

Connections

MAY ISSUE 2002

◆ INSIDE:

Legislative Update 2

Family Support 3

“Ask The Advocate” 4

“Rights and Rights Protection”

Region 10 is committed to assuring that all individuals affiliated with us are informed of their rights and that all staff and providers who support them are protecting those rights. The State Standards very clearly outline Region 10's responsibilities as an Area Agency in this regard.

First: We must inform people when they begin to receive services about their rights and the complaint (rights protection) process. This sharing of information and discussion about rights is also done annually to assure that changing needs are addressed.

Second: We must have qualified staff available (complaint investigators) to respond to any questions or complaints that are made. Again, there are very clear expectations from the State which outline how staff responds to complaint allegations. It is ultimately the individual or guardian's (if applicable) decision concerning whether or not the complaint investigator has resolved the issue to their satisfaction.

Third: We must also provide educational opportunities for individuals, family members, staff and providers to learn about rights and how to protect them. Region 10 routinely offers training seminars that focus on rights issues such as “Rights” and “The Complaint Investigation Process”. Region 10 actively supports the efforts of People Power, a local self-advocacy group, which meets monthly in the Salem area. The primary focus of members has been to develop and increase their skills related to personal advocacy, including education concerning rights, the complaint process and other topics that foster self-esteem. Members of People Power offer a seminar “Speaking Up for Ourselves” which focuses on the importance of self advocacy and assisting individuals to feel comfortable in speaking up about their needs and desires to improve the quality of their services. This forum also discusses the important role that others can play

The Region 10 library has several videos and books available for loan that address rights and rights protection. (“I Got That Right”, “It’s My Life”, “People Becoming Empowered”, “Learning About Rights Manual”, etc.). These resources are available to individuals, families, staff and providers to assist them in learning more about rights and rights protection. Region 10 also makes copies of “The Handbook for Guardians” available upon request. This manual was prepared by Client and Legal Services of the Division to assist people to better understand the reasons for guardianship, guardianship alternatives, the role of a guardian and expectations of guardians including rights protection.

If the concern involves a violation of rights, abuse, neglect or exploitation, a complaint should be initiated. To do this, a report needs to be made to Chris Roy at Region 10. It is important to report this in a timely manner because someone may be in jeopardy of being victimized or may need emergency actions taken to protect them while the situation is being investigated. Anyone who is employed by Region 10 or our provider agencies, or anyone under contract to provide services, is required by state law to make a report if they have reason to believe that there has been abuse, neglect, exploitation or someone is living in a hazardous living condition. This report must be made to the Division of Elderly and Adult Services. For this type of complaint, both Region 10 and the Division of Elderly and Adult Services has a responsibility to investigate the allegations.

In closing, I hope that this clarifies ways in which you can receive support concerning rights and protection procedures. For further information, please don't hesitate to contact me at the Region 10 office.

— Jane Dichard

Read all about us on the web!!
Visit our new and “improved” website. It’s chock full of information you can access right from your home. *Visit us soon!!!*



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Chris Roy

Design Editor
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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

(An update on some of the bills we have followed this year?)

HB1144, establishing a committee to evaluate access to the polls by disabled persons and the use of new technology to accommodate disabled voters, was referred for Interim Study (a polite death).

HB1230, authorizing the Commissioner of the Department of Education to expend funds for special education advocacy, passed the House and is now in the Senate.

HB1291, requiring the Department of Education to develop a plan to address and reduce the number of persons awaiting Vocational Rehabilitation transition services, was referred for Interim Study (a polite death).

SB161, relative to treatment for individuals with disabilities and making an appropriation therefore, passed the Senate and was significantly amended in the House (the new facility in Berlin was rejected; support received to expand and relocate the Laconia facility from 6 beds to 12 beds – no new funds for services). The bill has now gone back to the Senate for approval of House amendments.

SB182, establishing a brain injury program and making an appropriation therefore, has passed the House and Senate and is at the Governor's office for signature. While this bill does not require an appropriation of NEW money, it does access existing funds and because there is such a funding problem in NH, advocates need to communicate to the Governor that this bill should be signed. Calls, to the Governor's office (271-2121), asking her to sign SB182, are important (don't worry if you can't reach the Governor.....just leave a message with her receptionist).

SB347, establishing a study committee on public building access and the disabled, passed the House, Senate, and was signed by the Governor.

Other Policy Issues

Participation in graduation– Senator Ned Gordon has offered to introduce legislation that would clear up the recent problems wherein school districts threaten to terminate services to an educationally handicapped student not yet 21 if the student participates, in any way, in the graduation ceremonies. It is not clear when (the current session attached to an existing bill or next session) the legislation will move forward.

