

# Pipeline

2008 Archive



# *Pipeline ... direct from the state ...*

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



Pipeline will be published at least twice monthly.  
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**Wednesday, January 9, 2008**  
**Volume 2, Issue 1**

- 1. 2007's Steps on a Path to 2008
- 2. ODMRDD Supports Governor's Newly-Launched Efficiency Review and Continuous Improvement Initiative
- 3. Practical information About Non-medical Transportation
- 4. Seniors: Another Chance to Apply for Property Tax Break

## [ODMRDD Director John Martin Comments on...](#)

### **1. 2007's Steps on a Path to 2008**



Beginning one year ago this month, we took our first steps together as an Administration, choosing a few goals along the way, in line with input from you, our stakeholders. Setting out on this path with some guideposts, we have worked during 2007 to provide leadership and direction, stopping to listen as more information and ideas came our way. As Director of the ODMRDD it is my pleasure to report to you briefly where we are now on this path, and where it is we are headed in 2008.

Also beginning one year ago this month, we promised to communicate with you regularly on our progress, and to seek your input and feedback as we move forward. As a part of this effort I have enjoyed many opportunities to travel around the state and meet with people representing the very broad spectrum that is Ohio's MRDD community.

In fact, in writing this piece for *Pipeline* I have reviewed my travel roster and found that I have visited more than 25 Ohio counties in 2007. In this statewide journey I also have met hundreds of people who are involved with our system in one way or another. There is no substitute for good old-fashioned face-to-face communication, and in that effort I will continue traveling throughout the state in 2008 to discuss, applaud, listen, share, and just get to know ... what is going on 'out there'.

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I believe that in a leadership role it is especially important to stay focused on the people we serve, and the people who directly serve them. While technology has helped us immeasurably to stay connected in less intrusive ways ... via email, cell phones, websites and the like ... I am committed to seeing first-hand how each area of our state delivers services and operates programs that meet the needs of people in their specific communities. Our ODMRDD staff members are committed to this approach, as well.

### Core Areas of Progress

While there were many, many steps on the path from 2007 to 2008, I will highlight a few here with the acknowledgement that this review is by no means exhaustive. In the framework of broad goals, strategies, and key actions steps, here *are three major areas* in which I believe we have made solid progress:

- *Rollout of the 1500 Individual Options (IO) waiver opportunities resulting from the Martin v. Strickland settlement:* Beginning in September 2007, this process has been very intensive and has required the cooperation and collaboration of several entities, including County Boards of MRDD, other service providers, and various reimbursement systems. We greatly appreciate the spirit in which this effort has proceeded, recognizing what an excellent opportunity it is for the many Ohioans who need these waivers, and would otherwise still be waiting for them.

*In terms of waiver services overall,* ODMRDD is working to streamline several of our own processes to provide less complex service delivery with fair and logical payment systems – one of our top five organizational goals. We recognize that we have a long way to go with this goal in our waiver system. Everyone’s patience is greatly appreciated.

- *Functional restructuring of the Community Services division:* Our intent in restructuring Community Services in 2007 and bringing under its umbrella the ten Developmental Centers, was to create one seamless entity that included all of the people involved in the support and delivery of direct care. I agree with Deputy Director, Michael Rench, when he stated back in July, “Community Services now has a stronger statewide perspective by including the ten Developmental Centers.” The Centers are cultivating a role in each of their communities as a more accessible community resource offering expertise to a wider range of partners in that process.

This approach also helps to fulfill the goal of service delivery models designed in response to choices made by people served, and in alliance with community supports.

- *Development and coordination of the Futures Committee:* The Committee’s members and subcommittee members represent a variety of organizations interested in Ohio’s MRDD system, and include individuals with MRDD, family members, and others serving the MRDD arena. Through the Committee, we are developing an overall long-range strategic plan for continuous improvement of the MRDD system which will guide us through the next three years.

The Committee is focused on finding practical solutions in four specific areas:

- 1) Accessing services and supports;
- 2) Financing services and supports;
- 3) Delivering quality services; and,
- 4) Serving populations with specialized needs.

The Committee's recommendations will address how to achieve improvements in the systems serving individuals with MRDD and their families, while balancing available resources in relation to the needs of individuals, families, and communities. By March 30, 2008, the Committee will produce a written report for Governor Strickland and the General Assembly, which will include the results of the study, stakeholder involvement, and the Committee's recommendations. While the Futures Committee addresses all of our major goals in some way, it most assuredly speaks to providing good stewardship of limited resources.

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### **Steps and the Value of Mis-Steps**

And the 'limited resources' concept brings me to my final step on the path from 2007, as we begin to look at 2008. ODMRDD will be focusing again this year on offering the individuals and families we serve some help and some hope – on doing the most good with available resources. We also will continue to work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to positively affect the day-to-day lives of individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities and their families – a core value.

In this process we will work to refine our approach to providing services and look forward to finding new and practical ways to do this. Thomas Edison is said to have stated during the light bulb invention process, "*I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.*" And we probably will have our share of recommendations that are considered, but do not work. I also believe that there will be several light bulbs resulting from our work in 2008, and look forward to sharing more about those lights along the path in future issues of *Pipeline*.

*-John L. Martin, Director*



## **2. ODMRDD Supports Governor's Newly-Launched Efficiency Review and Continuous Improvement Initiative**

Supporting Governor Strickland's newly-launched *Efficiency Review and Continuous Improvement Initiative*, the ODMRDD has joined a coordinated effort to assure that state government is working as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible. According to ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin, "The Governor is looking to us for ways to help improve state government's responsiveness and eliminate redundant or unnecessary services, products, and processes at every level."

The initiative involves several staff from each cabinet-level agency in collecting and reviewing feedback from state employees and stakeholders, regarding how best to use available resources. A keystone in the process will be the utilization of a website at [efficiency.ohio.gov](http://efficiency.ohio.gov) which is now up and running. This is a start-up site, and as the initiative evolves, so will the website. If you have an idea for enhancing the efficiency of state government please visit this website and submit recommendations following the simple format supplied.

Explaining the Initiative's goal of improving and streamlining government, Mitch Bailey of the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) explains,

**“ This initiative will not be an ‘efficiency bureaucracy’.  
In fact, the intent is quite the opposite. ”**

He continues, “Each agency’s review team will have equal representation from labor and management, and will thoroughly and thoughtfully review all suggestions.”

Patrick Lanahan, ODMRDD’s coordinator for the Initiative, adds that the agency’s review team is now in the process of training and working together to make sound and reasonable decisions based on each suggestion’s possible impact on the *ODMRDD Five Goals*, shared at the outset of this Administration. They are:

- Less complex service delivery, with fair and logical payment systems;
- Good stewardship of limited resources;
- Quality outcomes, through a combination of people and processes;
- Service delivery models designed in response to choices made by people served, in alliance with community supports;
- A system-wide vision developed with stakeholders.

Patrick notes, “The Efficiency Initiative work will be very important in helping to direct the way the state does business. It is a big-picture kind of approach, and should be an outstanding way to open the doors to new ideas and collaboration opportunities with various stakeholders and agency partners.”

It is also important to note that the outcomes of this Initiative are not designed to impact the size of the state’s workforce, and no employee’s position is placed in jeopardy because of any ideas submitted. They are all anonymously offered unless a person chooses otherwise.

Patrick also noted that it is important for each state employee to look at his or her own area of expertise and think about specific ways that processes or procedures could be improved. “We want this to be as constructive as possible, and not become a complaint file. Comments should be focused on issues and suggestions to solve those issues or challenges. We’re interested in building the foundation for a sustainable flow of information and ideas.” He adds,

**“ The Efficiency Review and Continuous Improvement Initiative is another way that the Strickland Administration looks to build a culture where everyone believes that everything can be improved, and works to make it so. ”**



Visit [efficiency.ohio.gov](http://efficiency.ohio.gov) to see the suggestion format information.



## **As Requested by the Family Advisory Council**

### **3. Practical Information about Non-Medical Transportation**

*Following a request from the Family Advisory Council for “... more practical information we can use,” we thank Nancy McAvoy, ODMRDD Division of Medicaid Policy and Administration, for this update on the subject of non-medical transportation.*

Pipeline is pleased to provide some explanations that address questions we have received from staff of County Boards of MRDD, families, and private providers, as they prepare to implement Non-medical Transportation waiver services in 2008. Also, please see the [New Adult Day](#) handbook, and the [Rules in Effect](#) listing for rule references.

Some of the confusion in introducing any billing procedure, or method of claiming services provided, stems from a lack of clear-cut definitions of what is allowed or not allowed, and of what is expected of a provider. It is hoped that this information is helpful in those areas.



### **Commercial Vehicles**

The term ‘commercial vehicles’, as used in rule 5123:2-9-19 (E), has the same meaning as the term ‘non-specialized transportation’ which is defined in rule 5123:2-1-03. As such, for the purposes of billing for Non-medical Transportation services as a commercial vehicle, the vehicle would be available to the public from local transit systems and public transportation systems. These transportation services may be provided by:

- A public transit agency organized under Chapter 306. of the Ohio Revised Code; and/or
- A participating agency under the Ohio Department of Transportation’s coordination project, commonly referred to as Coordinated Transit.

Vehicles operated by any transportation service designed and operated primarily to serve individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities, including a transportation service provided by an entity licensed or certified by the ODMRDD, are not considered to be commercial vehicles for the purpose of billing for Non-medical Transportation services.

### **Documentation of Non-medical Transportation Services Delivered - Odometer Readings-**

Both ‘per mile’ and ‘per trip’ transportation requires the provider to record odometer readings. ‘Per mile’, or commute, requires an odometer reading for the first-on and the last-off waiver recipient so ODMRDD knows how many billable miles to divide by to get a per person mileage rate for waiver recipients.

The new documentation clarification in rule 5123:2-9-18 (H) could be met by keeping one set of odometer readings to verify the pick-up and drop-off of waiver recipients during the commute. If a provider wants to keep both this odometer reading and the odometer readings from the start of the whole commute until its end, as calculated for per trip documentation, that would be acceptable also, but not strictly necessary;

‘Per trip’ requires an odometer reading at the beginning and the end of the trip so that, at some time in the future, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) could ask for a quick tally of trips taken to calculate an average trip length to, then, evaluate the ‘correctness’ of the per-trip rates that were negotiated. The odometer reading of ‘trip beginning’ to ‘trip end’ is of consequence for per trip billing, and can be initiated and ended at any points designated by the provider.

For example, these points may be from the time the driver leaves the parking lot to the time the driver returns to that same lot, or can be from the time the driver picks up the first passenger until the time the driver drops off the last passenger. *Consistency in recoding is important.*

#### **- Passenger Identification -**

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is the single state Medicaid agency in Ohio, and so is the state agency charged with the responsibility to render final policy decisions concerning Medicaid requirements. ODJFS staff in the Bureau of Community Access have confirmed that all elements of documentation enumerated in rule 5123:2-9-18 (H) must be entered on the documentation form.

This rule requires the Medicaid number and the provider number to be on the service documentation form. Health Insurance Portability and Accessibility Act (HIPAA) safeguards pertaining to this information may be met by locking the vehicle containing the information, or removing the documentation sheets from an unattended vehicle and securing them at a designated location. To meet the intent of the rule, it is sufficient to secure the attendance sheets in vehicles that are housed in a secured parking area.

Drivers will need to indicate in some manner the individuals who were actually transported on each trip, as well as the other documentation elements contained in paragraph (H)(1) of rule 5123:2-9-18. Several providers have stated that they will pre-print individuals' names and the other information required for Non-medical Transportation billing for each route. Then, for each trip, they will start a new, dated form, 'line out' the names of individuals who did not ride on the trip, and initial the form. On the form, there will be a pre-printed statement that Medicaid billing is not to occur for persons whose names were 'lined out'.

*For more information or clarification on this subject, contact Leslie Paull at [leslie.paull@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:leslie.paull@dmr.state.oh.us) or Nancy McAvoy at [nancy.mcavoy@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:nancy.mcavoy@dmr.state.oh.us)*



## **4. Seniors: Another Chance to Apply for Property Tax Break**



Senior citizens and Ohioans with permanent disabilities have another opportunity to apply for an expanded property tax cut. Beginning January 8, and continuing through June 2, eligible homeowners may submit paperwork in hopes of shielding the first \$25,000 of their home's value from property taxes.

The state's Homestead Exemption Program used to have restrictions that made people above a certain income level ineligible. But those limits were eliminated last year. The average qualified homeowner stands to save about \$400.

Those who missed an Oct. 1, 2007 deadline may sign up now for the 2007 credit. Also, those who weren't eligible last year but recently turned 65 may apply to take the 2008 credit on their tax bills due next year.



## Reminders

### Winter Issue of *Pipeline Quarterly* Now Online

The winter issue of ODMRDD's newsmagazine, *Pipeline Quarterly*, was published last month, and is archived at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/pipeline/odmrdd.htm>. To suggest an article or idea for the Spring issue, contact [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us) and put the words *Pipeline Quarterly* in the subject line. *Pipeline Quarterly* is published in summer, fall, winter, and spring. The publication is in addition to, and not in place of, the regular twice-monthly issues of *Pipeline*.

### Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)



The ODMRDD toll-free hotline number for reporting abuse/neglect and other MUIs is **1-866-313-MRDD (6733)**. Please note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of MRDD, however, it is understood that there may be times an individual, staff member, or family member may feel it is a

conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember that the hotline number exists, and is to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.



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**Wednesday, January 23, 2008**

**Volume 2, Issue 2**

- 1. Governor Outlines Budget Challenges
- 2. Ernie Fischer Named Superintendent, Mount Vernon Developmental Center
- 3. Establishment of *Help Me Grow* Advisory Council
- 4. February 4, Voter Registration Deadline
- 5. March 6 Event Slated for MRDD Awareness Month
- 6. Standardization of Certification Requirements Related to CPR/First Aid

## 1. Governor Outlines Budget Challenges

Governor Ted Strickland's office today provided general information pertaining to state budget issues. The national and state economies continue to offer a challenging environment, and new projections on how the economy might impact the remainder of Ohio's biennial budget are being carefully reviewed.

Governor Strickland has asked state agencies to work with the Office of Budget and Management to address potential budget shortfalls. At this time, no specific decisions have been made. The ODMRDD and other agencies will continue to work with the governor to ensure that Ohio maintains a balanced budget, but does so in a way that preserves the state's ability to serve the people of Ohio.

According to spokesperson, Keith Dailey,

**"These are tough economic times but the governor has never lost faith in the overall soundness of the state's economy or the ability of Ohioans to innovate and create a brighter future. He will not allow temporary challenges to take our focus away from creating a stronger Ohio economy."**

*The ODMRDD will provide updates on the state budget via future issues of Pipeline.*



## 2. Ernie Fischer Named Superintendent, Mount Vernon Developmental Center, Succeeding Tim Elder



Ernie Fischer has been named Superintendent of Mount Vernon Developmental Center (MVDC), effective March 1, 2008, succeeding retiring Superintendent, Tim Elder. Fischer has most recently served the ODMRDD Central Office as Assistant Deputy Director, Special Investigations and Enforcement, Division of Community Services, where he has been instrumental in helping organizations meet guidelines and requirements for licensure and accreditation.

According to Ginnie Whisman, Deputy Director, Developmental Centers, "I have been honored to work with Ernie since 1991. His knowledge, experience, and skills are exemplary. Ernie has dedicated his entire career to serving individuals with MRDD. It is a real privilege to have him as part of our Developmental Center team."

And, Whisman added this about retiring Superintendent, Tim Elder, "Tim will be retiring as Superintendent of MVDC on February 29, 2008. Tim has been a caring and dedicated leader, and has made a positive impact on many individuals, families, and staff over the past 10 years. Although I only had the opportunity to work with Tim for the past seven months, it is clear that his energy and commitment to the job is contagious. I wish him all the best in his retirement."

Upon the announcement of his new role, Fischer noted,

**" I have certainly enjoyed my tenure in Central Office and appreciate the hard work of all who have made the office successful. Mount Vernon Developmental Center is a valuable asset to the department's service system and to the community, and I look forward to the opportunities and challenges that this new position provides. "**

Mount Vernon Developmental Center is one of ten such centers under the ODMRDD Community Services umbrella, and serves the following counties: Knox, Holms, Tuscarawas, Carroll, Jefferson, Harrison, Licking, Fairfield, Hocking, Perry, Muskingum, Coshocton, Guernsey, Belmont, Noble, Monroe, Morgan and Washington (this comprises ODMRDD Region 5.)

MVDC encompasses 310 acres of land, centrally located in Knox County. There are nearly 220 residents at the Center, in six different living areas. The majority of people who reside at MVDC are diagnosed with profound mental retardation and need extensive supports in the areas of daily living, health care, and social skills development.



### [Agreement Between ODH and ODMRDD](#)

## **3. Establishment of Help Me Grow Advisory Council**



The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the ODMRDD recently announced a renewed partnership to coordinate Early Intervention (EI) Services for infants and

toddlers under the age of three. An Interagency Agreement outlining how each department will collaborate in the statewide planning and coordination of Help Me Grow (HMG) services, with emphasis on intervention for children experiencing developmental disabilities or delays, was signed earlier this month by both agency directors. The agreement also includes a stronger emphasis on the state entities working more closely with local County Boards of MRDD in assisting children and their families.

### **About Help Me Grow**

Ohio's Help Me Grow initiative provides state and federal funds to county Family and Children First Councils to be used in conjunction with state, local and other federal funds. These funds implement and maintain a coordinated, community-based network that promotes family-centered services for expectant parents, newborns, infants, toddlers, and their families. Children and families in every county in Ohio can access Help Me Grow services through the 88 county-level offices throughout the state.

