

IL Education Day was a success. With followup actions, we hope to make progress on increasing the supply of affordable housing for people with disabilities.

The really exciting news is that the snow has magically disappeared! Unfortunately, it has left behind many cracks and heaves and barriers in the sidewalks. Keep us posted on any new MetroWest barriers that you encounter.

Enjoy the spring weather!

Sincerely,

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



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Housing Advocacy Needed

With housing as biggest barrier to living in the community, the Alternative Housing Voucher Program is extremely important to the IL community.

Representative Tim Toomey introduced an amendment, #1034, to add the funding we need to expand housing opportunities for people with disabilities. It will increase funding for the program to \$5 million. This funding will make a difference for the over 2,000 people with disabilities on the AHVP waiting list, and 30,000 people with disabilities on the section 8 waiting list statewide. Please call or email your State Representative to ask them to co-sponsor or support Rep. Toomey's Amendment #1034 to expand AHVP.

MWCIL



**MetroWest Center
for Independent
Living**

Website: www.mwcil.org

You can find your State Representative's information [here](#).

Independent Living Education Day At the State House



We enjoyed a good turnout, and inspirational talks from Mike Kennedy (CLW and MASILC), Steve Higgins (IA), State Senator Karen Spilka, Joe Bellil (Easter Seals and MWCIL), Dustin Smith (Easter Seals), MRC Commissioner Charlie Carr, Kerri Zanchi (MRC), State Senator Linda Forry, Justin Brown (Northeast Recovery Learning Community), Allegra Stout (BCIL), State Representative Ellen Story, Paul Spooner (MWCIL), and several consumers who shared personal stories.

Our 2015 priorities are to

- Restore IL Funding (AND our line item!) after the 9C cuts
- Increase the Alternative Housing Voucher Program
- Align MA AAB regulations with the ADA
- Support the Jobs Bill
- Expand Assistive Technology.


Visit the [MetroWest Center for Independent Living Website](#) and click on Photos (right side).

Easter Seals Youth Chain Project for ADA

Email: info@mwcil.org

Phone: (508)875-7853

Address: 280 Irving
Street
Framingham, MA 02702

Facebook: 

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)



State Senator Karen Spilka



MWCIL Staff visits Representative Jeff Roy's office



DPC Update: Early Budget Analysis of DPC Priorities By Bill Allan

(Note: DPC priorities are remarkable similar to MWCIL priorities!)

"The House Ways and Means Budget was released on Wednesday, April 15. The news was

mixed as usual.

The biggest news for the disability community was the restoration of funding for the Recovery Learning Communities. The Governor's Budget cut funding by 50% but the House restored it to \$3,468,000 while increasing the 5046-0000 Adult Mental Health Services the Dept of Mental Health budget by \$15.6 million dollars.

The members and the leaders of the Recovery Learning Communities pulled out all the stops lobbying to get the cuts restored. From a member in Winthrop approaching Speaker Robert DeLeo in a pizza shop, to meeting with legislators in their home communities as well as the State House. Emails, a lobby day with 250 people knocking on doors, and use of social media rounded out a campaign seldom seen in disability politics.

The Independent Living Centers lost their hard-fought separate line item and was folded back into the 4120-4000 account. Elsewhere in MRC budget, the House restored the \$80,000 for the Housing Registry. Rep. Ellen Story (D-Amherst) is filing an amendments to restore the line item 4120-0200.

In the Department of Developmental Services the Community Based Work Supports line item was reduced from the \$5,048,666 in the governor's budget to \$3,000 which is still an increase over the \$1 million in FY2015. Transportation services were increased by 14%."

Reprinted from the April 21 DPC Weekly Update.

2015 Boston Marathon

This year, racers with disabilities got more press than ever before. Many people who were injured in 2013 participated, and the stories of how they have put their lives back together made us proud.

We watched the wheelchair racers around the 10 mile mark in Natick as they came up a hill. At that point, Marcel Hug (1st place men's wheelchair), Tom Davis (handcycle winner) and Wakako Tsuchida (2nd place women's wheelchair), were in the lead.

We are especially proud of Dennis Moran, member of the Framingham Disability Commission. He made it look easy! He came in 13th in the Handcycle race with an impressive 2:13:46 time!





You can see more photos on the [MetroWest Website](#).

NCIL Legislative & Advocacy Priorities Booklet - Spring 2015

The [National Council on Independent Living](#) has published a document containing specific information on the national legislative and policy priorities identified biannually by the NCIL membership, including funding for the Independent Living Program, healthcare and long-term care, housing, transportation, education, and more.

You will notice that the national priorities are familiar - with Housing listed right after Independent Living.

Please share this document with your Center or SILC staff, board, and the Senators and Representatives who serve your districts.