In-home support– We are still waiting for the Department of Health & Human Services to write the rules to implement SB324 (as they were instructed to do by the Joint Committee on

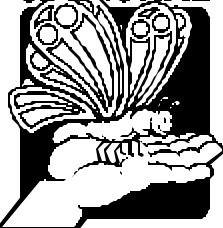
Legislative Administrative Rules.) It is anticipated that the rules will reflect the intent of the legislation (creating the opportunity for families to hire community personal care providers to care for family members who have Medicaid Home Care for the Severely Disabled that do not require nursing services, and permitting other qualified agencies to bill for personal care services). Once the rules are accepted, the State must then submit a waiver to get permission from Medicaid (federal) to use Medicaid funds in a non-traditional way (funding community-based, consumer directed services). The Commissioner expects the rules to pass this spring, the waiver to be submitted late spring, and waiver approval and program development by fall.

Eligibility for Katie Beckett (a.k.a. HC-CSD) Medicaid– the Disabilities Rights Center lawsuit against the state will be at trial soon. This suit is brought because of unexplained changes and restrictions at Medicaid relative to the eligibility of some disabled children (i.e., children with Down Syndrome and children with autism used to be eligible and now many are not).

Medicaid denial of related services– Children on HC-CSD (a.k.a. Katie Beckett) Medicaid who have been receiving certain services at home (OT, PT, Speech, etc.) are, in regions all around the state, being denied those services or having those services reduced. Some candidates for office propose that the statewide property tax be repealed. That tax was passed in response to the court's instruction that the state MUST participate in the funding of education, favoring poorer communities, because the NH Constitution says that children will receive an adequate education.

Some candidates want to reverse the court by putting a question to the voters: Should we amend the Constitution so it clearly states that each community is responsible for raising its own funds for the education of the children in that community? Such an amendment would have to pass the House and Senate by a 3/5 majority vote to even get on the ballot for voters in 2004 and then would need 2/3 majority vote to change the Constitution – NOT A LIKELY SCENARIO. So, think about the politicians you hear who say we can eliminate the statewide property tax (sounds nice, doesn't it?), introduce no new taxes, reduce spending.....we can, but off the backs of whom? Senate President Arthur Klemm recently said, "We need to talk less about taxes and more about controlling spending." Advocates need to be involved in the upcoming campaigns, asking legislators the hard questions: how will we serve the needy in NH without revenue? How will legislators address the Waiting List for developmental services? How will there be enough money to attract direct support professionals

SPRINGTIME







FAMILY SUPPORT

“Transition to Pre-school” Invites You To An Open House



This workshop is open to all families receiving early intervention services.

DATE: Friday, May 17, 2002
TIME: 9:30-11:30 a.m.
PLACE: Atkinson Community Center
 4 Main Street (Rte. 121)
 Atkinson, NH

Please **RSVP** as soon as possible to Aleece Pappas at Region 10. Childcare will be provided. **Call now to re-  serve a spot!!  —**

Now Available in the Region 10 Resource Li- brary

Wrightslaw From Emotions To Advocacy, The Special Education Survival Guide: teaches you how to organize, plan and use your emotions to become an effective advocate for your child. Step by step you will learn how to conquer your obstacles and fear on child advocacy.

Wrightslaw, Special Education Law: will help you to better understand your rights and responsibilities under the special education laws. This book will also help you  answer any questions in  the statutes, regulation and case law. To sign out either of these resources for a limited time, call Sheila Prunier

SIBLING SUPPORT GROUP BACK IN AC- TION!!

We have hired Stephanie Ash to be our new Sibling Support Group Leader. Stephanie is a 19 year-old young lady who has a brother with Down Syndrome. Stephanie is anxious to get the group up and running once again. She will be contacting the parents of the kids that attended in the past, but if you would like to

“My Child Can’t Play
Baseball!!!!????!!!

WELL, LISTEN TO THIS!!!!!!
The answer is.....
Yes, they CAN!!”

As interested parents of Region 10, we are in the process of forming Challenger Little League teams. All children ages 5 through 18 with any physical or mental disabilities are encouraged to participate.

Little League Challenger Division has proven therapeutic and socialization benefits. It promotes self-esteem, teamwork and sportsmanship. But most of all, it’s fun for the whole family!

If you are interested in your child having fun please call Mary and Michael Haney at (603) 329-8051 for more information about **Little League Challenger Division**.

An informational meeting is planned on May 8th from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Region 10 office. We will have videos and pamphlets available, so make plans now to attend.

— **PARENT TO** **PAR- ENT** OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Check out updated website www.P2pnh.org
 It will provide emotional support, insight and understanding for parents when they learn their child may be going through a transitional period.