### **Governor Issues Executive Order**

To meet federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) participation requirements, Governor Ted Strickland, in June 2007, issued an Executive Order which allows ODH to continue as Ohio's lead agency in providing EI services.

The same order also reinforces the role of the Ohio Help Me Grow Advisory Council which is charged with enhancing the quality of care for Ohio's children with and without disabilities. Its members represent the statewide early childhood services community, and include parents of children in HMG, legislators, state agency representatives, representatives from county HMG's and HMG service providers. The Advisory Council will focus on advising and assisting ODH in the implementation of the HMG program in Ohio, including the establishment of an effective statewide system of EI services.

The interagency agreement between ODH and ODMRDD will assist the agencies in implementing HMG, and promises to:

- Support Ohio's school readiness goal through strengthening positive family environments for optimal growth and development of young children;
- Support HMG through the development of a coordinated community-based infrastructure that promotes family-centered services for expectant mothers, newborns, infants, toddlers and their families;
- Clarify issues, define problems and propose alternatives related to promoting the statewide HMG system and coordinating early intervention services;
- Increase public awareness of the rationale and need for early intervention services, and to support that need through the collection and analysis of relevant data;
- Assure that eligible individuals received needed early intervention services;
- Assure that EI services meet federal requirements, and support program evaluation efforts through the sharing of pertinent data.

### **Importance of Early Intervention Services**

Ohio is committed to creating a system of high quality care for its children, and sees EI services as critical to the full development of infants and toddlers, especially those with

developmental delays or disabilities. EI services allow a state to enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities during these early years, lessening the need for special education for children over age three, thus helping to reduce long-term educational costs.

ODMRDD Director, John Martin, stated,

**“Through this collaborative effort, children in Ohio will have better opportunities to reach their full potential. In addition to helping children and their families, early intervention services provide economic benefits to taxpayers by helping to decrease dependence on extended or lifelong services.”**

For more information about EI services and the Help Me Grow program, visit the Ohio Department of Health website at: <http://www.ohiohelpmegrow.org/>

*This information was prepared for Pipeline by Robert Jennings, Public Information Manager, who will be leaving the ODMRDD this month to join the Ohio Department of Health as Director of Public Affairs. We congratulate Robert, and thank him for his nearly 11 years of excellent service to the ODMRDD as a public information professional.*



## 4. February 4, Voter Registration Deadline



On Tuesday, March 4 there will be many issues across the state for which to cast votes *‘for’* or *‘against’*. Many issues directly affect MRDD services, such as County Boards of MRDD levy issues. To exercise the right to vote, *Pipeline* reminds individuals, families, and direct care staff who may need to assist in this process, that the *voter registration deadline is February 4.*

To be registered one must be a U.S. citizen at least 18 years old on or before the date of the election, be a resident of Ohio for at least 30 days before the election, and if a person has already registered but has moved since then, the person must report the change of address to the local Board of Elections. This can be done by U.S. Mail, in person, or at any public high school or library. Forms also may be obtained at the Board of Elections website for each county. A helpful place for more information is the Ohio Secretary of State’s website at <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/sos/ElectionsVoter/OhioElections.aspx?Section=boeDir>



## 5. March 6 Event Slated for MRDD Awareness Month

Ohio Public Images (OPI), in cooperation with the ODMRDD, has slated the annual MRDD Awareness Month (March) Kickoff Event for March 6, 2008, 10 a.m. – noon, at the Ohio Statehouse atrium. Please mark your calendars and look for details in future issues of *Pipeline*.

OPI also reminds you to check their website at [www.publicimagesnetwork.org](http://www.publicimagesnetwork.org) for MRDD Awareness Month materials supporting this year’s theme,

## “When Doors Open We Succeed”



If you have questions about the Kickoff Event, or would like to request an information/display table there to promote specific opportunities for people with disabilities to enjoy success in their communities, contact ODMRDD Public Information Officer, Sherry Steinman, at (614) 644-0262, or email [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us)



## 6. Standardization of Initial and Ongoing Certification Requirements Related to CPR/First Aid

An information notice has been posted at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/mrddlibrary/infonotices/01-14-08.pdf> on the subject of standardizing the initial and ongoing certification requirements for CPR/First Aid, pertaining to Home and Community-Based Waiver Services (HCBS). Rule language defining CPR/First Aid certification requirements may vary slightly depending upon the waiver-specific service.

There are eleven rules which address the requirement for individuals providing services to possess CPR or CPR/First Aid certification. Although the language used differs slightly, the concept of verifying that applicants and current service providers possess the appropriate credentials from an accredited entity is the goal.

Further on the subject of Health and Safety please note the following reminder:

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May feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember that the hotline number exists, and is to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.



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A *Pipeline* EXTRA will be published as needed to cover hot news.  
Visit us at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov)

Thursday, January 31, 2008

## In today's Issue

- ODMRDD Budget Challenges 2008-09, A Summary
- Futures Committee Recommendations Are In
- Administration Taps Two ODMRDD Staff

## **ODMRDD Budget Challenges 2008-09, A Summary**

The ODMRDD leadership is mindful of and sensitive to the impact that required budget changes will have on our systems' team, statewide. When any of us is confronted with major changes, having reliable information helps us to deal with what will happen and what must be done. We are absolutely committed to sharing information in an open and inclusive fashion during these difficult times. In fact, today, ODMRDD Director John Martin is meeting personally with key stakeholders to address these issues and provide a forum for discussion.

Because each agency's budget reduction plan is being thoughtfully weighed by the Governor's staff, and carefully reviewed by the Office of Budget and Management (OBM), final information about specific elements of the plan may emerge in a piece-meal fashion. We ask that everyone please be patient, as we navigate these rough waters together.

### **General Overview**

ODMRDD is required to reduce General Revenue Fund spending by \$17,261,709 during the biennium.

***The ODMRDD is required to reduce spending by \$ 17,261,709 during the biennium.***

ODMRDD's approach to reducing our overall budget spreads the impact of cost containment efforts among ODMRDD administration, providers, County Boards of MRDD, and Developmental Centers, while minimizing service reductions/disruptions for as many individuals and families as possible. Our strategy will:

- Encourage reduction of administrative costs throughout the system, as a first principle.
- Exempt line items that are used as match for Medicaid Waiver services for individuals with MRDD, and continue to maximize our federal dollars for services.

- Work with all system stakeholders and local funding partners to achieve the needed reductions in a way that continues to ensure the health and safety of the individuals being served.
- Act as an integrated package, with shared responsibilities: balancing the burdens of resource reductions, while maintaining an essential level of quality services.
- Hold to the Department’s vision to implement system improvements with participation from all of our partners – providers, county boards, families, consumers & advocates.

*Central Office* – The ODMRDD anticipates overall staff reductions at approximately 15% of current staffing levels including exempt and bargaining unit positions, with reductions occurring across all divisions of Central Office. We propose to accomplish this through a combination of attrition of vacant positions, an early retirement incentive plan (ERIP), and layoffs. Please note that all personnel plans must be approved by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and OBM, and have not been finalized at this time. More information will be forthcoming as it is available.

*Developmental Centers* – Capacity will be adjusted at each of the ten Developmental Centers; no institutions will be closed. The ODMRDD anticipates a staff reduction percentage of approximately 11% of the total Developmental Center workforce. As with Central Office, all plans include attrition of vacant positions, an ERIP, and layoffs, and are subject to Administration approval.

*Early Retirement Incentive Program (ERIP)* -- In order to minimize the number of employees being laid off, we intend to propose a Mandatory ERIP. An ERIP is offered to employees who, by virtue of a combination of their age and/or years of service when combined with the amount of time approved for the ERIP, makes them eligible for retirement. Additionally, an ERIP must be approved by the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System, OBM and DAS.

Completion of staff reductions occurs following a series of approvals by the Office of Collective Bargaining (OCB), DAS, and OBM.

*County Boards* – Approximately 170 Individual Options waivers funded by the Martin v. Strickland settlement (currently allocated to the County Boards of MRDD) will be used by ODMRDD to assist in the capacity adjustment at the Developmental Centers. In addition, the County Board Subsidy appropriation line item will remain unchanged in order to facilitate this process and assist counties with costs associated with the waiver reimbursement transition. In addition, the ODMRDD will work to reduce the complexity of the system’s administrative practices to help reduce administrative costs in order to maximize funds for services.

*Providers* – ODMRDD will encourage the reduction of administrative overhead of providers to ensure that direct care wages can be sufficient to sustain services.

## **Next Steps**

To help ensure a flow of reliable communication, please use the following avenues to access information:

“*Rumor Buster*” -- As you have questions and need answers, please don’t consult the rumor mill. Consult us. The ODMRDD has set up an email feedback system [budget-rumors@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:budget-rumors@odmrdd.state.oh.us) Email your specific concerns, or information you wish to have verified, and someone will respond to you directly.

*Division meetings* -- The Director/Deputy Director will provide updates through division meetings, and possibly through all-staff and lunch-time meetings to allow for accessibility.

*Regional Meetings* -- Knowing that nothing can replace face-to-face contact with the field, we will schedule regional meetings around the geographic locations of our ten Developmental Centers, thereby meeting with County Boards of MRDD, families, providers, and state employees.

*Pipeline* -- In the future, as details are solidified, we will use the *Pipeline* electronic newsletter to inform our constituents how the budget reduction process will move forward. It will focus on how, with their help, we believe we can make positive changes in our system, despite these challenges.



## **Futures Subcommittee Recommendations Are In – 33 Suggestions for System Improvements**



The ODMRDD Futures Committee has reached a milestone. Each of the four Subcommittees comprising the full Committee have reported their recommendations with the following results:

- Accessing Services and Supports, 5 recommendations;
- Delivering Quality Services, 15 recommendations;
- Finance, 6 recommendations;
- Serving Populations with Special Needs, 7 recommendations

The 33 total recommendations are now being combined into one preliminary document, and it will be posted on the ODMRDD website at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/odmrdd.htm> early next week.

Kudos to all Subcommittee members for working very hard to organize a great deal of input into defined and measurable recommendations. The full committee will next move forward in assessing the key issues and priorities to be acted upon as the foundation for ODMRDD's direction over the next three years.

ODMRDD Director John Martin, notes, "The subcommittees have made a set of recommendations that address the legislative mandate and offer strategic opportunities to improve services -- and access to them -- for individuals and families. The recommendations also set the strategy for addressing issues of financial sustainability and system improvements for the future."

*The Futures Committee website noted above is updated regularly.*



## **Administration Taps Two ODMRDD Staff Aligns with Cost-Saving Consolidation of Central Office Resources**

Two ODMRDD Deputy Directors have been tapped to serve the Strickland Administration in different policy roles. Renuka Mayadev, from the Department's Constituent Services Division, will join the Governor's Office as Executive Assistant for Criminal Justice Services. Tracy Williams of the Department's Medicaid Division will move to the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) as Deputy Director for Budget. Both of these changes will be effective in mid-February.

In light of the State's budget situation, Director Martin will eliminate Mayadev's current position and reorganize so that the Constituent Services staff will report to Deputy Director, Patrick Lanahan. There will be no reorganization of the Medicaid Division, and for a period of approximately two months, Williams will remain in a partial leadership role to assist in final steps of waiver reimbursement transition and general staff management.

"I am pleased to see both Renuka and Tracy recognized by the Administration for these key roles," said Director, John Martin. "We look forward to continued interaction with them in their new capacities."



### *Pipeline Extra feedback ... direct from you to the state ...*

*Questions? Comments?* Pipeline Extra is a publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) and is distributed infrequently, to highlight breaking news in the MRDD arena. The regular Pipeline publication publishes twice monthly to inform readership of relevant information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us), or contact Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us), phone (614) 644-0262.

*Editor's Notes:* ODMRDD values subscriber confidentiality and does not intentionally share subscriber addresses with others. *In the event of a public records request, however, the ODMRDD would comply with all applicable Public Records Laws. Please also note the Privacy information at the ODMRDD website, at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/privacy/odmrdd.htm>.* If you would like to subscribe to Pipeline newsletter, send an email to: [join-pipeline@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:join-pipeline@odmrdd.state.oh.us) and write SUBSCRIBE in the subject line. If you would like your subscription to Pipeline discontinued, write UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line. You may also read issues of this newsletter on the web at: <http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov>

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# Pipeline . . . direct from the state . . .

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



Pipeline will be published at least twice monthly.  
Visit us at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov)

We hope you enjoy Pipeline!

Please share your thoughts with us at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us)

**Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2008**

**Volume 2, Issue 3**

- 1. Governor's State of the State Address
- 2. ODMRDD Budget Update
- 3. Futures Committee Public Hearing, February 14
- 4. March 4, Primary Election, Polling Place Accessibility
- 5. MRDD Awareness Month Kickoff Event Ramps Up

## 1. Governor Strickland's State of the State Address

*Thanks to the Governor's Communications team for this timely information.*

In his State of the State address, Governor Ted Strickland today proposed a \$1.7 billion jobs package, expanding access to college for high school seniors and allowing the governor to appoint a newly-created Director of the Ohio Department of Education.

Strickland outlined a \$1.7 billion jobs stimulus package, *Building Ohio Jobs*, which will invest in job-creating industries and Ohio workers.

Through issuing bonds, the \$1.7 billion *Building Ohio Jobs* package will create more than 80,000 good-paying jobs in Ohio and lay the foundation for future economic prosperity by investing in the state's energy economy, distribution infrastructure, biomedicine, bioproducts, public works, our downtown neighborhoods and the Clean Ohio fund.

"*Building Ohio Jobs*, and all these programs within it, represents a commitment to opportunity and strength," Strickland said. "It is an investment in job-creating industries, in our communities, and in our workers. And it will create opportunity today, tomorrow, and for generations."

Strickland also proposed a reorganization of the leadership structure at the Ohio Department of Education and an expansion of higher education opportunities for the state's college bound students.

In K-12 education, Strickland called for the establishment of a new position: Director of the Ohio Department of Education. Under the governor's proposal, the Director would be appointed by the governor and serve as a member of the governor's Cabinet, subject to the approval of the senate. The current State Board of Education and the state superintendent

would serve in advisory and additional roles as determined by the Director of the Department of Education.

In higher education, Strickland announced that Chancellor Eric Fingerhut's 10-year strategic plan will guarantee that high-quality associate and bachelor's degrees in core fields will be available on a campus within 30 miles of every Ohioan.

Strickland also proposed the *Seniors to Sophomores initiative*, which directs the Chancellor to give every 12th-grader who meets the academic requirements a choice of spending their senior year in their home high school, or spending it on a University System of Ohio campus. Tuition would be free.

To honor the state's commitment to our veterans, Strickland called for the creation of the Department of Veterans Affairs, which will consolidate Ohio's veterans' services to one agency and ensure the state is effectively providing veterans with the benefits they have earned.

"I look forward to working with the General Assembly on this effort," Strickland said. "Let us make Ohio known for its commitment to our entire military community."

In addition, Strickland urged the General Assembly to complete work on his Energy, Jobs and Progress bill as soon as possible. The plan will guarantee that electricity prices remain stable and the supply of electricity is reliable while protecting and creating jobs and establishing Ohio as a leader in advanced energy efforts. The governor also noted that,

**"The State of the State is *resolute*. We are challenged, but will not back down."**

**A summary of the Governor's State of the State address is included below:**

***Economy: Building Ohio Jobs, \$1.7 billion Ohio Jobs Package***

To respond to the state's economic challenges, Governor Strickland is proposing *Building Ohio Jobs*, a \$1.7 billion jobs stimulus package to create more than 80,000 jobs and lay the foundation for future economic prosperity.

Through issuing bonds, the plan will invest:

- **\$250 million in the advanced and renewable energy economy**, including solar, wind and clean coal.
- **\$150 million in our state's infrastructure** to help create a seamless network of roads, rails, and ports to support our logistics and distribution industry.
- **\$100 million in bioproducts that use renewable sources** instead of petroleum to create plastics and other products.
- **\$200 million in the biomedical industry**, saving lives by fueling Ohio's leadership in new medical products.
- **\$200 million establishing the Ohio Main Streets Renewal Initiative** to spur redevelopment in downtown neighborhoods in our cities and towns.

- **\$400 million in the Clean Ohio fund**, to advance our efforts to reclaim brownfields and other damaged lands and preserve farm land and open spaces.
- **\$400 million in the Ohio Public Works Commission** to help our local partners with road, bridge, water and sewer projects. These are projects that spur growth in our cities and towns and Ohio as a whole.

### **Higher Education: Seniors to Sophomores Initiative**

Governor Strickland's *Seniors to Sophomores* Initiative directs the Chancellor to give every twelfth grader who meets the academic requirements a choice of spending their senior year in their home high school, or spending it on a University System of Ohio campus. Tuition would be free.

### **Higher Education: Bachelor's Degree Offered within 30 Miles of Every Ohioan**

Chancellor Fingerhut's 10-year strategic plan will guarantee that high-quality associate and bachelor's degrees in core fields will be available on a campus within 30 miles of every Ohioan.

### **Education: Allowing the Governor to Appoint a newly-created Director of Department of Education**

To ensure a direct line of responsibility and accountability in education, Governor Strickland is calling for the establishment of a new position: the Director of the Department of Education. The Director will be appointed by the Governor and serve as a member of his Cabinet. The existing structure of the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent would remain in place in advisory and additional roles as determined by the director.

### **Veterans: Establishing the Ohio Department of Veterans Affairs**

To honor our commitment to Ohio's veterans, Governor Strickland is calling for the creation of the Ohio Department of Veterans Affairs and the consolidation of the state's services to veterans in this new Cabinet-level agency.