[Download the pdf version.](#)

[Download the plain text version.](#)

NCIL Director to Ask Congress for \$200 Million in Additional IL Funding: ***Your Support Needed!***

On Wednesday, April 29, Kelly Buckland, National Council on Independent Living's ED will be testifying in front of the U.S. House of Representatives Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee at their Public Witness Hearing. Kelly will be addressing the crucial need to increase funding for Independent Living, and the vital role that Centers for Independent Living play in the lives of people with disabilities. [Read Kelly's testimony.](#)

Congress demonstrated their understanding and support for this when WIOA was passed and transition was added as a fifth core service. However, with IL being the only federally funded program mandated to provide transition services, the need for funding is critical! Moreover, CILs need additional funding to restore the devastating cuts to the Independent Living program, make up for inflation costs, and address the increased demand for independent living services. Right now, the Independent Living Program is receiving nearly \$3 million less in funding than we were in 2010. This is simply unacceptable.

The value of CILs cannot be overstated. People with disabilities deserve to be the decision-makers in our own lives, and CILs provide that opportunity to millions of individuals. We need to make sure that Congress hears this! The Subcommittee is accepting written testimony for the record from the public through April 29, and they need to hear from you! Input from the IL community will provide an incredible amount of support for NCIL's written and oral testimony..

To submit your own written testimony by Wednesday, April 29 deadline, [Click here](#) for directions.

(above information from the [National Council on Independent Living](#))



Kelly Buckland speaks at the July, 2014 conference in Washington.

Massachusetts Transportation Summit: ***Fix What We Have and Build What We Need***

When:

Friday, May 1, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Where:

DCU Center
Worcester

Register:

[Click Here to Register](#)

Fee:

\$75 or info@t4ma.org if fee is an issue

Hosted by [Transportation for Massachusetts](#), this [event](#) is a diverse coalition of organizations working together to create safe, convenient, and affordable transportation for everyone. Keynote speakers are Secretary of Transportation: Stephanie Pollack, and Zip Car founder: Robin Chase.

With Governor Baker's proposal to eliminate the MBTA's additional \$500 million allocation over 5 years, people with disabilities need to be at every single discussion of transportation.

Hotel and Tourism Facility Accessibility Survey Request

Dr. Ozkan Tutuncu and Dr. Lauren Lieberman
from the Department of Kinesiology, Sport

Studies, and Physical Education (KSSPE) at the College of Brockport (NY) are conducting a study on the Development of an Accessible Tourism Facility Standard.

The study will try to determine the accessibility of hotels and accommodation facilities with the life experiences of people with disabilities. The survey questions are intended for people with disabilities, their families and traveling companions. It should take about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. *Results are expected to help improve the accessibility of accommodation facilities.* Please share this link!

The link is: <http://www.gumus.com/survey/>

Washington ADAPT Action April 19-22

The ADAPT Spring action began with the 10th annual Fun Run, led by former U.S. Senator Tom Harkin. Harkin Institute for Public Policy and Citizen Engagement.

On Monday, 150 activists attended and 53 were arrested.

One of the main issues was about personal care attendants.

"ADAPT was at HHS because the Department of Labor recently promulgated new rules that mandate overtime for in-home attendant care. Without adequate Medicaid reimbursement critical service hours are being cut and persons with disabilities who live in the community are at risk of being forced into nursing homes. In addition, low wages for attendants are making it increasingly difficult for persons with disabilities to recruit and retain quality attendants. ADAPT demanded that Burwell:

- 1) Recognize that inadequate Medicaid rates have driven down attendant wages and consequently undercut the ability of Americans with disabilities to live in freedom. We therefore further demand that Secretary Burwell use HHS's authority to ensure that state Medicaid rates are sufficient to secure the workforce needed for community integration.
- 2) Utilize HHS's authority regarding Medicaid rates to ensure that states have adequate Medicaid rates to cover the increased costs associated with the Companionship rule changes made by the Department of Labor."

The above information is from the adapt.org website.

Designing for Disability

The April 16 New Yorker published this article, "[Designing for Disability](#)", by Amy Merrick. Apparently, during February's New York Fashion Week, several models with disabilities appeared on the runways. The article describes Liz Jackson with a new disability whose purple cane seemed to snap her out of despondence and self-consciousness. The writer goes on to wonder if the fashion industry really is becoming more inclusive.

Liz Jackson's blog is at theGirlWithThePurpleCane.com. Liz takes on fashion and disability with panache. *We highly recommend you visit her site.* (Her [blog post about Boston](#) is specially endearing!)

Seminar on Knee Treatment Options in Medway

What:

Educational seminar on treatment options for knee pain, including Q and A

Who:

Dr. Shah from MetroWest / Natick Hospital

Where:

Medway Senior Center
Oakland Street
Medway

When

Thursday, June 18 at 6 p.m.

Contact:

Samia Hicks at 781-828-0222 Ext. 24 or shicks5@ITS.JNJ.com

Sponsored by DePuy Synthes Joint Reconstruction.

Got News?

Send us your ideas!

This monthly section is for news and comments from our readers. You can suggest something for us to research, 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 srorke@mw cil.org. Thanks!

www.mw cil.org

MetroWest Center for Independent Living
280 Irving Street
Framingham, Massachusetts 01702
(508) 875-7853

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