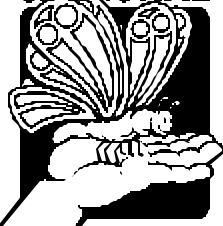
- **Parent Matches between supporting parents, who "have been there" with referred parents of children with special needs (medical, developmental, emotional, learning).**
- **Information and Referral to community resources, services, support groups, state support programs and others.**
- **Training for parents who would like to become volunteer supporting parents.**
- **A state-wide network of regional Parent to Parent Coordinators.**

Parent to Parent of NH provides parent matches as well as information and referral services for the whole state of NH. Call them at 1 800 698-5465 or email them at P2PNH@valley.net or leave a message on the website..

No-Cost Fishing Licenses Available

Free fishing licenses are for people with developmental disabilities. There are certain requirements and an application form from Fish and Games that must be completed. Complimentary licenses are also available to some group homes, paraplegics, disabled veterans and individuals with severe visual impairment. For more information and to obtain an application, call 271-3422

SPRINGTIME



“Ask the Advocate”

Question: My son receives special education services at school. He has physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy numerous times a week. He also has an aide who works with him “one-to-one.” If all goes well, we are planning on moving to a new town (hopefully) during the summer. I realize there is a shortage of aides and I am worried they will not have one available for my son. My question is, how long does a school system have to implement an IEP and all of it’s components?

Answer: To answer your question... IMMEDIATELY, or as soon as humanly possible. But you are right, there is a shortage of aides, and some areas experience this more than others. I would suggest that as soon as you know for sure **where** and **when** you are moving, get in touch with the school. Ask if you can set up a meeting with the Special Ed Director. Maybe even send them a copy of your son's current IEP so they will be prepared to add him to their schedule come September. **Be pro-active.** The sooner you get the ball rolling, the smoother the transition. Communication is the key!

To Infertility and Beyond

Hello Everyone, my name is Judy Kuczvara and I am the mother of six-year -old triplets, two girls and one boy. Two of the three triplets have Cerebral Palsy.

I am entering my third year serving as a member of the Family Support Council. I have found this group of individuals to be very helpful and genuinely concerned about the future of our children. We are a volunteer group, donating both our time and talents. We are always looking for new members to join the council. Let us know what your particular talent or interest is, as we could always benefit from each and every volunteer.

When I joined the council I had no idea what Region 10 was about or what role they played in my children’s lives. As I was completing a leadership series hosted by the Institute on Disability, members of the group highly recommended that I become involved with my area agency.

I work part-time for Rehab Equipment Association as a sales rep for pediatric products and enteral/disposeables. My educational background is in Physical Therapy, as well as I “*live the life*”.

These experiences have allowed me to network with some wonderful individuals who have knowledge and insights into the disability world, and can help us to navigate the “*system*”.

My children are in a full inclusion kindergarten program and are making great progress. This process is not without its fights and daily challenges. I am on the phone daily advocating for something to do with the kids. I deal with insurances, MD offices, hospitals, schools, nursing agencies, and many others.

When I got married to my (awesome) husband Dan, we never expected to have to change our dream so **drastically**. So, when we entered the realm of infertility, we were not expecting it to take us to this level and, I suspect, beyond.

Our children were truly miracle babies. I would love to talk to anyone who wants to know more information about infertility issues and the process we chose. My focus today is my family. I want everyone know I have **three** beautiful children. Sara, Susan and Matthew. They are all different in temperament and interests, but are connected in a way I can't explain in words.

They are my future and could very well be the future leaders of our country. I will do everything in my power (with the help of Region 10, our area agency) to achieve the best life possible for each of them. I would be happy to talk to anyone about our family or the Family Support Council. Call me at 432-8833.

—Judy Kuczvara
Family Support Council

“RESPITE NEWS”

The following are Respite Reimbursement guidelines:

- All cards are due by the 10th of the month
 - Respite checks will be issued by the 3rd week of the month
 - Respite hours are reviewed on a quarterly basis. If you do not use your hours within each quarter they will be placed back into the respite pool and allotted to other families in need.
- If you wish to save your unused hours for a particular reason (ie: vacations) it **must** be prior approved by contacting your support coordinator or a member of your family support team. If you do not do so we cannot guarantee that unused hours will be available to you later on in the year.

MISSION STATEMENT

“Our mission is to support individuals who have developmental disabilities and their families to realize their dreams by enhancing relationships within the community, respecting personal choice and providing opportunities for lifelong learning.” —Region 10

(Continued from Page 2)

infrastructure of the system that serves individuals with disabilities be supported to recover from the erosion that has come as a result of rising costs -of-doing-business and no increases in operating funds? This is a simple list of questions advocates should start asking – a more extensive list of questions will be developed in May. It will be extremely important that families start meeting with candidates and asking these questions right after the period to file for office closes (mid-June) and right up until election day in November. Make sure your voice is heard!!