## **2. ODMRDD Budget Update**

As promised in *Pipeline Extra*, January 31, 2008, ODMRDD plans to keep you up-to-date regarding the impact of budget cuts on our agency. While we know more today than when revenue forecasts were made public, we do not yet have all of the details, or know how all of the details will impact specific areas of the Department. Because we feel that it is important to share what we know, and be responsive and responsible in the process, we will communicate what we know as soon as we can.

**... We feel that it is important to share what we know,  
and be responsive and responsible in the process ...**



Supporting our goal to protect services for individuals and families, ODMRDD has focused on cost-saving opportunities that will, we believe, minimize the impact of budget cuts on services. We are identifying areas within our organization to consolidate, reduce administration, and streamline operations. In addition, we will work to reduce management layers and identify vacancies that can remain unfilled, along with using the Early Retirement Incentive Plan (ERIP) in order to reduce costs.

**... The ODMRDD has focused on cost-saving opportunities that will, we believe, minimize the impact of budget cuts on services ...**

While we are reducing capacity at the Developmental Centers and consolidating functions at the Central Office, we are committed to supporting all of our staff.

The budget plan does not call for closing any Developmental Centers, but it does call for reducing capacity, and using Individual Options (IO) Waivers funded by the *Martin v. Taft* Settlement ('Martin Waivers') and existing vacancies in the Centers to close some cottages around the state. These waivers allow those individuals who have wanted to move into the community the opportunity to do so, while receiving the services and supports they need. And, we are going to make these waivers available statewide, to allow individuals at every Developmental Center to access community services and supports.

Our top priorities at each of our Developmental Centers are the continuation of quality services, and the health and safety of the individuals who reside there. Governor Strickland and the ODMRDD are committed to minimizing the impact these budget cuts will have on the individuals we serve.

We will continue to share information and provide opportunities for questions and issues to be raised so we can address all concerns. To help ensure a flow of reliable communication, please use the following avenues to access information:

*'Rumor Buster'*-- As you have questions and need answers, please consult us, not the rumor mill. Use the email feedback system at [budget-rumors@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:budget-rumors@odmrdd.state.oh.us) Email your specific concerns, or information you wish to have verified, and someone will respond to you directly.

*Division meetings* -- The Director/Deputy Directors will provide updates through division meetings, and possibly through all-staff and lunch-time meetings to allow for accessibility.

*Regional Meetings* -- Knowing that nothing can replace face-to-face contact with the field, we are scheduling regional meetings around the geographic locations of our ten Developmental Centers, thereby meeting with County Boards of MRDD, families, providers, and state employees.

*Pipeline* -- As details are solidified, we will use the *Pipeline* electronic newsletter to inform our constituents how the budget reduction process will move forward. It will focus on how, with their help, we believe we can make positive changes in our system, despite these challenges.



### 3. Futures Committee Public Hearing, February 14



**Looking to the Future**

The Futures Committee Public Hearing is scheduled for February 14 from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm at the Riffe Center, 77 S. High St. The full Committee will meet from 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm after the testimony. Public testimony will be limited to 3-5 minutes, and written comments of any length can be submitted in person or through the MRDD Futures Website via email -- just click on the 'Contact Us' button. We encourage everyone who wishes to testify to notify the Department via [Futures-Feedback e-mail](#) so that we can accommodate as many as possible during the scheduled time.

People who pre-register will have priority to testify before those who do not. Please note that written testimony can also be mailed to: ODMRDD, Attn: Lisa Walsh, 1810 Sullivant Ave., Columbus, OH 43223-1239.

Futures Subcommittee Recommendations have been completed, and there are 33 Suggestions for System Improvements: [Subcommittee Recommendations - Full Text](#) [Printer Friendly Recommendations](#) (No graphics and no supporting text about rationale, charge or committee actions) The Subcommittees have made recommendations that address the legislative mandate and offer strategic opportunities to improve services, access, and quality for individuals and families. They also set the strategy for addressing issues of financial sustainability and system improvements for the future.

The Committee is interested in testimony related to the Subcommittee Recommendations, and in how well those recommendations meet the Legislative Mandate of the Committee. Subcommittee members have organized a great deal of input into defined and measurable recommendations, and the full committee will next move forward in assessing the key issues and priorities to be acted upon as the foundation for ODMRDD's direction over the next three years.



### 4. March 4th Primary Election, Polling Place Accessibility



It is important to remember that on Tuesday, March 4 -- Primary Election Day in Ohio -- every polling place is required by state and federal law to be accessible to people with disabilities. The Ohio Legal Rights Service (OLRS) provides a great deal of information about the rights of voters with disabilities, and this information is available online at [http://olrs.ohio.gov/ASP/olrs\\_Voting.asp](http://olrs.ohio.gov/ASP/olrs_Voting.asp)

In addition, a helpful place for more information is the Ohio Secretary of State's website at <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/sos/ElectionsVoter/OhioElections.aspx?Section=boeDir> If you are in a position to assist someone with a disability in exercising his or her right to vote, thank you for doing so – and please be assured that systems at every polling place should be in place for voting to be a satisfactory experience for everyone involved.



## 5. MRDD Awareness Month Kickoff Event Ramps Up Event to celebrate positive efforts throughout the state

Ohio Public Images (OPI), in cooperation with the ODMRDD, reminds you that the annual MRDD Awareness Month (March) Kickoff Event is slated for March 6, 2008, 10 a.m. – noon, at the Ohio Statehouse atrium. The event will celebrate many positive efforts throughout the state that afford opportunities for people with disabilities to be successful in their communities. In addition, the event offers an informal display and information area for attendees to share information and network.

Organizations that support people with disabilities are encouraged to check the OPI website at [www.publicimagesnetwork.org](http://www.publicimagesnetwork.org) for MRDD Awareness Month materials with this year's theme:

**“When Doors Open We Succeed”**



If you have questions about the Kickoff Event, or would like to request an information/display table there to promote specific opportunities for people with disabilities to enjoy success in their communities, contact ODMRDD Public Information Officer, Sherry Steinman, at (614) 644-0262, or email [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us)



### Reminder: Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)



The ODMRDD toll-free hotline number for reporting abuse/neglect and other MUIs is **1-866-313-MRDD (6733)**. Please note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of MRDD, however, it is understood that there may be times an individual, staff member, or family member

May feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember that the hotline number exists, and is to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.



## Winter Issue of *Pipeline Quarterly* Now Online

The winter issue of ODMRDD's newsmagazine, *Pipeline Quarterly*, was published last month, and is archived at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/pipeline/odmrdd.htm>. To suggest an article or idea for the Spring issue, contact [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us) and put the words *Pipeline Quarterly* in the subject line. *Pipeline Quarterly* is published in summer, fall, winter, and spring. The publication is in addition to, and not in place of, the regular twice-monthly issues of *Pipeline*.



## *Pipeline feedback ... direct from you to the state ...*

*Questions? Comments?* *Pipeline* is a, electronic publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) and is distributed approximately twice monthly to update and inform readers of time-sensitive, relevant information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us about *Pipeline* at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us), or contact Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us), phone (614) 644-0262.

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We hope you enjoy Pipeline!

Please share your thoughts with us at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us)

**Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2008**

**Volume 2, Issue 4**

- 1. New Leadership at Two Developmental Centers – Gallipolis and Warrensville
- 2. Governor's Executive Order Defines 'Common Sense Business Regulation'
- 3. Testimony Provided at Futures Committee Public Hearing
- 4. Statewide Family Advisory Council, the Movers and Shakers
- 5. MRDD Levy Issues on March 4 Ballots, Statewide
- 6. People First Conference, March 14 - 16
- 7. MRDD Awareness Month Kickoff Event Ramps Up

## **1. New Leadership at Two Developmental Centers** **Kevin Davis, Gallipolis; Wendy DiGregorio, Warrensville**

Ginnie Whisman, ODMRDD Assistant Deputy Director, Developmental Centers, has announced the hiring of Superintendents for both Gallipolis and Warrensville Developmental Centers. Effective March 10, Kevin Davis will be Superintendent at Gallipolis (Gallipolis, OH), and Wendy DiGregorio will be Superintendent at Warrensville (Highland Hills, OH).

Davis earned a Bachelor's Degree from Shawnee State University, and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Ohio University. He also has completed the Executive/Superintendent Development Program from the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD. Davis' previous experience includes Program Director for Easter Seals of Central Ohio; Director of Residential Services, Pickaway County Board of MRDD; and, Adult Services Director, Hocking County Board of MRDD. He most recently served as Adult Services Director, Meigs County Board of MRDD.

DiGregorio has dedicated her career to providing services to individuals with MRDD and Mental Health issues, and earned a Bachelor's Degree from Rider College in New Jersey, a Master's Degree in Counseling from Rider College, and a Master's Degree in Health Administration from Long Island University in New York. She began as a Program Director at an Intermediate Care Facility for the Mentally Retarded (ICF/MR) in New York.

In addition, upon moving to Ohio, DiGregorio was Executive Director at After Care Residential Services, and after a merger with Spectrum of Supportive Services, she was Chief Operating Officer and Vice President for Advancement/Human Resources.

Whisman, and Coordinator of Developmental Center Services, Dan Housepian, add,

**“ We are very excited to have Wendy and Kevin as part of our team. We are confident that their experience and leadership will help each of the two Developmental Centers operate with efficiency and economy. Both Kevin and Wendy have dedicated their careers to providing services to individuals with MRDD, and bring a wealth of knowledge, skills, and experience to the job of Superintendent at these facilities.”**



## **2. Governor's Executive Order** **“Common Sense Business Regulation”**

Governor Ted Strickland has signed an executive order providing clear direction to create a more efficient and effective regulatory environment in Ohio. Following a philosophy of “Common Sense Business Regulation,” the executive order requires agencies to:

- Review existing rules and processes;
- Treat those affected by their rules and regulatory processes as customers, and to treat them consistently across regions, offices, and departments; and to,
- Consolidate regulatory rules and processes.

Additionally, the executive order directs certain cabinet agencies to designate an existing staff member as an agency regulatory ombudsman who will act as a liaison between the agency and those affected by the regulatory rules and processes. In line with this direction, ODMRDD’s Division of Constituent Services has long provided such information about rules and processes with staff support, and through the regularly-updated Rules & Laws section of our website at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/rules/rules.htm> . Director, John Martin, notes,

**“We also will be looking at our rules and processes as an important element in carrying out the recommendations of the Futures Committee.”**

“Regulations for conducting business in Ohio exist to promote health, safety and economic vitality,” Strickland said. “A transparent, common sense approach to our state regulatory process will help us keep good-paying jobs in Ohio and make Ohio a more attractive place to bring the jobs of the future.”

After a review, state agencies must amend or rescind rules that are unnecessary, that unnecessarily impede economic growth, or that have had unintended negative consequences. “We must act as partners to ensure Ohio’s regulatory environment is flexible, respectful and responsive to Ohio’s citizens and the people who do business in our state,” Strickland said. He added,

**“State agencies will be guided by the principle that the individuals and businesses they regulate are customers, and they will be held accountable for the quality of customer service they provide.”**



### 3. Testimony Provided at Futures Committee Public Hearing



(Left) Futures Committee member, Bill Adams and his father, discuss testimony with Subcommittee staff person, Jody Fisher. (Right) It was standing room only for the Committee's February 14 public testimony meeting at the Riffe Center.



< Thomas Simon testifies about the far-reaching impact of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), as Futures Committee member, Davida Russell, listens.

The Futures Committee Public Hearing, February 14th at the Riffe Center in downtown Columbus, provided a forum for 28 people -- many of them individuals with disabilities or family members -- to present testimony to the MRDD Futures Committee.

Families and Individuals testified about topics including:

- The need for the MRDD system to be family-centered and provide better cross-system supports;
- Better housing options;
- The support and services family members appreciate from Developmental Centers, County Boards of MRDD, and other providers;
- Recommendations to improve quality and continuity of services, statewide, and
- How certain policies impact service delivery.
- The impact of wage changes on cost caps for waivers, especially Level 1.

Following a full morning of testimony, the Committee met to discuss the many issues presented during that time, and to discuss the 33 recommendations previously provided by the four Subcommittees. The full Committee is reviewing the testimony in light of the recommendations, and developing plans based on shared areas of concern and interest.

Written testimony received at the public hearing, through the U.S. Mail, and on the ODMRDD Futures website is being compiled this week. Comments received by mid-day Thursday, February 21, will be sent to Committee Members and posted on the website by the end of the day, Friday, February 22.

*The next meeting of the Futures Committee is February 27, 2008, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm on the 31<sup>st</sup> Floor of the Riffe Center in Columbus.*



Looking to the Future



## 4. Family Advisory Council – The Movers and Shakers



A recent Family Advisory Council meeting at the Columbus Developmental Center training room hosted more individuals, families and professional staff, than there were chairs. Word is that ODMRDD Director John Martin is the big draw with his 'Director's Chats' at each meeting.



Peggy Martin, Family Advocate

The February 5th Family Advisory Council (FAC) meeting at the Columbus Developmental Center gathered 66 individuals in attendance, representing counties from across the state. These individuals and families attend FAC meetings to learn and collect information about services, and take this information back to others who need to know about it.

ODMRDD Family Advocate, Peggy Martin, who organizes and oversees the Family Advisory Council, welcomed attendees, and encouraged professionals in attendance to bring a family member or participant in MRDD services with them to future meetings. "I want to stress how important it is to bring the people who are receiving services into the forum here, so that we have their input and feedback," Peggy explained.

Topics at the FAC meetings vary, based on what families request information about. According to Peggy, "This council is not just for families to get information, but for policy makers to hear from families so that they know what issues there are regarding MRDD services in Ohio." She adds,

**ODMRDD Director, John Martin, attends each one of these meetings to connect with individuals and families. Director Martin was once a member of the Family Advisory Council, and is committed to listening to families and providing updated information about what is happening in our system.**

The February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting focused on Adult Day services and on updated information on the progress of the Individual Options (IO) Waivers funded by the *Martin v. Strickland* Settlement ('Martin Waivers'). ODMRDD staffers, Nancy McAvoy and Leslie Paull, provided details and information on the subjects, and answered questions from a very interested audience. The next Family Advisory Council meeting will be April 15, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at the Columbus Developmental Center training room, 1601 West Broad Street. If you would like information about that meeting or any future meetings and are not currently a member of the FAC, please email Peggy Martin at [peggy.martin@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:peggy.martin@dmr.state.oh.us). Additional general information about family advocacy is available on the ODMRDD website at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/families/advocateinfo.htm>



## **5. MRDD Levy Issues on March 4 Ballots, Statewide**

Following is the MRDD 'tax issue' (levy) listing according to Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner's website at <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/sos/ElectionsVoter/2008/pri/tax.pdf> for the Tuesday, March 4, election in Ohio.



Fayette County, 1.75 Mill, replacement

Franklin County, 1.65 mill, replacement, AND

1.85 mill, additional \*

(\*a 2.32 mill levy will not be renewed if this levy passes)

Harrison County County, 1mill, renewal

Knox County, 2.75 mills, additional

Lorain County, 1.6875 mills, renewal

Madison County, 1 mill, replacement

Meigs County, 2 mills, renewal

Miami County, 2.5 mills, renewal

Morrow County, 0.7 mill, renewal (operating) AND

0.6 mill, additional (capital)

Preble County, 1 mill, additional

Stark County, 3.9 mills, additional

*Pipeline* will report the results of this election in the March 5 issue of *Pipeline*. You also may wish to check the source at the Ohio Secretary of State's website at <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/sos/ElectionsVoter/OhioElections.aspx?Section=boeDir>

Remember, if you are in a position to assist someone with a disability in exercising his or her right to vote, thank you for doing so – and please be assured that systems at every polling place should be in place for voting to be a satisfactory experience for everyone involved.



## **6. People First Conference, March 14-16, Wilmington, OH**

The *People First of Ohio Conference*, March 14 – 16, will be held at the Robert's Convention Centre in Wilmington, Ohio, celebrating the theme, "Advocacy Under The Big Top." People First of Ohio spokesperson, Sadie Hunter, notes, "Our conference chairperson, and our working committees are people with disabilities who plan and make this conference come to life! Advocates will learn about issues that are so important for them to continue to advocate for themselves and others across Ohio. But this conference is not just for self-advocates, it is for everyone."

Registration is \$190 for the conference, and includes all meals. Rooms are \$100.00 per night, and accommodate up to four persons each. "Advocacy Under the Big Top" begins at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, March 14, and ends March 16 at 3:00 p.m. Contact Sadie Hunter at [shunter@columbusrr.com](mailto:shunter@columbusrr.com) for more information, or obtain a registration form by calling 1-740-397-6100 fax 740-397-6118.

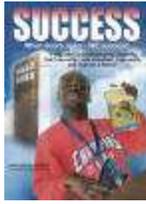


## **7. MRDD Awareness Month Kickoff Event Ramps Up Event to celebrate positive efforts throughout the state**

Ohio Public Images (OPI), in cooperation with the ODMRDD, reminds you that the annual MRDD Awareness Month (March) Kickoff Event is slated for March 6, 2008, 10 a.m. – noon, at the Ohio Statehouse atrium. The event will celebrate many positive efforts throughout the state that afford opportunities for people with disabilities to be successful in their communities. In addition, the event offers an informal display and information area for attendees to share and network.

Organizations that support people with disabilities are encouraged to check the OPI website at [www.publicimagesnetwork.org](http://www.publicimagesnetwork.org) for MRDD Awareness Month materials with this year's theme:

**"When Doors Open We Succeed"**



If you have questions about the Kickoff Event, contact ODMRDD Public Information Officer, Sherry Steinman, at (614) 644-0262, or email [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us)



### Reminder: Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)



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May feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember that the hotline number exists, and is to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.



