

**MetroWest
Center For
Independent Living**

People with Disabilities Living in the Community

May 2015



Thank you to the Senate Ways and Means Committee for restoring our line item 4120-200. The IL Centers need to have stable funding, dedicated to the independence of people with disabilities.

The process isn't done yet - we need to continue to work with the Senate, House and governor's office to make sure our items get signed into the final budget!

Our big news at the center is that we've successfully moved to the new space. It's AWESOME!

Enjoy the spring weather!

Sincerely,

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

MetroWest Center for



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MWCIL



MetroWest Center
for Independent
Living

Website: www.mwcil.org

Independent Living Has Moved!

The new space is in the same building; closer to the street. If you are facing the old building, our new entrance is on the right. We are on the second floor - go up the ramp and through the door. Then turn right and you'll see the elevator on the right.

The phone number and mailing address remain the same.



Email: info@mwcil.org

Phone: (508)875-7853

Address: 280 Irving Street
Framingham, MA 01702

Facebook:



[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

THANK YOU to the MA Senate!

The Senate Ways and Means Committee came out with their budget. We thank Chairperson Spilka and the committee members for understanding the importance of our issues, and for addressing them. Please thank your senator for these changes to the House Budget.

- IL Center Line Item 4120-0200 was restored, and increased with the 9C cuts (\$84K) and another \$500,000.
- The Alternative Housing Voucher program was increased by \$1 million, or housing for an additional 117 people with disabilities. Great work by Allegra Stout from BCIL and her team of advocates.
- The Mass Rehabilitation Commission's line item for Assistive Technology and the REquipment program was increased by \$480,000 to 1.3 million.



MassHealth Stakeholder Sessions

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) will host a series of [public stakeholder sessions](#) as a follow-up to the stakeholder engagement kick-off meeting on April 6, 2015. This series of focused conversations will be an opportunity for MassHealth to seek input on its efforts to enhance the health care experience for MassHealth members, improve health outcomes and discuss reforms to make the MassHealth program more sustainable. Please note that these sessions are open to all members of the public.

| Topic | Date | Time | Location |
|---|---------------|-------------|---|
| Payment Reform | May 22, 2015 | 2:00-4:00 | Transportation Building 10 Park Plaza Boston |
| Behavioral Health, and Long Term Services and Supports | June 12, 2015 | 2:00-4:00 | Ashburton Place 21 st Floor One Ashburton Place Boston |
| Customer Service Experience, Payment Reform, Behavioral Health, and Long Term | June 23, 2015 | 10:00-12:00 | North Shore location TBD |

| | | | |
|---|---------------|-------------|--|
| Services and Supports | | | |
| Customer Service Experience, Payment Reform, Behavioral Health, and Long Term Services and Supports | June 25, 2015 | 10:00-12:00 | New Bedford Free Library 613 Pleasant St. New Bedford |
| Customer Service Experience, Payment Reform, Behavioral Health, and Long Term Services and Supports | June 29, 2015 | 2:00-4:00 | Springfield Public Library - Mason Branch 765 State Street Springfield |
| Customer Service Experience, Payment Reform, Behavioral Health, and Long Term Services and Supports | July 7, 2015 | 10:00-12:00 | Worcester Public Library 3 Salem Square Worcester |

New Hampshire is First State to Ban Subminimum Wage

[The Disability Scoop's Michelle Diamont](#) reports that the Governor Hassan of New Hampshire signed a bill to ban subminimum wage. The bill will go into effect in July.
 "New Hampshire has a strong tradition of treating

all of our citizens with respect and dignity, and by making New Hampshire the first state to prohibit employers from paying subminimum wages to people who experience disabilities, Senate Bill 47 helps build on that tradition," Hassan said.

Accessible Recreation Fair Saturday May 30

[The Department of Conservation and Recreation's \(DCR\) Universal Access Program \(UAP\)](#)

Accessible Outdoor Recreation available for individuals, families and friends of people with disabilities.

When:

Saturday, May 30 from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Where:

Artesani Park
1231 Soldier's Field Road
Brighton

Registration:

(413) 577-3840

Volunteer:

(413) 545-5745

Activities will include a cycling fair with an assortment of accessible cycles available for use; other adaptive recreational activities, including power soccer, hiking, letterboxing, face painting, kite decorating/flying, DJ music; snacks, and more!

Join us rain or shine [call 617 626-1294 for recorded status in case of severe weather] and enjoy the accessible recreation fair and the beauty of the Charles River running along the park. Enjoy the camaraderie while learning about DCR's inclusive, accessible programs and resources available to people of all abilities around the state.

This is THE PLACE to come FIND OUT ABOUT accessible recreation programs offered by multiple organizations in the Boston area and beyond.

