

**MetroWest
Center For
Independent Living**

**People with Disabilities
Living in the Community**

December 2015



2015 Awards Gala

Over the next two months, there will be numerous hearings and State House events on PCA's, Housing, AAB Regulations and the MBTA. If you have opinions on these subjects, we *highly recommend* you attend and share your story. The Baker administration seems to be leaving no stone unturned as they slog through the complex and sometimes expensive state commitments. If we don't speak up, and let them know that we use and need these services, things might not change for the better.

It's also that time of year to review and update your Emergency Preparedness plan and supplies. My theory is: If you're ready, then you won't need to be! The Midwest has already experienced winter related power outages. Visit our [website](#) for some ideas on how to get ready for an emergency.



Please join us at our annual **Holiday Open House** on Thursday, December 17 from 1-4. [Download the flyer.](#)



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MWCIL



**MetroWest Center
for Independent
Living**

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We wish everyone the happiest of holidays!

Sincerely,

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

Address: 280 Irving
Street
Framingham, MA 01702

Facebook: 

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Speak Up for Affordable, Accessible Integrated Housing

(from Boston Center for Independent Living)

When:

Monday, Dec. 14
2-4pm

Where:

2nd floor (SEIU 32BJ)
26 West St
Boston MA 02111

RSVP:

Allegra Stout at 617-338-6665 or
astout@bostoncil.org

Are you feeling:

Hungry for a world with real affordable housing?

*Angry that having a disability makes finding
housing harder?*

*Lonely, like people don't understand your
struggle?*

*Tired of waiting for the housing market to
improve?*

Then come to our speak-out, tell your story, and join the fight for real change. Last year, we and other disability advocates won more than a million dollars in new funding for housing for people with disabilities. Now we want to hear from you how we can go further towards ending the disability housing crisis.

Hosted by the Housing Advocacy Leadership Team (HALT), a project of Boston Center for Independent Living and Disability Policy Consortium.

Light refreshments will be provided.
ASL interpreters have been requested.

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

MBTA Accessibility - Public Hearing with Judge King

When:

Tuesday, December 15, 2015
1:00 - 3:00 P.M.

Where:

Transportation Building
10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116

The next public meeting regarding accessibility at the MBTA is scheduled for Tuesday, December 15th. Judge King will be providing an overview of the T's compliance with the MBTA/BCIL settlement. Senior management will present on upcoming projects and hear feedback from the community. Click on [this MBTA link](#) for more details.

Over 500 Amtrak Stations Still Inaccessible

Thanks to the [New Mobility Magazine](#) for this article. We recommend you follow New Mobility - all of their articles are excellent. This one about train stations jumped out at us.

The Americans with Disabilities Act gave Amtrak 20 years to make their stations accessible. After 25 years (25!), over 500 stations are not yet accessible! Resources continue to be committed, the National Disability Rights Network is pushing progress, and the Department of Justice is negotiating changes... so progress is being made, but 20 years seems like a generous length of time! [Read the whole article in New Mobility Magazine.](#)

Snow Situations

Did you know that businesses and municipalities must keep handicapped and van accessible parking spots, along with curb cuts and ramps, clear of snow? If you find any non-compliant snow barriers, please contact MWCIL, and let us know the locations.



Mass Health Hearings: Improving the PCA Program

The November 30 Hearing has come and gone, but two more will be held in January. Thanks to DPC for the following information. The sessions are open to all members of the public.

Overtime and Intra-Day Travel Time for Personal Care Attendants (PCAs)

Purpose: The Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) is hosting three public statewide listening sessions on recent changes to federal regulations implementing the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the MassHealth PCA Program's implementation of these requirements. The purpose of these listening sessions is to gather information from PCA consumers, PCAs, interested stakeholders and the general public on how to improve the PCA program in a way that ensures consumers receive all of their authorized PCA services while minimizing the need for PCAs to work overtime. These listening sessions are an opportunity for MassHealth to obtain input on ways to enhance the health care experience of PCA consumers and to gather ideas on how to make the MassHealth PCA program more sustainable. We welcome all members of the public who wish to share their ideas with MassHealth and help us work through design challenges related to these recent changes.

Background: The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has issued a Final Rule revising DOL regulations that implement the FLSA. The result

of this new rule is that PCAs may receive overtime pay for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week for one or more consumers cumulatively and pay for intra-day travel time when traveling between one consumer employer's home and another consumer employer's home on the same day to provide PCA services.