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# *Pipeline* ... direct from the state ...

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



Pipeline will be published at least twice monthly.  
Visit us at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov)

We hope you enjoy Pipeline!

Please share your thoughts with us at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us)

**Wednesday, March 5, 2008**  
**Volume 2, Issue 5**

- 1. Results, Statewide MRDD Levy Issues, March 4
- 2. Futures Committee Reviews 33 Recommendations
- 3. Statewide MRDD Awareness Month Kickoff Event, March 6th
- 4. Mount Vernon Developmental Center Superintendent, Tim Elder, Retires
- 5. Ross County Superintendent, Rick Marriott, Earns Statewide Honor
- 6. People First Conference, March 14 – 16
- 7. Autism Awareness Rally Planned for April 2

## 1. Results, Statewide MRDD Levy Issues, March 4

Following are the results of the MRDD 'tax issues' (levies) according to Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner's website at <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/sos/ElectionsVoter/2008/pri/tax.pdf> for the March 4 election in Ohio.



Fayette County, 1.75 Mill, replacement ... PASSED, 64% FOR

Franklin County, 1.65 mill, replacement, AND

1.85 mill, additional \* ... PASSED, 69% FOR

Harrison County County, 1mill, renewal ... PASSED, 63% FOR

Knox County, 2.75 mills, additional ... PASSED, 50.8% FOR

Lorain County, 1.6875 mills, renewal ... PASSED, 63% FOR

Madison County, 1 mill, replacement ... PASSED, 62% FOR

Meigs County, 2 mills, renewal ... PASSED, 61% FOR

Miami County, 2.5 mills, renewal ... PASSED, 65% FOR

Morrow County, 0.7 mill, renewal (operating) AND

0.6 mill, additional (capital) ... FAILED, 57% AGAINST

Preble County, 1 mill, additional ... FAILED, 56% AGAINST

Stark County, 3.9 mills, additional ... FAILED ... 55% AGAINST



## 2. Futures Committee Reviews 33 Subcommittee Recommendations with an Eye Toward Results



Barb Yavorcik and Dan Ohler engage fellow Futures Committee members in a discussion of Finance Committee recommendations at the February 27 meeting.



(l to r) Futures Committee members, Michael DeFrancesco, Bob Milliken, and Nancy Richards, address questions and comments.

As a critical step in the process of moving forward with specific priority issues, the ODMRDD Futures Committee\* met on February 27, 2008 to review the 33 recommendations presented by the group's four subcommittees:

- Accessing Services and Supports, 5 recommendations;
- Delivering Quality Services, 15 recommendations;
- Finance, 6 recommendations;
- Serving Populations with Special Needs, 7 recommendations

Recommendations are listed at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/recommendations.htm> on the ODMRDD website. Subcommittee members organized a great deal of input into defined and measurable recommendations, and it was the full committee's charge at the February 27 meeting to assess key issues and themes, and prioritize them to guide ODMRDD's direction over the next three years.

At the close of the meeting, ODMRDD Director John Martin, noted, "I believe the process of working together to get to this point has been a rewarding one, and I am gratified by the level of participation by stakeholders and the overall spirit of cooperation throughout the past several months. We now will take the next step, distilling these recommendations into a strategic plan that will attain positive outcomes for the nearly 80,000 people across Ohio who receive MRDD services.

**"... We now will take the next step, distilling these recommendations into a strategic plan that will attain positive outcomes for the nearly 80,000 people across Ohio who receive MRDD services."**

\* *The full committee membership is listed at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/members.htm>*



**Looking to the Future.**



### **3. Kickoff Event for MRDD Awareness Month is Tomorrow! March 6th Event to Celebrate, "When Doors Open, We Succeed"**

Ohio Public Images (OPI), in cooperation with the ODMRDD, reminds you that the annual MRDD Awareness Month Kickoff Event is tomorrow March 6, 2008, 10 a.m. – noon, at the Ohio Statehouse atrium. The event will celebrate many positive efforts throughout the state that afford opportunities for people with disabilities to be successful in their communities.

The program will include legislative addresses by *Representative Fred Strahorn*, House of Representatives, House Minority Whip and recipient of the 2007 Legislator of the Year award from the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD, and by *Representative Kevin Bacon*, House of Representatives Judiciary Committee, Vice Chair Finance & Appropriations, Financial Institutions, and Public Utilities Committees. In addition, *John L. Martin, Director, ODMRDD* will address the group and highlight progress made by the Futures Committee and other efforts being made toward achieving the Administration's key goals.

#### **Opening Doors to Success in the Community**

The kickoff program will also feature unique opportunities for success in the community, highlighted by several brief presentations, including *PersonnelPlus*, Athens County

(community employment); *Emergency Preparedness*, a collaborative effort from Vinton, Crawford, Coshocton counties (empowerment, safety); *Columbus State Community College*, Franklin County, certification program (learning, employment); and, *Delaware Creative Housing*, Delaware County (building accessible residences). In addition, the event offers an informal display and information area for attendees to share ideas and network with people from across the state.



In 2007, approximately two hundred people filled the Statehouse Atrium during the program portion of the MRDD Awareness Month kickoff event. Not shown is the area to the rear of the Atrium, ringed with informational displays staffed by various service providers and County Boards of MRDD.



Also in 2007, advocate Angela Bachmann received an “Everyone Belongs” hat from OPI member, Bryan Becker (far forward left).

Organizations that support people with disabilities are encouraged to check the OPI website at [www.publicimagesnetwork.org](http://www.publicimagesnetwork.org) for MRDD Awareness Month materials with this year’s theme:

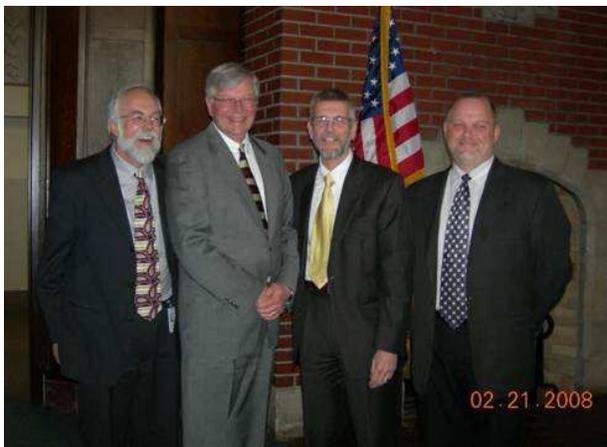
**“When Doors Open We Succeed”**



If you have questions about the Kickoff Event, contact ODMRDD Public Information Officer, Sherry Steinman, at (614) 644-0262, or email [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us)



## 4. Mount Vernon Developmental Center Superintendent, Tim Elder, Retires



On February 21, Mount Vernon Developmental Center (MVDC) celebrated Superintendent Tim Elder's ten years of leadership at a reception held in the Great Room. Friends, family and staff gathered as ODMRDD Director, John Martin, honored Tim, citing his accomplishments and dedication to MVDC and the State of Ohio.

Others in attendance included Deputy Director, Michael Rench; Assistant Deputy Director, Ginnie Whisman; Superintendents and staff representing other ODMRDD Developmental Centers; and many friends, community members, and MVDC staff. Congratulations and many thanks to Tim Elder for his years of service, and best wishes for a very enjoyable retirement!

Note: Ernie Fischer succeeds Tim Elder as Superintendent at MVDC, as reported in [Pipeline Volume 2 Issue 2](#).



## 5. Ross County Superintendent, Rick Marriott, Earns Statewide Recognition



The superintendent of the Ross County Board of MRDD recently was honored for his work with young children with developmental delays. Rick Marriott has been named the "conceptual award" winner by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), Office of Early Learning and School Readiness. The 2008 Irene Bandy Hedden Early Childhood Leadership awards will be presented April 3 as part of the Ohio Early Care & Education Conference in Columbus.

Previously, Marriott has earned the "citizen of the year" by the Chillicothe Jaycees and the "philanthropy award" by the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio for his time and efforts in education and community-based programs in Ohio's Appalachian area.

"I'm pleased to see those at the state level recognizing the talent and heart that Rick has," said Mary Ann Chamberlain, president of the Ohio Superintendents of County Boards of MRDD.

The annual award was established in 1994 in recognition of Irene Bandy-Hedden's service with ODE in the area of early childhood education.



## 6. Reminder: People First Conference, March 14-16

The *People First of Ohio Conference*, March 14 – 16, will be held at the Robert's Convention Centre in Wilmington, Ohio. People First of Ohio spokesperson, Sadie Hunter, notes, “Our conference chairperson, and our working committees are people with disabilities who plan and make this conference come to life! Advocates will learn about issues that are so important for them to continue to advocate for themselves and others across Ohio. This conference is not just for self-advocates, it is for everyone.”

The conference begins at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, March 14, and ends March 16 at 3:00 p.m. Contact Sadie Hunter at [shunter@columbusrr.com](mailto:shunter@columbusrr.com) for more information, or obtain a registration form by calling 1-740-397-6100 fax 740-397-6118.



## 7. Autism Awareness Rally Planned for April 2

Ohio individuals with autism, activists, families, and state legislators will gather for the fifth annual statewide Autism Awareness Rally at the Ohio Statehouse on April 2, 2008. The rally, which is co-sponsored by the Autism Society of America - Central Ohio Chapter, Autism Speaks, and the Autism Society of Ohio, will take place on the South Lawn of the Statehouse from 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. For more information email [askASO@autismohio.org](mailto:askASO@autismohio.org) or call 330-376-0211.



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**Wednesday, March 19, 2008**  
**Volume 2, Issue 6**

- 1. Statehouse Atrium Hosts More Than 200 for MRDD Awareness Month Kickoff
- 2. Patrick Stephan Named ODMRDD Deputy Director, Medicaid Development and Administration
- 3. Ohio Public Images Award Luncheon Celebrates Accomplishments of 42 Honorees
- 4. Columbus Developmental Center Sesquicentennial – 150 Years of Caring
- 5. Sharing Ideas -- Awareness Month Events Across the State
- 6. ODMRDD Information Systems Upgrades and Updates
- 7. Reminder: Autism Awareness Rally Planned for April 2

## **1. Statehouse Atrium Hosts More Than 200 to Celebrate MRDD Awareness Month Theme, “When Doors Open, We Succeed”**



For a complete look at this event, visit the ODMRDD website at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/topics/awareness-month/pics.htm>.

(l. to r.) Representative Fred Strahorn, Ohio House of Representatives; Mark Seifarth, ODMRDD Legislative Liaison; and Linda Oda, OACBMRDD Director of Communications, gather at the Statehouse Atrium.

*Each year, the ODMRDD, in cooperation with Ohio Public Images (OPI), hosts the annual MRDD Awareness Month kickoff event at the Statehouse in Columbus. This year, on March 6<sup>th</sup>, the theme, “When Doors Open, We Succeed” celebrated many positive efforts throughout the state that afford opportunities for people with disabilities to be successful in their communities.*

An enthusiastic Fred Strahorn, member of the House of Representatives and recipient of the 2007 Legislator of the Year award from the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD, looked out over the sea of more than 200 faces in the sun-filled Statehouse Atrium and exclaimed, “This is what democracy is all about – this is why I love my job. And, the Legislator of the Year award means a lot to me because MRDD issues affect families in such a big way.”

The event program featured legislative addresses from Rep. Strahorn and Rep. Kevin Bacon, Ohio House Judiciary Committee, as well as an informational update from ODMRDD Director, John Martin, who commented on the many successes he has seen during the course of his travels around Ohio this past year. He noted,

**“I have seen people with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities working in jobs in the city ... in art studios in rural communities ... in workshops that foster the unique talents and interests of each individual ... and living in homes suited to their needs. Each of those opportunities is a door opened to success.”**

In addition, Director Martin highlighted progress made by the Futures Committee and other efforts being made toward achieving the Administration’s key goals.

### **Success in the Community**

Several brief presentations followed Director Martin’s remarks, including an entourage from *PersonnelPlus*, Athens County, featuring community employment opportunities spearheaded by a dynamic team of private sector employers, MRDD professionals, and employees who have proven themselves to be a perfect fit for community jobs.

Terry Marovich, Director of Human Resources for Diagnostic Hybrids, Inc., noted, “As the world’s largest processor of human cell cultures (culture-based diagnostic kits)— when we need to fill a critical position, people with disabilities are considered as an integral part of the overall potential employment pool.” Hybrid’s management dismisses the notion that the interest is simply for humanitarian purposes. “Businesses must be concerned with the bottom line or they’re doomed to fail,” said Marovich, adding,

**“That’s why it is not about doing something that feels good, or because it forwards a social agenda. It just makes good business sense to tap into a large and capable employment pool.”**

Individuals employed through *PersonnelPlus* visited the podium with to-the-point pronouncements about their jobs, including a challenge from Josh Boyer, receptionist at the Ohio University Innovation Center, to those in attendance: “Give us a chance, and we’ll work hard. We might even surprise you with what we can do on the job!”



**The team from *PersonnelPlus* in Athens County included representatives from private businesses, Ohio University, staff from the Athens County Board of MRDD, and employees who are succeeding in jobs that will help open doors for others in their community. In fact, their can-do attitude has yielded statewide publicity for hiring people with disabilities.**

Also exemplifying success was the *Emergency Preparedness* team, a collaborative group from Vinton, Crawford, and Coshocton counties whose goal is empowerment and safety for people

with MRDD. Ann Weisent, ODMRDD Review Manager and spokesperson for the group, noted Vinton County made dozens of emergency kits as part of a statewide Emergency Preparedness Month effort in 2007, and Crawford and Coshocton counties joined in with self-advocates who 'took the word to the street' -- "We need these in case of emergency, and it's important for our safety!" the group urged, adding, "Talk to your SSA's and providers ... they can help you get this done."



Preparedness team members made kits, trained groups on why they should have them, and suggested strongly that everyone who lives in the community should have an emergency kit that has what they need, including any medications they take.

Their mantra? "Put it in your ISP!"  
Say, 'I want an Emergency Preparedness Kit this year.' "

That's what you call self-determination.

Speakers representing *Columbus State Community College*, a certification program focusing on learning and employment, and *Delaware Creative Housing*, a collaborative group building accessible residences in Delaware County, rounded out the official program before attendees made the rounds to information tables displaying interesting opportunities for success around the state.



Community/Habilitation Assistant Certificate Program participants at Columbus State Community College attended en masse. Instructor, Jackie Teny-Miller, invited event participants to contact her if they would like to apply for the next class session ([Jtenym10@aol.com](mailto:Jtenym10@aol.com)).

Upon receiving certificates, students of the class are prepared for human services jobs in the community.

Wrapping up the program, Lon Mitchell, OPI Executive Director and emcee for the event, asked the audience, "Where are all of you from?" Hands waved and voices shouted out, "Delaware County!" "Vinton County!" "Hamilton County!" "Lucas County!"

In all, more than 10 counties were represented by the 200-plus attendees, and one enthusiastic person easily maneuvering around the Atrium in a power wheelchair, noted, "I'm comin' back here next year – I never knew all this stuff was going on." And another door opens.

Lon Mitchell, OPI Executive Director and emcee for the event, asked the audience, "Where are all of you from?" Hands waved and voices shouted out, "Delaware County!" "Vinton County!" "Hamilton County!" "Lucas County!"  
In all, more than 10 counties were represented by the 200-plus attendees.



## 2. Patrick Stephan Named ODMRDD Deputy Director, Medicaid Development and Administration

Patrick (Pat) Stephan has been named ODMRDD Deputy Director, Medicaid Development and Administration (MDA), a position previously held by Tracy Williams, who was tapped by the Strickland Administration to serve as Deputy Director for Budget, Office of Budget and Management (*Pipeline Extra, January 31, 2008*). Stephan comes to the position, effective in mid-April, from the County of Summit Board of MRDD, where he has served as Sr. Director of Medicaid Service and Utilization since 2006.

In a *Pipeline* interview, Pat noted,

**"I think this is a tremendous opportunity! I am looking forward to serving individuals at the state level and assisting the field as a whole in understanding and maneuvering through the overall waiver reimbursement system."**

And, ODMRDD Director, John Martin, stated, "I am looking forward to Pat joining our team, as he brings to us the perspective of administering Medicaid Services for a large metropolitan county board of MRDD, along with a knowledge of developing quality systems utilizing the Baldrige model.\* Bringing that kind of expertise to the state level will be a real asset for us in moving forward our goals to simplify service delivery."

Welcome aboard, Pat!

*\* The Baldrige model assists in the development of a service system that is customer and process-focused. It promotes identifying and continually improving key organizational processes in the interests of delivering better value to customers.*



## 3. Luncheon Honors 42 for Outstanding Efforts OASCBMRDD Conference Hosts Awardees

*The Ohio Association of Superintendents of County Boards of MRDD recently hosted the annual statewide MRDD Awareness Awards Luncheon in Columbus, along with Ohio Public Images (OPI). Individuals and organizations were recognized for excellence in providing greater awareness and understanding of people with MRDD, and were presented honors in 17 categories, including self-advocacy. (See photo gallery immediately following this article.)*

"And the Self-Advocate of the year is *Bryan Grubb*, of Union County!" announced Pamela McCort, president of Ohio Public Images. At the March 10 Awards Luncheon, Bryan Grubb received a rousing standing ovation as he walked to the podium to sign a few words about working in the community -- in a job he developed through his 'self-determined' business, BRG Motivations.