The UAP provides recreational accessibility to Massachusetts' park facilities for individuals with disabilities, their families and friends. For persons

with disabilities, free use of accessible equipment and staff assistance are available. The UAP strives to increase the participation in indoor and outdoor recreational activities in integrated settings.

The program offers accessible cycling, boating, hiking and horseback riding programs in the summer and fall, as well as adaptive winter activities in January through March at various Massachusetts' state park facilities.

Pre-registration is highly recommended, especially for use of equipment. Call 413-577-3840 to pre-register.

Call 413-545-5745 about volunteer opportunities!

Please RSVP to request an ASL interpreter.

Why Disability Rights Advocates Oppose Assisted Suicide

This article, printed at Syracuse.com, is by Diane Coleman, president and CEO of [Not Dead Yet](http://NotDeadYet).

"People are often surprised to learn that all of the major national disability rights groups that have taken a position on assisted suicide oppose bills to legalize it . It may seem counterintuitive that the National Council on Independent Living, the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund and similar organizations that fight for increased rights for people with disabilities would oppose a public policy often characterized as a new right.

Simply put, assisted suicide sets up a double standard, with suicide prevention for some and suicide assistance for others, depending on their health or disability. If such distinctions were based on race or ethnicity, we'd call it bigotry. The dangers of mistake, coercion and abuse it poses to old, ill and disabled people are rooted in a profound and still largely unacknowledged devaluation of our lives."

The article continues with compelling evidence and reasons for opposing assisted suicide.

[Second Thoughts](#) opposes Massachusetts efforts

to legalize assisted suicide.

Service Animal Controversy

We've covered the rules for service animals in previous newsletters. This CBS report - [How easily can pigs fly free?](#) - demonstrates this escalating controversy. On one hand, even though the report describes how people can get on-line certifications for \$150, people with disabilities are *not* required to register their service animals, or certify their need for an animal. I would assume that anyone with a real need already knows this fact. So people who just want to bring their pets along are getting these fake certifications (their disability is listed as "fear of flying") and fake vests. On the other hand, airlines have no way and no legal need to know what a person's disability is and why they use of the service animal. The results are a broken system with passengers and airlines both being irritated, and legitimate service animal owners becoming marginalized. We predict that some sort of certificate is soon going to be required - probably something similar to handicap plaques being required to park in a handicap parking spot.

Below - Lucy - Nice dog. Not a service dog.



Time to End the Disability Tax

By John Winske of the Disability Policy Consortium

DPC Weekly Update, May 18

"Over the years, I have hear lots of people talk about cutting taxes, this includes our new Governor. Not one of them has ever talked about the Disability Tax.

Let me explain what I mean by Disability Tax. People who are on CommonHealth for Working Disabled Adults are required to carry health insurance if it is available at their work. Since commercial insurance does not cover most Long Term Support Services such as Personal Care Attendants (PCA's) and expensive Durable Medical Equipment (DME) they buy Commonhealth, as a "wrap around" policy. Wrap-around means that MassHealth or Medicaid picks up the cost of things the commercial insurance does not cover.

I contend that forcing the personal with a disability to purchase two insurance policies is both unfair and discriminatory. Why are we forcing workers with disabilities to purchase a commercial policy that is inadequate to meet their needs? People who have the wrap-around coverage do not pay the full Commonhealth premium. Instead are charged a lower rate which is 66% of the full premium for their income level. But regardless they are paying a health insurance "tax" since they have a disability and have complex needs. The premium can be very steep sometimes such as several hundreds of dollars per month.

There is also another kick in the teeth with the disability tax. If the worker is over 55 when they die, Commonhealth can take their assets to recover the cost of services provided. This is in accordance with Federal regulations. Imagine, if when you died your health insurance could recover the money spent treating you by taking your home to make up for the money they lost providing your treatment.

let me share a little history, Commonhealth for Working Disabled Adults was established because commercial policies available were not adequate. People with disabilities were not able to go to work because of income limits on MassHealth. So Commonhealth was set up to provide insurance coverage and allow people with disabilities to seek employment. When Governor Dukakis signed this innovative program into law, we were the only state to have such a program.

Unfortunately we are still fairly unique. Although Social Security has been altered to allow people in some cases to keep their coverage, not many states are as good as Massachusetts. I want to be frank and acknowledge this fact.

But the fact remains that simply because they have a disability workers are being required to buy a second policy and thus they are being discriminated against. They are having to fork over a tax each month and property when they die because they have a disability.

So how would I fix the system? Stay tuned for this column next week to find out.

John Winske
[jwinske@gmail](mailto:jwinske@gmail.com)

This editorial is my personal opinion and does not represent the view of the DPC and it's board. "

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@mwcil.org. Thanks!

www.mwcil.org

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