What MassHealth is Doing: Beginning on January 1, 2016, PCAs will automatically receive overtime pay for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week for one or more consumers combined and pay for intra-day travel time in which a PCA travels between one consumer employer's home and another consumer employer's home on the same day to provide PCA services. To facilitate this, MassHealth's contracted fiscal intermediaries will track the cumulative hours worked by PCAs each week, even if they work for more than one consumer, and will automatically calculate any intra-day travel time.

Prior to January 1, 2016, if a consumer needs to schedule a PCA to work more than 40 hours per week, the consumer must contact his/her designated personal care management agency to make a request for prior authorization for premium pay for overtime, as described under MassHealth PCA regulations at 130 CMR 422.420(A)(13).

When:

Friday, January 22, 2016
1:00 - 3:00 P.M.

Where:

Saxe Meeting Room
Worcester Public Library
3 Salem Square
Worcester, MA 01608

Call in Information:

877-929-7125

Participant code:

3608246

When:

Wednesday, January 27, 2016
1:00 - 3:00 P.M.

Where:

Community Room
Mason Square Branch
Springfield Public Library

765 State Street
Springfield, MA 01109

Call In Information:
866-565-6580
Participant code:
95934

Disability-Related Accommodations:
Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) services and ASL Interpretation will be available. If disability-related accommodations are required for you to attend, or you need materials in other formats, please contact: Erin.Dore@state.ma.us.

Comments: Can be sent
to: Erin.Dore@state.ma.us.

VOTE!

The Presidential Primary will be on Tuesday, March 1, 2016. *You must be registered, and have your desired party enrollment by Wednesday, February 10 in order to vote in the primary. Unenrolled, registered voters may vote either a Democratic or Republican ballot.*

If you've been following the presidential campaign, you know that the stakes are very high in the 2016 presidential election. Since the Citizens United Supreme Court ruling, money in elections is basically uncontrolled, and it can be very difficult to decipher what is true from the constant, slick advertising. Our state legislators are elected every two years (2016), and their opponents can (and do!) get money from anywhere in the country. Our Congressmen and women will also be running in 2016. Again, the stakes in Washington are high - especially for disability issues. While we focus on issues, everything is easier when the right (i.e. supportive of disability issues) people are in office!

In preparation for 2016 elections, the Disability Law Center, IL Centers and other disability organizations are partnering to ensure that that all voters with disabilities can vote by increasing registration, education and access. Stay tuned for more information from REV Up.

Bill Galvin, The Secretary of State, has enhanced the [Elections Division on the state website](#). With

more information, on-line registration, insistence on accessible polling venues, early voting (new for November 2016) and absentee ballots, *Massachusetts residents have no excuse for not participating!* Here are some of my favorite links:

- [Find my Elected Officials](#)
- [Register to Vote ONLINE](#). Online registration requires a RMV ID. If you do not have an RMV ID, you can fill out the form, print it, and mail it in.
- [Voting for Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [Absentee Voting](#)
- and... last but not least, [How to Run for President](#)

Please contact us at MWCIL if you have questions or need help registering or voting.

2015 IL Conference - Building A Blueprint for the Future of Independent Living

We would like to thank Sadie Simone, and MASILC (MA Statewide Independent Living Council) for putting together another great conference. The speakers this year were all local, and while we could use help navigating changes in Washington, there was plenty to learn about Massachusetts. The workshops covered a wide range of topics from medical marijuana to housing to autism, and were well attended. State Attorney General Maura Healey sent Andrea Kramer to speak. Ann Shor of MRC and the Commissioner of MCB (MA Commission for the Blind) spoke, and finally, Chris Griffin from the Disability Law Center gave an inspirational talk.

The Conference was a great opportunity to stay current with issues, regulations and best practices, as well as network with our colleagues.

MASILC also held a State Plan for Independent Living Hearing after the Conference. Visit their [website](#) to learn more about future SPIL hearings.



2015 Awards Gala

Thank you to everyone who attended our Awards and Fundraiser Gala. We were pleased to honor four deserving advocates for Independent Living.

- Mary Margaret Moore - Independent Living Advocacy Award
- Colleen Flanagan - IL Youth Leadership Award
- Senator Thomas Kennedy (posthumously) - Legislator of the Year Award - his wife, Clare Holgren, accepted the award.
- Ed Carr - Margaret A. Spooner Service Award





Visit the [MWCIL Website](#) for photos from the Gala.

www.mwcil.org

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