Bryan explained that for years, he could not understand why people did not see that he could do the many jobs he applied for... even though he is legally blind, is non-verbal, and has other

challenges that he works through each day. They did not see his intelligence, his potential, his drive, or the few adaptations that could have allowed him to be successful in those jobs. Bryan decided to become a public speaker, assisted by signing and visual cues, and relying on a dry wit that prompts the listener to pay attention to the message he brings. According to Union County Board of MRDD Superintendent, Kim Miller, that's exactly what this self-advocate is doing now. He notes, "Word of Bryan's talent for this type of work is definitely spreading."

Just before Bryan stepped received his colorful 'Passion Flower'\* award and certificate, *D.J. Maes* accepted his award as Runner-Up Self-Advocate of the Year. D.J. represents Hamilton County, and is a driving force with the area's Leaders in Action. At his table were many family and friends who attested to D.J.'s commitment to making the most of opportunities available in the Hamilton County area, and his willingness to work hard to involve others in doing the same.

### Way to Go, Bryan and D.J.!

Other awardees included Awards of Merit and Awards of Excellence for efforts ranging from an audio-visual production documenting a history of MRDD services in Ohio (Partners for Community Living, "Lest We Forget"), to the Kiwanis Club of Mount Vernon, for their long-term support of people with MRDD in their Club and throughout Knox County. (see *pdf at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/topics/awareness-month/3-08-OPILunchProgs.pdf>* )

All honorees underscored the strides being made by people with MRDD in communities throughout the state, and the continuing need to keep doors open for those opportunities to occur.

*\* Passion Flowers are products of the Athens County Board of MRDD art program, PassionWorks [www.passionworks.org](http://www.passionworks.org)*



<  
**Ohio's Self-Advocate of the Year, Bryan Grubb, accepts the award from OPI President, Pamela McCort.**

**Below, Bryan signs his acceptance and thanks, and D. J. Maes uses assistive technology to convey the excitement already apparent in his smile, as he accepts the state's Self-Advocate of the Year Runner-up award.**



### 3. The Arc Welcomes All at Annual Conference

President of The Arc of Ohio, Judy Murray, joined nearly 300 Ohioans with disabilities, their family members, advocates, and support professionals in welcoming First Lady Frances Strickland on March 12 at The Arc's annual conference in Columbus.

The First Lady was gracious and upbeat in her comments, inviting everyone in attendance to call the Governor's Mansion ('our house') any time to schedule a visit. "No kidding, we'd love to have you come visit us," she said. Noting that the work of organizations such as The Arc is important business, she added that she and Governor Strickland are committed to helping *all* Ohio citizens have the opportunity to participate in their communities.

Joining with the Ohio Olmstead Task Force to co-sponsor "Coming Together for Change," The Arc offered a day of sessions focusing on current issues affecting the lives of Ohioans with disabilities and their families. The variety of information included opening remarks on the subject of advocating for choice in longterm community supports and services.

The program ended with a series of awards including The Arc of Ohio's highest honor, The Ray Ferguson Advocacy Award, recognizing a lifetime of advocacy and service to others, presented to a surprised and delighted John Hannah of Urbana, Ohio. *Congratulations, John!*



Above, Centennial High School's "Many Hands" musical group, performs their rendition of 'Big Black Horse and a Cherry Tree', which considerably energized the morning program. Below left,

John Hannah receives the coveted Ray Ferguson Advocacy Award, and right, The Arc of Ohio President, Judy Murray welcomes program speaker, First Lady Frances Strickland.



#### 4. Columbus Developmental Center Marks 150<sup>th</sup> Year

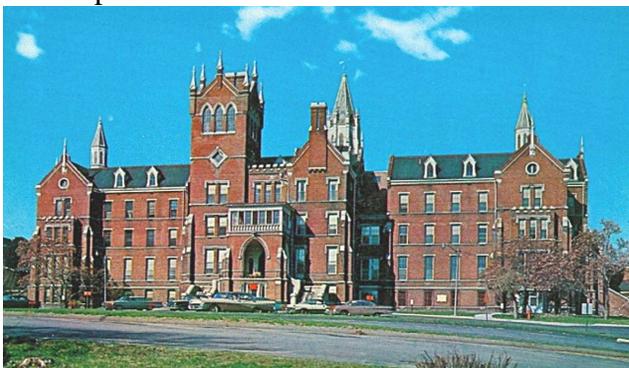
Opening the celebratory sesquicentennial event, Mike Snow, Superintendent of the Columbus Developmental Center (CDC) offered a moment of silence to honor the more than 20,000 individuals who have been residents at the facility during its 150 year history.

Acknowledging the many changes that are inevitable during that span of time, he added that above all, the CDC has offered residents, “The opportunity to grow, a place to be loved, and a place to be cared for.” He added that many lives have been lived almost completely at the facility, with at least one person arriving as a child and reaching the age of 100 years old.

**The CDC has offered residents, “The opportunity to grow, a place to be loved, and a place to be cared for.”**

The event featured a pictorial review of the CDC’s 150 years, memorabilia provided by several long-term staff and families, and a good deal of reminiscing as people remembered how it was ‘back in the day’. Snow put the historical timeline in perspective noting that the CDC was opened in August 1857, four years before the start of the Civil War.

Congratulations to all the staff and residents at CDC for a nicely-done sesquicentennial celebration, providing an interesting look back at the first 150 years of Central Ohio’s Developmental Center.





The photo of CDC above left was taken in the mid-'60s. That building was demolished in 1987. Gradually replacing that structure was a series of cottages and other buildings that now form the CDC campus, one of which is shown at right.

(Left) CDC Superintendent, Mike Snow, visits with Betty Bradley. Betty was a 39-year employee of the CDC and continues to actively volunteer. She contributed many of the materials on display at the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event, and shared some highlights of her years of service.



## Sharing Ideas

### 5. MRDD Awareness Month Across the State

With 88 County Boards of MRDD and numerous other partnering organizations throughout the state, there are hundreds of events, honorary activities, and informal celebrations going during March all over Ohio. *Pipeline* is pleased to respond to readers' requests to share some of the ideas and information that come our way at ODMRDD. Here are a few, and more will follow in the April 2 issue of *Pipeline*.

- **Ross County** – According to Dottie Faye, Community Information Manager at Pioneer Center, “We started off this year by doing a “balloon bouquet delivery” where we had different groups of individuals in the Chillicothe area delivering bouquets of helium balloons. Each balloon had our logo printed on it plus, “*Thank you, Ross County, for your Support*”. This was the first time for this event and it went over well—we delivered to places that had some involvement in our programs, plus other businesses as well. It was good for the community to see the faces of our folks.

For March we have an annual event inviting providers to display their services. Our “Provider Fair” involves about 25 providers. Each provider sets up an information table in a large room and we serve punch and cookies. It has become a ‘social’ activity as well as informational. Also planned is a ‘spa day’ at the local JVS’s cosmetology program. Individuals sign up for free services.

At the end of the month we have our Annual Awards Event which honors businesses, organizations, and individuals -- children and adults. We post the nomination forms in January. Everything is free and open to the public and this year we will have a new square dance group (our individuals) entertain. I always do a power point of photos kind of in the background.” Dottie may be reached at the Ross County Board of MRDD, (740) 773-8044.

- **Richland County** – According to Jane Imbody, Director of Community Relations, “We have a variety of activities throughout March. Our actual kick-off is held as part of a County Commissioners' regular meeting, in part because the media is usually there!

We sponsor an annual 3rd Grade Coloring Contest and invite the winners, their parents, teachers, and principal to a luncheon. This involves sending the schools a coloring page with a disability awareness message, and selecting one winner per school. *This year we had 740 entries from 19 schools.* Miss Ohio and Ms. Wheelchair Ohio are special guests at the luncheon, which also includes several simulated disability activities.

Also in March we hold a Community Awareness Day and invite 15-18 people from the community to our facilities and provide them a simulated disability for about two hours. That's followed by a luncheon where they share their experiences.

For the first time this year, we're sponsoring a Free Movie Event at our local historic theatre. We're showing the movie "Radio" and will also present our new "Heroes With Heart" award to three people in the community who've made a significant difference in the life of someone with a developmental disability.”

*Jane may be reached at Richland Newhope/Richland County MRDD at (419) 774-4215.*

- **Lawrence County** – According to the Lawrence County Board of MRDD, and the local Herald-Dispatch newspaper, “Cook it and they will come.” Now in its ninth year, a Chili Fest is sponsored by the Awareness Committee of the Lawrence County Board of MRDD, and this year the event features 20 chili booths, kids games, entertainment, and a wide array of crafters.

Admission is only \$1 and that buys samples of 20 different chilis. Originally held at Tri-State Industries, the Chili Fest is now on its third move because it continues to out-grow the locations. “Having to move is a great thing,” said Sarah Diamond Burroway, chair, MRDD Awareness Committee, since the goal of the event is not to raise funds but just to raise awareness of people with mental retardation or disabilities being among the general population.

“It is thousands of people through the door and we think it is a success every year because people are becoming more aware of people with disabilities,” Burroway said, “If you don't have someone in your family with mental retardation or a developmental disability you might not be aware of all the capabilities they possess. Bringing people into a friendly environment with music and food helps erase the stigma.”

Folks attending receive a ballot so they can vote for the People's Choice award. *Contact Sarah Diamond Burroway /Lawrence County MRDD at [mrddfocust@lawrencemrdd.org](mailto:mrddfocust@lawrencemrdd.org)*



## 6. ODMRDD Information Systems Upgrades and Updates

During the past week ODMRDD has experienced some bumps in the road while reviewing and installing certain computer systems applications and upgrades. These have resulted in system performance issues and glitches for those using ODMRDD applications. In an effort to keep users of ODMRDD applications informed of system availability we will continue to send updates via email to various users regarding the system's status. According to Information Technology (IT) Services, databases and applications are being examined more closely and

adjustments are being made to improve database parameters. Additionally, an external consultant is reviewing parameter settings in our web-based environment. ODMRDD also is in the process of procuring additional memory for our database server. We thank you for your patience while we work to resolve these issues.



## Reminder

### 7. Autism Awareness Rally Planned for April 2

Ohio individuals with autism, activists, families, and state legislators will gather for the fifth annual statewide Autism Awareness Rally at the Ohio Statehouse on April 2, 2008. The rally, which is co-sponsored by the Autism Society of America - Central Ohio Chapter, Autism Speaks, and the Autism Society of Ohio, will take place on the South Lawn of the Statehouse from 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. For more information email [askASO@autismohio.org](mailto:askASO@autismohio.org) or call 330-376-0211.



### Reminder: Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)



The ODMRDD toll-free hotline number for reporting abuse/neglect and other MUIs is **1-866-313-MRDD (6733)**. Please note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of MRDD, however, it is understood that there may be times an individual, staff member, or family member

May feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember that the hotline number exists, and is to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.



### *Pipeline Quarterly* Now Online

The winter issue of ODMRDD's newsmagazine, *Pipeline Quarterly*, is archived at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/pipeline/odmrdd.htm>. To suggest an article or idea for the Spring issue, contact [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us) and put the words *Pipeline Quarterly* in the subject line. *Pipeline Quarterly* is published in summer, fall, winter, and spring. The publication is in addition to, and not in place of, the regular twice-monthly issues of *Pipeline*.



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Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



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Thursday, March 20, 2008



## Futures Committee Report, Final Meeting

### **Governor Strickland Commends Futures Committee Efforts**

There is no better way to start off an important meeting than with remarks from the Governor. In person is especially nice. The ODMRDD Futures Committee was honored and delighted to see Governor Ted Strickland walk into the Futures Committee meeting this morning at the Riffe Center in Columbus, and offer comments commending the group for their months of collaboration, and reminding all that he is looking forward to positive results for the nearly 80,000 Ohioans receiving MRDD services. He began,

**“Not only do I commend you for your work and commitment, but I also appreciate that you didn’t always agree with each other on what needs to be done. That shows me that the right mix of people were put together. Every point of view deserves the right to be heard and respected, and that is what I see has happened here.”**

The Governor went on to note that the Futures Committee membership was selected to be inclusive of stakeholder groups, and illustrates a broad base of different perspectives from which to develop recommendations. He added,

**“Including the people who will be affected by the decisions arrived at in this process is clearly in line with the way we plan to Turnaround Ohio.”**

In the Final Report, distributed to the group in final draft form today, the Futures Committee’s 31 recommendations have been distilled into action items designed *to improve the accessibility of services and supports* to Ohioans with disabilities, statewide.

Addressing the Committee members, Governor Strickland emphasized that,

**“One of the main accomplishments of any group put in place to accomplish real change is not only to determine what those changes are, but to make sure that the resulting opportunities are accessible to those who need them.”**

He continued, “Especially in the MRDD community, this is an important charge, and one that you have taken well in hand.”

Director Martin followed the Governor's comments, thanking him for the ongoing support shown by the Strickland Administration for the ODMRDD goals set forth early last year, and helping guide the overall strategy and decision-making processes. Those goals are:

- Less complex service delivery, with fair and logical payment systems
- Good stewardship of limited resources;
- Quality outcomes, through a combination of people and processes;
- Service delivery models designed in response to choices made by the people served, in alliance with community supports;
- A system-wide vision developed with stakeholders.

All five of the goals will -- in conjunction with the Futures Committee recommendations contained in the report -- be the basis of how Governor Strickland and the General Assembly will evaluate the performance of the ODMRDD.

Answering the question, "Where do we go from here?," Director Martin replied, "What happens next is that an implementation plan will be developed in line with the work done to-date by the Committee, and that implementation initiative will be shared with the field as soon as it is ready. He added, "Be assured we will be calling upon you as seasoned members of the Futures Committee to help us carry out this initiative."

*The Final Report will be posted at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/odmrdd.htm> by March 31.*



**ODMRDD Director John Martin introduces Governor Ted Strickland at the outset of today's Futures Committee meeting at the Riffe Center in Columbus.**



**Governor Strickland addresses committee members, including Bill Adams (seated at table). He noted that the recommendations in the Futures Committee report will provide a framework to assure a more simplified and accessible system of support for Ohioans who receive MRDD services.**



## *Pipeline Extra feedback ... direct from you to the state ...*

*Questions? Comments?* Pipeline Extra is a publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) and is distributed infrequently, to highlight breaking news in the MRDD arena. The regular Pipeline publication publishes twice monthly to inform readership of relevant information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us) or contact Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us) , phone (614) 644-0262.

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**Wednesday, April 2, 2008**

**Volume 2, Issue 7**

- 1. Futures Committee Final Report Completed
- 2. Autism Awareness Rally Urges Legislative Action
- 3. News from ODMRDD Central Office
- 4. Added Protection for Missing Individuals -- Senate Bill 87
- 5. SOCOG Names New Executive Director, Amy Cartwright
- 6. Sharing Ideas -- Awareness Month Events Across the State

## 1. Futures Committee Final Report Completed

The MRDD Futures Committee Final Report has been completed and was distributed to each Member of the Ohio General Assembly on March 28, 2008. Pursuant to Amended House Bill 119 of the 127th General Assembly, and in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 337.20.20 the Report is a product of many months of intensive work, and will serve as a blueprint to guide ODMRDD's strategic direction. It has been posted on the ODMRDD website at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/docs/MRDDFuturesFinalReport.pdf>.

In the introductory letter included in the Report, ODMRDD Director John Martin addressed the Governor, Speaker Husted, and President Harris as follows (*excerpted*):

*“This report is the culmination of the work of 21 Committee members and 25 others who served on subcommittees and is a testament to their commitment to improve services for Ohio's citizens with developmental disabilities.*

*Committee and subcommittee members, representing diverse roles and perspectives across the system, came together to adopt 31 recommendations which address legislative mandates regarding self-determination, quality, specialized services, financing, and waiting lists, and align with system goals set forth early last year.*

*The Futures Committee recommendations emphasize involvement of individuals and families in directing services and defining quality of services, and emphasize regional planning to meet service needs. They also call for the development of methods for sustainable financial decision-making and policy development and address how services are accessed and planned. These recommendations will be the compass for the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities' strategic direction.”*

Director Martin also noted,

**This report, while setting forth positive steps to improve services, processes, and supports for individuals and families, is not a cure-all. As we move forward to implement the Committee's recommendations, we must be vigilant to address unmet needs, respond to systemic changes, and push for more understanding of and funding for services.**

*Pipeline will continue to provide periodic updates on the progress of the Futures Committee recommendations, and actions taken to move them forward. In addition, the ODMRDD website at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov) will continue to carry updated information as available.*



Looking Toward the Future



## 2. Autism Awareness Rally Urges Legislative Action



(Left) ODMRDD Director John Martin, at podium, flanked by legislators and other speakers, describes the efforts of the interagency work group that is currently looking at ways to break down barriers to accessing needed services.

(Below, L) Students from Oakstone Academy share their individual experiences with the school's inclusive atmosphere and environment of acceptance.

(Below, R) Parents and advocates carry posters supporting the passage of House Bill 170. The bill mandates that health insurance policies providing basic health care coverage must include coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism. HB170 is currently before the insurance committee in the House of Representatives.



The South Lawn of the Ohio Statehouse hosted more than 200 individuals with autism, activists, families, and state legislators today for the fifth annual statewide Autism Awareness Rally. The rally, co-sponsored by the Autism Society of America - Central Ohio Chapter, Autism Speaks, and the Autism Society of Ohio, gathered an enthusiastic group of participants from across the state, providing a cross-section of support for raising awareness of specific issues faced by families who have members diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The federal Centers for Disease Control report that the incidence of autism in the United States is 1 in 150 children, and there are more than 10,000 families in Ohio affected every day. Rally participants urged legislative action to respond to this growing health crisis, including passage of HB 170 Health Insurance coverage, a Medicaid Waiver, and other issues.