—Linda Steir

Self Advocacy Update

? Maureen Jardine, Region 10 RN, attended the April People Power meeting. She spoke to the group about hand washing and personal hygiene. Members learned ways they can reduce the risk for colds and flu and what steps they can take to help prevent spreading illnesses.

Dennis Powers, Executive Director of Region 10, will be attending the May meeting to discuss the State's funding system and how it affects the availability of services for individuals.

The group wishes to congratulate Robert Getchell for recently being elected to the Co-chair position for *People First of NH*. Bob has been serving as a representative from People Power to the People First Board of Directors for the past few years.

Just a Reminder: It's not too early to begin planning to attend the **2002 National Conference of Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE)**: Share the Spirit, Shuffle off to Buffalo. It will be held September 19th through the 22nd in Buffalo, NY.

Each month approximately fifteen members of People Power meet on the first Monday of the month in Salem. They share ideas, participate in education and training, learn about community resources and activities and plan ways to support the members of the group. People Power is always looking for new members. If you would like more information about the group or would like to join, please call Region 10 893-1299 and leave a message for Jeff and/or Beth Vacco.

The mother's heart is the child's schoolroom.

H. W. Beecher

May is "Nurses Appreciation Month"

Region 10 would like to say "thank you" to all of the nurses who provide support to individuals and families receiving services through Region 10 Community Support Services and our contracted provider agencies.

In our day-to-day work we don't always take the time to acknowledge the individuals who play such a vital role in our provision of community services. Our nurses provide individuals, family members, providers, and staff with training, health care support, direct nursing support, medication administration oversight, access to resources, and many other types of support to assure quality services.

Each one provides a needed service and we are fortunate to have some of the most qualified nursing professionals in the state working with us!

It is only fitting that during *Nurses Appreciation Month* we tip our hats, and with sincere appreciation, thank each and every one of you.

Region 10 Community Support Services, Inc.

Yes, I want to help Region 10 Community Support Services as you work to meet the needs of children and adults with disabilities. I am enclosing my gift in the amount of:

___ \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 Other \$ ___

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Please make your tax-deductible check payable to Region 10 Community Support Services.

Thank You!

P.S. Please let us know if your employer has a matching gift program.

New Web-Site

There is a new resource available on the web. To find out how to sign up for federal and state benefits go to:

<http://www.benefitscheckup.org>.

The site features a database of roughly 1,000 federal and state programs for the elderly and people with disabilities.

Visitors can fill out a confidential questionnaire, and find out programs for which they are qualified and how to apply. The site is hosted and advertised for free by AOL Time Warner, <http://www.aoltime Warner.com>, and is a non-profit initiative led by the National Council on the Aging <http://www.ncoa.org>.



Calendar of Upcoming Training's

JOIN US AT REGION 10 FOR THE FOLLOWING:

PDD Autism Support Group
 Guest Speakers Monthly
1st Tuesday of the Month
 No Charge
 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Call Kathy Waterson

Empowerment
 Lynn Tonkin
MAY 15, 2002
 *\$10
 9:30 a.m. -11:30 a.m.
Registration Deadline: 5/8/02

ADA
 Cheryl Killam
MAY 9, 2002
 *No Charge
 1:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m.
Registration Deadline: 5/02/02

Understanding & Supporting Effective Behavior
 Sharon Richey
JUN 4, 2002
 *\$15
 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
 Region 8, Portsmouth, NH
Register by: 5/28/02

Health & Safety
 Maureen Jardine, RN
MAY 16, 2002
 *\$10
 9:00 am - 11:30 a.m.
Registration Deadline: 5/09/02

Preventing Disease Transmission: OSHA
 Maureen Jardine, RN
MAY 23, 2002
 *\$10
 10:00 am - 12N
Registration Deadline: 5/16/02

Parent Breakfast Support Group
MAY 14, 2002
JUN 11, 2002
 No Charge
 10: a.m.—11:30 a.m.
Call Kathy Waterson

Rights
 Cheryl Killam
JUN 6, 2002
 *No Charge
 12N- 2:30 p.m.
Registration Deadline: 5/30/02

Fall Prevention
 Lorene Reagan
JUN 12, 2002
 *\$10
 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Registration Deadline: 6/05/02

Board of Director's Meeting
MAY 16th
 7:00 p.m.
 (Date & time subject to change. Please call to confirm if attending)

*If not connected to Region 10 Community Support Services Inc. If you would like more information on any of the training's sponsored by Region 10, please call 893-1299.

Region 10 Community Support Services, Inc.
 8 Commerce Drive
 Atkinson, NH 03811

Non-Profit Org.
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Serving individuals with developmental disabilities and their families in the following communities:
 Atkinson Derry Pelham Salem
 Chester Hampstead Plaistow Windham
 Danville Newton Sandown

