review your plans with them. The MWCIL website has an [Emergency Preparedness page](#) with resources, as well as template links for creating your own plan.

## Singing Out Loud

I was honored to be nominated by State Senator Karen Spilka as a 2014 Unsung Heroine.

"Each year the MA Commission on the Status of Women gathers nominations from across the state for women who make outstanding contributions to their organizations and communities. The Honorees are nominated by state legislators as a means of recognizing women for their previously unnoted yet valuable community contributions."

The reason I'm "singing", is that the nomination was for my work here at MWCIL! I'm just the messenger (i.e. photographer), and the staff at MWCIL accomplishes so much more than I do. I hope that I can continue to highlight the important work that our center does, and to celebrate the great people (legislators, advocates, staff and consumers!) whom we work with. And thank you very much to Senator Spilka and Representatives Roy and Fernandes for their recognition.



Senator Spilka, Sue, Representative Roy

(I have a new appreciation for being on the other side of the camera - *UGH!*)

## Get Outdoors

Since the weather has continued to be up and down, and some events may have been wet, we



are reprinting this story.

The DCR ([Department of Conservation and Recreation](#)) has an updated summer and fall newsletter, with sailing, kayaking, biking and more. The website also has a downloadable brochure. The information for each state park includes its accessible features.

(We love the DCR because they provide the popular kayaking at the annual ADA Celebration in Gardner!).

Second, the [Spaulding Adaptive Sports Center](#) has released their Spring/Summer brochure with lots of fun, outdoor, accessible events and programs. The programs take place in Boston and Cape Cod.

(We got a recommendation from a friend who says that the Spaulding Adaptive programs are wonderful!)



[www.mwcil.org](http://www.mwcil.org)

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