The bill mandates that health insurance policies providing basic health care coverage must include coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism. HB170 is currently before the insurance committee in the House of Representatives.

Recently, the ODMRDD was named the lead agency on autism, and in that role Director John Martin spoke to the issue at the rally, noting,

**“ We are working diligently to put together a comprehensive plan. In that effort we have some very aggressive short-term goals to clarify issues, and have developed an interagency work group that is looking at concrete ways to break down barriers to accessing services. We are also looking at the environment nationally ... particularly how other states and other entities are accessing funds. ”**

Director Martin also added that the ODMRDD has created a partnership to assist families who may lose services due to recent rule changes. The ODMRDD collaboration brings together Nationwide Children's Hospital and Ohio State University's Nisonger Center in an effort to provide direct support now and during this time of transition. The partnership will work individually with families to help them navigate the web of resources available through the vouchers, Medicaid waivers, County Boards of MRDD, and other sources, he said.

While an array of excellent speakers addressed many issues from varying perspectives, it was probably the voices of Oakstone Academy students that made the strongest impact. Eight students briefly shared their individual experiences with the school's inclusive atmosphere and environment of acceptance. One noted,

**“ I have realized that my autism keeps me in a constant state of wondering ... wondering how to make good choices ... wondering who my real friends are ... wondering if I can make progress in some areas. I think I am learning to make good choices. I think I am making progress in some areas. I think I now have some real friends. ”**

The conviction of those students standing at the podium was reason enough to celebrate that the United Nations has declared April to be World Autism Awareness Month, and that in Ohio we celebrate statewide by proclamation of Governor Ted Strickland.

For more information about this event or any of its sponsors, contact organizer, Doug Krinsky, at (614) 882-8763 or email [askASO@autismohio.org](mailto:askASO@autismohio.org) (330-376-0211).



### 3. News from ODMRDD Central Office

During the month of March there have been changes in the location of some Central Office staff. Here is a brief update:

- **The Director's Office, Constituent Services, Legal Services Staff, and Michael Rench's Office** have moved from 1810 Sullivant Ave., Columbus OH, 43223, to the State Office Tower, 30 E. Broad St., Columbus OH, 43215. *All email addresses and phone numbers for staff remain the same.* Please note that Michael Rench's office and Constituent Services staff share a new facsimile number: (614) 752-8551.
- **Audits, and Facilities Development staff** have moved into the space vacated by the above moves, with some offices at 1810 Sullivant Ave. remaining available for other uses. Conference rooms there are still available, and a few vacant offices may be used for staff and visitors who may need a location to work from for short periods of time.

It is important to note that while these office relocations were not far away from each other in terms of distance (just a few miles across town) they prompted some rethinking of functions and streamlining of operations. Details in this regard will be forthcoming in future issues of Pipeline. Efforts directed toward relocating and restructuring offices will be guided by opportunities to use staff and other resources as effectively as possible.

**Efforts directed toward relocating and restructuring offices will be guided by opportunities to use staff and other resources as effectively as possible.**

In addition, regarding some issues we have experienced during the past the past week involving computer systems performance issues we will continue to keep users of ODMRDD 'applications' informed of system availability, and will continue to send updates via email to users regarding the system's status.

According to Information Technology (IT) Services, adjustments are being made to improve database parameters. Additionally, an external consultant is reviewing parameter settings in our web-based environment. ODMRDD also is in the process of procuring additional memory for our database server. We thank you for your patience while we work to resolve these issues.



### 4. Added Protection for Missing Individuals

Governor Strickland signed Senate Bill 87 on March 21, 2008. Ohio Revised Code Section 5502.522 creates a statewide emergency alert program to find and help an individual with a mental impairment\* or someone who is 65 years of age or older.

This alert program would include the efforts of the Governor's office, the Department of Public Safety, the attorney general, law enforcement, public and commercial television stations, and radio broadcasters. It is similar to the 'Amber Alert' system for children who are missing, and is a result of the effectiveness of that program.

The statewide emergency alert program uses the following criteria before it can be activated:

- The individual is confirmed as missing;
- There is a credible threat of immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death to the individual; and,
- There is enough information to describe the individual and the circumstances surrounding their disappearance that the activation of the alert will help locate the individual.

Added to local and regional efforts, this statewide alert program provides a real opportunity to assist a missing individual.

\* Mental impairment is defined in R.C. 5502.522 as “a substantial disorder of thought, mood, perception, orientation, or memory that grossly impairs judgment, behavior, or ability to live independently or provide self-care as certified by a licensed physician, psychiatrist, or psychologist.”



## 5. SOCOG Names New Executive Director, Amy Cartwright



**Amy Cartwright**

The Southern Ohio Council of Governments (SOCOG) board of directors has named Amy Cartwright executive director. Cartwright has been an employee of SOCOG for seven years, both as a quality assurance investigator and as quality assurance supervisor. Her career in public service spans a total of 15 years, and her educational background includes a bachelor’s degree in organizational management from Wilberforce University, and an associate degree in law enforcement from Ohio University.

Rick Marriott, Ross County Board of MRDD Superintendent and SOCOG board president states, “We are excited to have Amy promoted to executive director. SOCOG has made great strides in serving people with MRDD in Southern Ohio since its inception in 1996. With Amy’s leadership, it will continue to represent this population and ensure their needs are met.”

Cartwright replaces Jennifer Rousculp who accepted a position with Clark County Board of MRDD in Springfield, Ohio. Rousculp was executive director of SOCOG since its inception.

The Southern Ohio Council of Governments was created by the superintendents of the County Boards of MRDD in Southern Ohio and provides administrative support for county boards in Ross, Pike, Scioto, Pickaway, Adams, Brown, Clinton, Highland, Athens, Vinton, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Fayette, and Gallia counties.

SOCOG’s primary focus is quality assurance, provider compliance, investigative services and residential administration of waivers and supported living in order to provide individualized,

personal support to people with developmental disabilities. It is a government entity created under Chapter 167 of the Ohio Revised Code, representing the 15 County Boards of MRDD.



## [Sharing Ideas, Part 2](#)

### **6. MRDD Awareness Month Across the State**

With 88 County Boards of MRDD and numerous other partnering organizations throughout the state, there were hundreds of events, honorary activities, and informal celebrations during March all over Ohio. *Pipeline* is pleased to respond to readers' requests to share some of the ideas and information that come our way at ODMRDD. Here are a few, adding to the ones shared in the March 19 issue of *Pipeline*.

- **Jefferson County:** *Students See What Life Is Like For Persons With Disabilities.* This was the first year for the program at the School of Bright Promise. Students participated in activities that simulate various disabilities including vision impairments, using a wheelchair, and others. Students said it was an eye-opening experience. "A person with a disability can do the job -- it may just take them more time to do it because they're slower," said Jefferson County MRDD business manager, Micki Cline. Cline said she hopes the students gain a better understanding of the disabilities and become more accepting of people with disabilities.
- **Fairfield County:** *Ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Ohio University Lancaster Campus.* The Fairfield County Board of MRDD celebrated the end of MRDD Awareness month with a special ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Ohio University/ Lancaster Campus celebrating the 'G.R.O.W.' project -- Growing Opportunities and Resources that Work. A partnership between Fairfield County MRDD and Ohio University, G.R.O.W. is operated at OU-Lancaster in collaboration with Allen's Lancaster Greenhouse.

Fairfield County MRDD participants in the program grow vegetables, grasses, and hanging baskets that will be sold at Allen's this spring. This is a unique partnership that brings together higher education and private enterprise to provide horticultural opportunities for interested participants. For more information about G.R.O.W., contact the Fairfield County Board of MRDD at 740-687-7240 or 740-756-7874.

- **Wood County:** *'Open House Plus'.* The Wood County Board of MRDD has planned an MRDD Awareness Day event for April 16. Tours of Wood Lane School and Wood Lane Industries will be conducted in the morning and afternoon. There also will be an information fair in the school gym that will highlight many other community-based programs operated by Wood Lane and Wood Lane Residential Services, Inc. as well as some "hands-on" activities.

Attendees may participate in a morning (8:30 – 11:30 am) or afternoon (11:45 am – 2:45 pm) session. Refreshments will be available at both sessions. For more information contact Liz Sheets at [lsheets@woodmrdd.org](mailto:lsheets@woodmrdd.org), 419-352-5115, ext. 3231.



Wood Lane uses the Ohio Public Images 2008 Awareness Month theme and personalizes it.

*Kudos to all who raised awareness in their communities this year!*



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**Reminder: Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)**



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Friday, April 4, 2008

## Request for Proposal (RFP), National Core Indicators

The Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) is pleased to announce that it will adopt the National Core Indicators as a basis for measuring the performance of and improving Ohio's MRDD service delivery system. ODMRDD, legislatively charged to "examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the current system of separate and concurrent accreditation, licensure, certification, quality assurance and quality improvement activities", was tasked to review and propose changes to improve that system.



In that process, the ODMRDD Futures Committee has made and, as one of the 31 recommendations in their Final Report, the adoption and implementation of the National Core Indicators for Ohio's MRDD system. The Report was delivered to Governor Strickland and the General Assembly on March 28, 2008. While the Department is developing an overall implementation plan for the Futures Committee recommendations, moving forward with the National Core Indicators can begin now.

### What Are Core Indicators?

Core Indicators are a set of performance measures that emphasize the outcomes that people with disabilities within the service system desire to attain, and the performance of a state in delivering those outcomes. Using a variety of survey sources (consumer, family, employment, provider, mortality, incidents, system, etc) this ongoing method of assessing performance at the system level is designed to provide useful results for operations improvement efforts. In addition, Core Indicators should provide information relevant to the concerns of individuals with disabilities and their families, and an assurance that the collection of this kind of data will lead to system improvement.

### Request For Proposal (RFP)

ODMRDD is seeking a contractor to implement the National Core Indicators – Consumer and Family Surveys. For more information, go to <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/topics/rfp/natindic.htm>  
To learn more about the National Core Indicators, go to [www.hsri.org/nci/index.asp?id=home](http://www.hsri.org/nci/index.asp?id=home).  
*More Pipeline Extra, p. 2*>



## ODMRDD Information Systems Update

Regarding some issues we have experienced during the past week involving computer systems performance, we will continue to keep users of ODMRDD 'applications' informed of system availability, and continue to send updates via email to users regarding system status.

We thank you for your patience while we work to resolve these issues.

NOTE: Information will be updated throughout the day on the main ODMRDD website located at: <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/topics/status/applications.htm> and at the ODMRDD applications portal located at: <https://odmrdd.state.oh.us/apps/>

If you have specific questions about an application please contact ODMRDD IT staff through the appropriate listserv for the application:

Payment Authorization for Waiver Services (PAWS): [paws.support@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:paws.support@odmrdd.state.oh.us)

Medicaid Billing System (MBS) system: [provider.support@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:provider.support@odmrdd.state.oh.us)

Incident Tracking System (ITS) : [ITS.support@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:ITS.support@odmrdd.state.oh.us)

Daily Billing Unit (DRA): [dra-support@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:dra-support@odmrdd.state.oh.us)

Medication Administration (MA): [ma.support@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:ma.support@odmrdd.state.oh.us)

Medicaid Administrative Claiming: [MAC.support@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:MAC.support@odmrdd.state.oh.us)

Cognos: [cognos.support@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:cognos.support@odmrdd.state.oh.us)

DCMIS: [dcmis@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:dcmis@odmrdd.state.oh.us)

AAI: [aai.support@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:aai.support@odmrdd.state.oh.us) General system questions:  
[contact.us@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:contact.us@odmrdd.state.oh.us)



### *Pipeline Extra feedback ... direct from you to the state ...*

*Questions? Comments? Pipeline Extra* is a publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) and is distributed infrequently, to highlight breaking news in the MRDD arena. The regular *Pipeline* publication publishes twice monthly to inform readership of relevant information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us) or contact Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us) , phone (614) 644-0262.

**Editor's Notes:** ODMRDD values subscriber confidentiality and does not intentionally share subscriber addresses with others. *In the event of a public records request, however, the ODMRDD would comply with all applicable Public Records Laws. Please also note the Privacy information at the ODMRDD website, at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/privacy/odmrdd.htm>.* To subscribe to Pipeline newsletter, send an email to: [join-pipeline@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:join-pipeline@odmrdd.state.oh.us) and write SUBSCRIBE in the subject line. To discontinue your subscription to Pipeline, write UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line. You may also read issues of this newsletter on the web at: <http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov>

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# Pipeline . . . direct from the state . . .

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
Ted Strickland, Governor John L. Martin, Director



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Visit us at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov)  
We hope you enjoy Pipeline!

Please share your thoughts with us at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us)

**Wednesday, April 16, 2008**  
**Volume 2, Issue 8**

- 1. OCALI Highlighted at Family Advisory Council Meeting
- 2. Information Technology Services Describes Progress
- 3. Governor's Efficiency and Continuous Improvement Initiative Yields Suggestions
- 4. International Conference on Self-Determination
- 5. Safety Information Key to 2009 Digital TV Transition
- 6. Life Planning Seminars for Families, May 6 & 7
- 7. Pipeline Quarterly, Spring Issue Publishes in May

## 1. Autism Awareness Month

### **OCALI Highlighted at Family Advisory Council Meeting**



**Autism Ribbon**

The April 15 meeting of the ODMRDD Family Advisory Council yielded spirited discussion on subjects including: Developing a good, workable Individual Service Plan; Services offered by the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI); Progress underway following the 31 recommendations of the Futures Committee; and, an assortment of thoughtful questions for ODMRDD Director John Martin during the 'Director's Chat' portion of the agenda.

Director Martin addressed the group, comprised of about 55 attendees, and responded to families inquiring, "What can we look forward to as a result of the recommendations of the Futures Committee?" ... "What are National Core Indicators?" ... and "How is the Department managing the issue of employee morale during budget cuts and reorganization efforts?"

Director Martin pointed to the work of the Futures Committee as a stabilizing and focusing influence. He shared,

**"The Futures recommendations are giving us direction on what we should be doing with our resources. I believe that the work of the Futures Committee actually gives us some hope in times of crisis, such as we are dealing with now – with painful budget cuts. It is helping us to lay the groundwork for when things get better."**

He added, "We are committed to the work that was done by the Committee, and are now putting together an implementation plan to help us move forward most effectively." Director Martin also explained that a systematic approach to surveying individuals and families, and

further defining and prioritizing system strengths and weaknesses, will be the focus of the ODMRDD National Core Indicators project. (See [Pipeline Extra!](#) April 4, 2008.) The results will show us where Ohio stands in relation to 27 other states' MRDD systems, as defined by the people served. "Next year at this time, we will have some good data to share with you," he stated.



< Family Advisory Council members were interested in Director Martin's thoughts pertaining to the current budget situation.

Describing his perspective on the remainder of the biennium, the Director noted a favorite quotation: "To live is to change. To live well is to change often."

He added, "We can't use the complexity of the system as an excuse to say change is too difficult. We are striving to make changes for the better."



< Donna Owens spoke to Family Advisory Council members about OCALI's growth as an information and advocacy group, and encouraged them to utilize the resources available on their website at <http://www.ocali.org/naam/>

Donna Owens, spokesperson for the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI), addressed the Family Advisory Council describing OCALI as an organization that serves families, educators, and professionals working with students with autism and low-incidence disabilities including autism spectrum disorders, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairments, other health impairments, and traumatic brain injuries.

She noted that OCALI's mission is to build state- and system-wide capacity to improve outcomes through leadership, training and professional development, technical assistance, collaboration, and technology. In addition, Owens stated that,

**" Families, as well as professionals, play a critical role in promoting the highest possible achievement of each child. To that end, we see connection and partnership with families as vital to the success of each individual at school and in the community."**

The meeting also hosted a group of ODMRDD Regional Consultants who presented information on the development of useful and workable Individual Service Plans, and discussed other day-to-day service issues.

The primary purpose of the Family Advisory Council is to provide information to policy makers who impact direct services, and to use the family network to reach as many families in Ohio, and provide them with information and education regarding Ohio's MRDD system.

*For more information about the Family Advisory Council, contact Peggy Martin via email at [peggy.martin@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:peggy.martin@dmr.state.oh.us), or by phone at (614) 466-8706.*

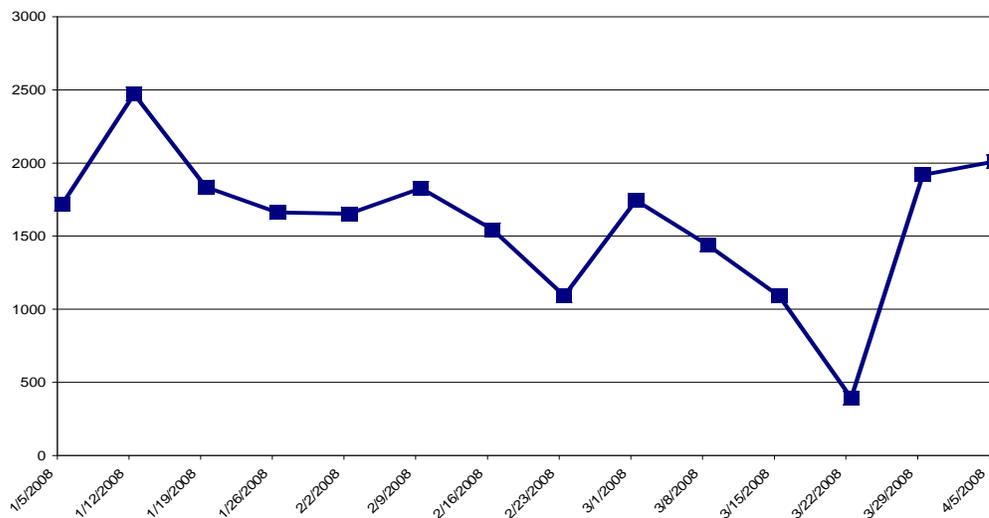


## 2. Information Technology Services Describes Progress

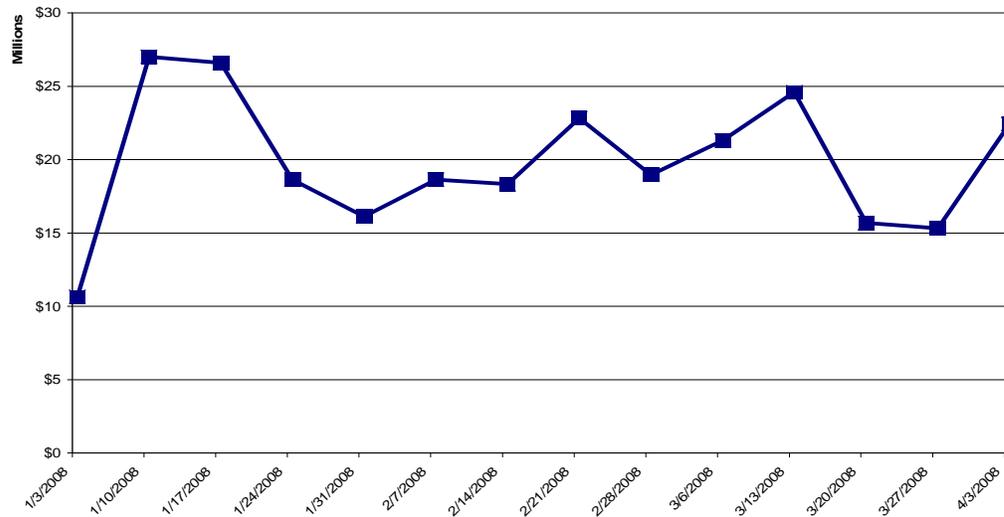
ODMRDD Information Technology Services (ITS) staff appreciate the patience and support of system users during the past few weeks as ITS worked on resolving various applications issues. ODMRDD's first priority is to ensure that critical business functions are maintained. We appreciate everyone's efforts to work with us to resolve the issues, and recognize that system users have gone 'above and beyond' to ensure quality service delivery.

Problems first were noticed with the Payment Authorization of Waiver Services (PAWS) and Incident Tracking System applications at the beginning of March. The problems escalated, especially in PAWS, the week of March 22. During this time ITS carefully monitored business transactions. As you can see in the graphs below, while there was a dip in the number of PAWS processed, claims continued to be submitted within historical trends.

**PAWS Enrolled by ODMRDD - Weekly 2008**



## Waiver Claims Submitted to ODMRDD - Weekly 2008



The major concern with the Incident Tracking System related to timely reporting and closure of Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs). The MUI team worked closely with ITS staff and County Boards' staff, to assure that counties would remain in conformance with reporting timelines for the 726 incidents which occurred during the March timeframe.

During this same time period ITS also continued to support the conversion to the Daily Rate Application (DRA) and saw submitted claims grow from \$6189 in mid-February to \$915,655 in mid-April. This implementation of the DRA was critical to successful completion of the Medicaid waiver transition.

While there appears to be no single root cause of the problems we have been experiencing over the last six weeks, ITS staff has taken the following actions to assist in resolving issues as they surfaced:

- Implemented daily status meetings to identify issues and actions that might potentially resolve problems, and monitored progress;
- Invited department staff of other divisions (Fiscal, Medicaid, MUI, Community Services) whose work was impacted by the problem to attend the status meetings and provide a customer perspective;
- Enhanced communication to the field by sending email alerts to relevant listservs and provided updated information on the main ODMRDD website located at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/> and at the ODMRDD applications portal located at <https://odmrdd.state.oh.us/apps/>
- Enlisted the assistance of several consultants to review our infrastructure and applications and make recommendations for improvements;
- Implemented system monitoring software to better identify and trouble-shoot concerns before they become significant problems;
- Reconfigured several servers and moved applications to better balance load.

We have seen relative stability in our applications over the past two weeks and are continuing to implement consultant recommendations to improve performance. Again, your cooperation during this challenging time has been most appreciated.



### 3. Governor's Efficiency & Continuous Improvement Initiative Yields Suggestions and a Way to Track Progress



The January 9, 2008 issue of *Pipeline* introduced ODMRDD's support of Governor Strickland's newly-launched *Efficiency Review and Continuous Improvement Initiative*. The ODMRDD joined this coordinated effort among state agencies to assure that state government is working as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.

The article noted, "According to ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin, 'The Governor is looking to us for ways to help improve state government's responsiveness and eliminate redundant or unnecessary services, products, and processes at every level.' "

Just a few short months later, ODMRDD has received 26 suggestions, and there is a way for each agency to track their progress. Visitors to the website at [www.ency.ohio.gov](http://www.ency.ohio.gov) can easily review the status of suggestions, submit one, or learn more about the initiative.

The ODMRDD Efficiency Team has matched our agency's first 26 suggestions' original internal tracking numbers (temporarily assigned as they were submitted) to the permanent system-wide numbers now in effect. Suggestions provided after April 21 will have only the permanent number. (Contact [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us) if you have any questions regarding a tracking number for a suggestion previously submitted.)

The initiative involves several staff from each cabinet-level agency in collecting and reviewing feedback from state employees and stakeholders, regarding how best to use available resources. ODMRDD representatives (and the organized groups they represent) on the Efficiency Team are:

- Michael Beaver, Operations Director, Gallipolis Developmental Center
- Monty Blanton, Electrician (OCSEA), Gallipolis Developmental Center
- Tresa Ide, Maintenance Repair Worker (OCSEA), Mount Vernon Developmental Center
- William Ferkan, Police Officer (FOP), Warrensville Developmental Center
- Patrick Stephan\*, Deputy Director, Central Office
- Stacy Sower, Qualified Mental Retardation Professional, Youngstown Developmental Center
- Sherry Steinman, Public Information Officer, Central Office
- Carol Woodruff, Rehabilitation Program Specialist (SEIU/1199), Central Office

*\*Note: Patrick Stephan replaces Patrick Lanahan on this team effective 4-15-08, in line with changes in staffing responsibilities.*

Specifically, this feedback program is designed to identify operational inefficiencies, improve state government's responsiveness, eliminate redundant or unnecessary services, improve overall customer service, and streamline processes at the agency and enterprise-wide levels.

Mitch Bailey, Department of Administrative Services (DAS), explains that this initiative is designed to help Ohio government improve its customer service and business operations. He notes that promotional posters and other materials will be distributed in April with the theme:

**“Ask me, I’ll tell you how we can improve.”**

*Theme from posters promoting the governor’s Efficiency Review and Continuous Improvement Initiative, employee and stakeholder feedback program.*

As a state employee, citizen and/or stakeholder, you have valuable insight about the State’s internal operations. You are invited to share your suggestions about how processes, policies and other operational and procedural matters can be improved.

Go to: [www.ohio.gov](http://www.ohio.gov) for more information.



## 4. International Conference on Self-Determination

The International Conference on Self-Determination ‘early bird deadline’ for registration is May 1, 2008. To register, go to [http://www.communitydrive.org/uploads/ICSD\\_Broch.pdf](http://www.communitydrive.org/uploads/ICSD_Broch.pdf) the conference brochure provides all information needed.

On May 27-29, 2008 at the Detroit Marriott Renaissance Center, the [International Conference on Self-Determination](#) will serve a much different purpose than most other conferences. It is a combination of a few short presentations and panel/round table discussions organized by topic. There will be several moderators and various panel members.

Pat Carver, conference spokesperson, says, “The time has come to move forward for self-determination for all. Please join us for this unique conference opportunity.”

*To request multiple brochures for distribution at upcoming meetings and events, email [info.icsd@gmail.com](mailto:info.icsd@gmail.com)*



## 5. Safety Information Key to 2009 Digital TV Transition



Digital broadcasting promises to provide a clearer picture and more programming options, and will free up airwaves for use by emergency responders. This is of special importance to congregate households and other family homes where people with MRDD reside.

### What is the Digital Television Transition?

At midnight on February 17, 2009, all full-power television stations in the United States will stop broadcasting in 'analog' format and switch to 100% digital broadcasting. Digital broadcasting promises to provide a clearer picture and more programming options *and will free up airwaves for use by emergency responders, including information about severe weather or national safety issues. This is of special importance to congregate households and other family homes where people with MRDD reside.*

### What is the TV Converter Box Coupon Program?

Congress created the TV Converter Box Coupon Program for households wishing to keep using their analog TV sets after February 17, 2009. The program allows U.S. households to obtain up to two coupons, each worth \$40, that can be applied toward the cost of eligible converter boxes. These coupons are available only for a limited time – see 'for more information' at the end of this article.

*A TV connected to cable, satellite, or other pay TV service does not require a TV converter box from this program.*

Options to explore include:

1. Keep your existing analog TV and purchase a TV converter box. A converter box plugs into your TV and will keep it working after February 17, 2009, or
2. Connect to cable, satellite, or other pay service, or
3. Purchase a television with a digital tuner.

For more information, visit <https://www.dtv2009.gov/>

*Information provided by OhioCable Telecommunications Assn. and the Ohio Assn. of Broadcasters*



## 6. Life Planning Seminars for Families, May 6 & 7

**A consortium of service providers, governmental agencies, and advocacy groups has collaborated to help families understand more about the benefits available to them.**

Amy Tuell, Benefits Specialist with the Hamilton County Board of MRDD, will offer a total of four seminars titled, "Benefits for Individuals who have Disabilities," May 6 and 7 (see below). Tuell is knowledgeable in the area of government benefits including Social Security Insurance (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Medicaid and Medicare. The presentations are designed to be easily understood by families and staff, and the same information will be

given at each session. CEU's are pending, and the program is funded in part by the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council.

The planning group includes the Hamilton County Board of MRDD; Butler County Board of MRDD; Clermont County Board of MRDD; Warren County Board of MRDD; National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Hamilton County; NAMI Warren County; NAMI Butler County; NAMI Clermont County; PLAN of Southwest Ohio; ARC of Southwest Ohio; Community Fund Management Foundation; and, the Brain Injury Support Association of Ohio. The presentations will be:

- May 6, 1-3 PM, Nathaniel Green Lodge, 6394 Wessleman Rd., Cincinnati
- May 6, 6:30-8:30 PM, Butler County Mental Health Board, 5963 Boymel Dr., Fairfield
- May 7, 1-3 PM, Union Township Civic Center, 4350 Aicholtz Rd., Clermont County
- May 7, 6:30-8:30 PM, Workforce One, Young Conference Room (2nd floor), 300 E. Silver St., Lebanon

All information sessions are free. A donation is encouraged so that more presentations can be offered. *Registration deadline is May 2.*

Call Kathy Morris at (513) 559-6701 for a registration form. For more information call Rosalyn Dadas at (513) 697-1857 or (513) 695-3650.



## 7. *Pipeline Quarterly* Spring Issue Publishes in May



### **Jim Swingle and his Flowerworks.**

*According to Beth Dillehay, resident artist at Rendville Art Works, on the first day of operation at the studio in 2002, friends had sent a bouquet of flowers to celebrate opening day. When Jim Swingle was asked that day what he wanted to paint, he pointed to the flowers in the vase in front of him. He has not wavered from that mission since then.*

*Because Jim's paintings look like a combination of flowers and fireworks, they began being titled 'Flowerworks.' He has found a primary subject matter which many artists take years to find, and it has served him well.*

Jim Swingle is just one of the interesting people you will meet in the spring issue of ODMRDD's newsmagazine, [\*Pipeline Quarterly\*](#), which will publish electronically in early May. It features several articles focusing on people with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities throughout the state who are working, living, and learning in their communities.

This will be the third issue of *Pipeline Quarterly*. (Fall and Winter 2007 issues are archived at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/mrddlibrary/quarterly.htm>) To suggest an article for any issue, contact [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us) and put the words *Pipeline Quarterly* in the subject line. The publication is in addition to, and not in place of, the regular twice-monthly issues of ODMRDD's *Pipeline*.



## **Reminder**

### **Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)**



The ODMRDD toll-free hotline number for reporting abuse/neglect and other MUIs is **1-866-313-MRDD (6733)**. Please note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of MRDD, however, it is understood that there may be times an individual, staff member, or family member may feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember that the hotline number exists, and is to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.



## ***Pipeline feedback ... direct from you to the state ...***

*Questions? Comments?* *Pipeline* is an electronic publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD), distributed approximately twice monthly to update and inform readers of time-sensitive, relevant information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us about *Pipeline* at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us), or contact Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us), phone (614) 644-0262.

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John L. Martin, Director



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We hope you enjoy Pipeline!

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Wednesday, April 30, 2008

Volume 2, Issue 9

- 1. NCD Calls for Improved Federal Data Tracking
- 2. County Spotlight – 4000 Lbs. of Paper Generates Tons of Awareness
- 3. Northeast Ohio Conference, People First, June 6 & 7
- 4. Constituent Services Becomes *Office of Policy and Constituent Support*
- 5. Information Technology Services Names Luebbert



April is  
Autism  
Awareness  
Month

## 1. NCD Calls for Improved Federal Data Tracking



The National Council on Disability (NCD) has released *Keeping Track: National Disability Status and Program Performance Indicators*, recommending that the Federal Government improve current data describing the status of Americans with disabilities. The report examines current data to assess the extent to which the well-being of people with disabilities is measured.

*Keeping Track: National Disability Status and Program Performance Indicators* includes a set of statistical social indicators that NCD believes accurately measure the progress of people with disabilities in important areas of life, over time. The report includes 18 indicators determined by stakeholders to measure “quality of life” using both objective and subjective measures. The indicators span a variety of life domains, including employment, education, health status and health care, financial status and security, leisure and recreation, personal relationships, and crime and safety.

For more information view the report at

[http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2008/Indicators\\_Report.html](http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2008/Indicators_Report.html).



## 2. County Spotlight

### 4000 Lbs of Paper Generates Tons of Awareness

Belmont County Board of Developmental Disabilities’ first *Shred to Save* Arbor Day event boasted a Document Destruction team that shredded more than 4,000 lbs. of paper. According to BCBDD spokesperson, Pamela McCort, “More than 100 people took advantage of this opportunity on Saturday, April 26, at Riesbeck’s in St. Clairsville.”

The event was designed to:

- Create public awareness of the benefits of recycling
- Encourage environmental stewardship and renewal of the earth's natural resources
- Promote document destruction services offered by Belco Works, Inc.

Through its Document Destruction department, Belco Works provides confidential shredding of old files, records, and other documents. All shredded material is recycled and turned into post-consumer waste products.

## **BELCO WORKS, INC.**

*It's not just a name...it's what we do!*



*Pictured in front of tons of shredded files and documents to be recycled are a few of the partners involved in Shred to Save.*

*From left: Rick Helms, Belco Works Document Destruction Manager; Ed Stenger, Belmont Soil & Water Conservation District; Patrick Lanaghan, Jefferson-Belmont Solid Waste Authority; John Williams, Riesbeck's; and Erik Keylor, Belco Works.*

Belco Works shredded and recycled a total of 210,000 lbs. of documents in 2007. According to the National Arbor Day Foundation, more than 1300 trees were saved due to Belco Works' shredding and recycling efforts.

**The mission of Belco Works is to provide meaningful employment and community opportunities which will uphold and preserve the dignity of individuals with disabilities.**

*For more information, contact Pamela McCort, Belmont County Board of Developmental Disabilities, 340 Fox-Shannon Place, St. Clairsville, Ohio, 43950, 740-695-0407, ext. 135*



### **3. Northeast Ohio Conference, People First, June 6 & 7**

The Center for Mental Retardation/The Arc of Cuyahoga County's People First will host a Northeast Ohio Regional Conference, June 6 & 7, 2008, at the Sheraton Hotel in Independence, Ohio. Presentations from self-advocates, community leaders, and others will address topics of interest that affect adults with developmental disabilities. Registration is \$160 per person which includes hotel accommodations, conference materials, and meals. *Deadline for registration is Thursday, May 15. Register today!*

For registration information contact CMR at 1331 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44115; call (216) 622-0755 ext. 13; email [cmr-cleve@cmr-cleveland.org](mailto:cmr-cleve@cmr-cleveland.org) or, visit [www.cmr-cleveland.org](http://www.cmr-cleveland.org).



#### 4. Changes at ODMRDD Central Office

### Constituent Services Moves to Director's Office, Becomes Office of Policy and Constituent Support

As part of consolidation efforts at the ODMRDD, the Division of Constituent Services has been re-organized as the Office of Policy and Constituent Support. This reorganization realizes efficiencies gained by combining areas, as the former Deputy Director for the Division left the position to accept a post with the Governor's Office. Constituent Services and Special Projects now are combined into one area to focus on issues that support stakeholders and the Department itself.

Patrick Lanahan, Deputy Director, oversees the Office of Policy and Constituent Support, and explains, "As we discussed the day-to-day activities in which each of the members of this team are involved, it was apparent that we needed a more accurate descriptor of what we do, and what we will be doing. We will be taking our team in new directions this year, as we look toward accomplishing many far-reaching projects."

ODMRDD Director, John Martin, comments on the role of the reorganized Office:

**"For example, in implementing the recommendations from the Futures Committee Final Report, all of the functions of this office will be affected and involved. We will be working with our stakeholders to develop processes and policies, and sharing information and ideas on a regular basis. It will involve some unique and specific collaborations both internally and externally."**

The Office of Policy and Constituent Support includes the following functions:

- Strategic Policy Development
- Legislative Liaison
- Public Information
- Family Advocacy
- Rules and Laws
- Special Projects

The Office of Policy and Constituent Support will continue to provide access to supports that stakeholders have come to expect from the team, and focus on improvements in other areas of interest to constituents. In addition, as a part of the staffing/organizational changes at ODMRDD's Central Office due to budget constraints, the newly-configured group will have more opportunities to provide assistance and information to various constituencies as part of the Director's Office 'umbrella'.



#### **Keeping it real.**

*Legislative Liaison, Mark Seifarth, (using wheelchair) knows that part of 'keeping it real' is seeing on-site how MRDD services are helping people throughout the state. Visiting the Preble County Board of MRDD, Mark met several program participants, and took back to the office a better-informed view of day services. Visits such as this help him interpret the impact of legislation on people served.*

The Office of Policy and Constituent Support may be reached as noted below. In addition, all ODMRDD Administrative Staff may be reached per information located on our website at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/contacts/admin.htm> and by using the ODMRDD Employee search feature at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/contactsearch/>.

**Office of Policy and Constituent Support**  
*Patrick Lanahan, Deputy Director*  
30 E. Broad St. 12th Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215-3434  
Telephone: (614) 644-6300  
E-mail: [patrick.lanahan@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:patrick.lanahan@dmr.state.oh.us)



## 5. Information Technology Services Names Luebbert



**Kathleen Luebbert**

The ODMRDD has named Kathleen (Kathy) Luebbert *Acting Deputy Director for Information Technology Services (ITS)*. Formerly Assistant Deputy Director with ODMRDD Community Services, “Kathy’s skills and interests in this area will allow her to support IT managers and staff as strategies for short- and long-term improvements are developed and implemented,” noted Director John Martin.

Kathy has been providing project leadership since February 2008, as well as staff support to an external consultant with whom ODMRDD has contracted, to complete an assessment of current IT services and make recommendations. She notes,

**“ I have had many opportunities throughout my career to work with a number of information technology staff on various projects. I am excited to bring that customer focus to this current assignment, and work even more closely with a very dedicated group of ITS professionals. ”**

She adds, “Our ITS staff appreciate the patience and support of system users during the past few weeks as we worked on resolving various applications issues. Our first priority is to ensure that critical business functions are maintained. We really appreciate everyone’s efforts to work with us to resolve issues, and we recognize that system users have gone ‘above and beyond’ to ensure quality service.”

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**Information Technology Services**  
*Kathleen Luebbert, Acting Deputy Director*  
30 E. Broad St. 12th Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215-3434  
Telephone: (614) 466-2201  
E-mail: [kathleen.luebbert@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:kathleen.luebbert@dmr.state.oh.us)



## Reminder

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# Pipeline . . . direct from the state . . .

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



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**Wednesday, May 14, 2008**  
**Volume 2, Issue 10**

- 1. Futures Implementation Team Highlights Next Steps
- 2. Rule Actions Support Strategic Direction
- 3. HUD Notice May Ease Voucher Use
- 4. Reminder: Northeast Ohio Conference, People First, June 6 & 7

## 1. Futures Implementation Team Highlights Next Steps



(left to right) Jody Fisher, Becky Phillips, and Michael Rench

**“We will be focused on getting the work done,”** notes Michael Rench, part of the panel of Futures Implementation Team members (l. to r., Jody Fisher, Becky Phillips, and Michael Rench) who addressed an ODMRDD staff meeting on May 12. He added, **“The field has told us what we need to do, and now we need to plug that information into the system.”**

The implementation plan for moving forward with Futures Committee recommendations was shared with attendees at an ODMRDD All-Staff meeting on May 12, along with additional updates on the budget and related staffing issues. A panel addressed steps being taken to begin implementing the 31 recommendations detailed in the Futures Committee Final Report, completed March 28, 2008 (<http://mrdd.ohio.gov/futures/docs/MRDDFuturesFinalReport.pdf>.)

Futures Implementation Team panel members Jody Fisher, Project Manager for Autism Services and Supports; Becky Phillips, Policy Staff, Rules and Laws; and Michael Rench, Deputy Director for Community Services, discussed efforts underway to transform and streamline how we do business.

Jody Fisher noted that Bill Adams, an individual who uses ‘touch-talker’ computer technology to communicate, had played an integral role in subcommittee meetings, describing what is

needed 'in the real world' to serve populations with special needs. She commented that Bill's participation "... infused a real perspective on how powerful it was to get so many different viewpoints together to discuss what can be done better to meet the needs of people in Ohio's MRDD system." Bill documented his involvement with the Future's Committee when he presented a speech at a conference for People First. Fisher added,

**"In his presentation, Bill emphasized that the Committee took time to write recommendations that would prompt real action, and that each word was chosen very carefully. The hopeful closing statement in his speech has stayed with me... 'And I believe that from our Futures Planning Committee, all of us in this room, and in the State of Ohio who receive services from MRDD, will begin to see changes for the better.' "**

Jody shared that Bill Adams would have attended the ODMRDD staff meeting and relayed this himself, however his computer-assisted speech equipment was in for repairs. (*See Bill, in good company, below*)



#### **IN MARCH 2008 ...**

*Governor Strickland (left) addressed committee members, including Bill Adams (seated at table). He noted that the recommendations in the Futures Committee report will provide a framework to assure a more simplified and accessible system of support for Ohioans who receive MRDD services.*

Futures panel members, Becky Phillips and Michael Rench reported that the 31 Futures recommendations will facilitate system change and help to achieve needed efficiencies. Phillips stated, "These are very broad and far-reaching changes that will affect everything we do." For example, she cited, "Statutes will need to change to enable us to move forward with some of these ideas, and we are prepared to make that happen."

Michael Rench added that, taken as a whole,

**"The overarching theme, and our overall goal, is to give people the opportunities they need to make choices. Real choices. Empowering people is not a 'recommendation.' It is embedded in everything we do and should be considered in every decision we make. "**

Continuing on that theme, Rench noted, "Sometimes we are dealing with issues where we have the information and the know-how, but we have what I would call a 'plumbing problem'. It's a matter of needing to get from here to there in the most efficient way, without barriers. We may need to 're-route' from time to time, or build smoother linkages into the system. In any event, it is important to remember that we are into the project-based work now -- the big picture has been framed for us by the Futures Committee."

ODMRDD Director, John Martin addressed the group on the subject of budget considerations, stating, "In order to meet the more than \$17 million in cuts to our budget for 2008-09, we have had to make some painful decisions, and will need to take a hard look again as we plan for the 2010-11 budget. A 10% reduction from the 2008-09 figure is what we are looking at, going in to the planning process." Implementing the recommendations of the Futures Committee also

will be an important part of assuring that we meet our overall goals in this type of budget environment.

### **ODMRDD Five Goals**

Director Martin also highlighted the Five Goals that the Administration had set forth early last year to guide our overall strategy and decision-making processes, and which are considered throughout the process of moving forward with the Futures Committee recommendations:

1. Less complex service delivery, with fair and logical payment systems;
2. Good stewardship of limited resources;
3. Quality outcomes, through a combination of people and processes;
4. Service delivery models designed in response to choices made by the people served, in alliance with community supports;
5. A system-wide vision developed with stakeholders.

He stated, “We are about evolutionary change, not revolutionary change. For example, when we look at services, we need to learn from the past and identify what’s going to work in the environment we are in now. To re-state something we talked about last year, we want to provide some help and some hope for everyone who receives MRDD services in Ohio. And in that process, I believe we will develop a much more efficient service delivery system.”

*Pipeline will continue throughout the year to carry information on the implementation of Futures Committee recommendations, and the work involved in that process.*

### **Looking to the Future**



## **2. Rule Actions Support Strategic Direction**

### **Rule 5123:1-1-03, Distribution of Community Assistance Funds for Purchase of Housing**

On May 5, ODMRDD filed proposed rule actions regarding community assistance funds for housing. Existing rule 5123:1-1-03, *Distribution of Community Assistance Funds for Purchase of Housing*, is proposed for rescission and replacement by a new rule of the same number. The proposed new rule 5123:1-1-03, *Distribution of Community Assistance Funds for the Acquisition of Housing*, is better organized for the reader and expands opportunities for county boards to access housing funds and increase housing options.

The proposed rule supports the work of the MRDD Futures Committee, which recommended development of a comprehensive housing plan to improve housing options for individuals choosing to live in the community. (See recommendation 28 of the *MRDD Futures Committee Final Report* at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/futures/odmrdd.htm>.) A public hearing on the proposed rule actions is scheduled for June 12, 2008. It is anticipated that the new rule will be implemented in July.

Additionally, ODMRDD has provided notice of its intent to rescind 20 rules under Chapter 5123:1-9 of the Administrative Code related to the former Purchase of Service\* (POS) program, which is no longer in effect. These rules are being rescinded, in accordance with Governor Strickland's Executive Order 2008-04S ([\*Implementing Common Sense Business Regulation\*](#)) which calls upon State agencies to rescind unnecessary rules.

The rules are posted at the ODMRDD *Rules Under Development* website: <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/rules/development.htm>.

*\* Purchase of Service (POS) refers to a former program which was a contractual arrangement between the ODMRDD and a person, agency, or governmental entity to provide community-based residential services to individuals determined to be eligible to receive these services.*



### **The Ohio Statehouse**

*Governor Strickland's Executive Order 2008-04S, Implementing Common Sense Business Regulation, calls upon State agencies to rescind unnecessary rules.*



## **3. HUD Notice May Ease Voucher Use**

*Note: This voucher is one of several programs offered by HUD that targets housing funds, specifically for people with disabilities.*

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has issued a new Notice titled "*Requests for Exception Payment Standards for Persons with Disability as a Reasonable Accommodation.*" The purpose of the notice is to facilitate the process for review and approval of special payment standards under the Housing Choice Voucher program as a reasonable accommodation for a family with a person with disabilities. It clarifies the calculation of the payment standard and the type of supporting documentation that should be included in the waiver request.

### **Focus on 'reasonable accommodation'**

HUD emphasizes that increased payments for vouchers for persons with disabilities to use with accessible units are a 'reasonable accommodation' under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. By recognizing that increased payments often are necessary to achieve equal access and equal opportunity in using vouchers, and therefore are a civil rights issue, the notice indicates to Housing Authorities that they must use their authority to increase such voucher payments up to 110% of the Fair Market Rent (FMR) or risk a discrimination lawsuit.

The Notice provides an example of the calculation process which should be followed and lists the types of documentation that should be provided. These changes potentially will facilitate equal opportunity for persons with disabilities to use vouchers in accessible units.



## Reminder

### **4. Northeast Ohio Conference, People First, June 6 & 7**

*Deadline for registration is Thursday, May 15. Register today!*

The Center for Mental Retardation/The Arc of Cuyahoga County's People First will host a Northeast Ohio Regional Conference, June 6 & 7, 2008, at the Sheraton Hotel in Independence, Ohio. Presentations from self-advocates, community leaders, and others will address topics of interest that affect adults with developmental disabilities. Registration is \$160 per person which includes hotel accommodations, conference materials, and meals.

For registration information contact CMR at 1331 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44115; call (216) 622-0755 ext. 13; email [cmr-cleve@cmr-cleveland.org](mailto:cmr-cleve@cmr-cleveland.org) or, visit [www.cmr-cleveland.org](http://www.cmr-cleveland.org).



### **Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)**



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Wednesday, May 28, 2008

Volume 2, Issue 11

**NOTE: This brief issue of Pipeline will be closely followed by a Pipeline Extra outlining issues related to the passage of the Capital Appropriations and Corrections Bill.**

- 1. Futures Implementation Team, Progress Report
- 2. Medicaid Buy-In for Workers with Disabilities

## 1. Futures Implementation Team, Progress Report

### Mawhorter's Contributions to Futures Efforts Lauded

Before we report on progress regarding Futures Committee recommendations, it is important to acknowledge the contributions to this effort by *Sonya Mawhorter*, who passed away earlier this month. Sonya's service to the MRDD field spanned more than 30 years, beginning as an Advocacy Coordinator for Ohio's Protection and Advocacy Association, and later included serving as Executive Director of the *Ohio League for the Mentally Retarded* ("The League"), a statewide group whose members are individuals with MRDD and their families/advocates.

Sonya's contributions to the Futures Committee and Finance Subcommittee focused on maximizing available resources, including regionalizing services in geographic areas, and utilizing Developmental Centers as community resources. Sonya was enthusiastic about the opportunities Futures recommendations would foster, especially in terms of partnering with County Boards of MRDD and other organizations, to bring expertise to people needing specialized services. We salute Sonya Mawhorter's spirit of service in these far-reaching efforts.

### Implementation Progress

As reported in Pipeline, May 14, 2008, [Pipeline Volume 2 Issue 10](#), the implementation plan for moving forward with Futures Committee recommendations has been organized for project-oriented success. Implementation teams have been formed around six themes:

- Strategic Implementation (policy and strategy)
- Decision Support (data, fiscal, and legal analysis)
- Empowering People (choice, control, and family support)
- Access and Care Management (waiting lists, individual service planning, and service and support administration functions)
- Services Management (covered services and service 'packages')

- Delivery Systems Management (quality, planning capacity, and developing capacity).

Each team, comprised of a team leader and several staff members, has been assigned specific Futures Committee recommendations. The teams will engage content experts—individuals, families, and professionals—in many ways throughout the process, to assist progress.

Implementation team efforts are designed in line with specific Futures Committee recommendations, and are detailed at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/>.

To support the work of implementing the Futures Committee recommendations, ODMRDD Director, John Martin, invited system partners from the Committee to join forces on the newly-formed Policy Leadership Roundtable. The Roundtable is intended to foster collaborative transformation of the MRDD service delivery system and includes a representative of each of the following organizations:

- ARC of Ohio
- Autism Society of Ohio
- Family Advisory Council
- Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD
- Ohio League for the Mentally Retarded
- Ohio Provider Resource Association
- Ohio Superintendents of County Boards of MRDD
- People First of Ohio

The group will meet periodically to monitor and help guide implementation of the recommendations, as well as work with ODMRDD in an advisory capacity on policy and legislative matters. Patrick Lanahan, Deputy Director of Policy and Constituent Support, will facilitate the Roundtable discussions. Other system stakeholders will provide input as content experts throughout the process.

In a presentation at the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD Spring Conference on May 22, Director Martin and county leaders discussed the policy and financial environments impacting delivery of services.

According to Director Martin,

**“It is time for Ohio’s MRDD service delivery system to adjust its course in line with the prevailing climate of limited revenue and expanding demands for services. Along with our stakeholders, we are looking at systemic issues and ways to impact the big picture.”**

In addition, funding partners affirmed their commitment to work together to develop sustainable, flexible services that better meet the needs of Ohioans with disabilities.

*Pipeline will continue to carry information on the implementation of Futures Committee recommendations, and the work involved in that process.*

## Looking to the Future





The benefits are significant ...

## 2. Medicaid Buy-In for Workers with Disabilities

Ohio's Medicaid Buy-In for Workers with Disabilities (MBIWD) began April 1, 2008. MBIWD allows individuals with disabilities who are working to qualify for Medicaid with higher income and resource limits, and buy-into Medicaid by paying a premium based on income.

As of May 7<sup>th</sup>, 163 people have been enrolled in the MBIWD program, about 25% of whom are paying a premium. Another 101 cases are pending a decision on their eligibility. Thirty-two people have been denied eligibility because they are over the age limit, not employed, or in a few instances, have too many resources.

As an example of the program's benefit, the first person enrolled in MBIWD had been paying a \$469 spend-down and now pays a \$20 a month premium. People with disabilities can qualify for MBIWD with resources up to \$10,000 and incomes that, under some circumstances, exceed \$60,000 a year.

Information about the MBIWD program, application forms and instructions can be found on the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services website at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/OHP/mbiwd.stm> Please read all application instructions carefully to ensure that you provide all of the information requested.

If you have questions, contact: Medicaid Consumer Hotline – 1-800-324-8680/V or 1-800-292-3572/TTY



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# Pipeline ... Extra!

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June 9, 2008

## **Leak in Buildings' Cooling System Causes Monday Shut Down ODMRDD Offices at 35 E. Chestnut St., Columbus, Affected**

Employees of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, the Ohio Department of Health, and the Rehabilitation Services Commission who work at either 246 N. High St or 35 E. Chestnut St. in Columbus were told not report to work today, Monday, June 9, due to a leak in a cooling system. The leak caused water damage Sunday and caused a shut down of the air conditioning in both buildings. The buildings, known as the "North High Complex" and located downtown, share a heating and cooling system.

The Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS) which manages the buildings said Sunday that the water leak was repaired by 10 p.m. Temperatures in the buildings at that time were near 90 degrees. While the buildings' air conditioning is expected to be operational again Monday, the day's expected temperatures in the 90's mean it will take several hours to cool the buildings down to normal temperatures.

ODMRDD Director, John Martin, and Community Services Deputy Director Michael Rench, assessed the damage this morning at 35 E. Chestnut St., and have determined that temporary relocation will be needed for some staff, and that clean-up work will be necessary both today and tomorrow, June 10, before workers can return to the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor offices. Director Martin stated,

**" We are working with DAS to monitor the work needed to reopen the work space. Community Services Staff and those involved with Medicaid Development and Administration are affected, and some may need to be temporarily relocated. We are implementing the specific steps necessary in the disaster recovery plan and will re-assess the situation on an ongoing basis."**



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June 10, 2008

## **UPDATE: ODMRDD Offices at 35 E. Chestnut St. Operational Today Most Staff Return to 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Offices, some temporarily relocated**

ODMRDD's 5th Floor Chestnut St. (Columbus) location is operational today, with staff in Medicaid Development and Administration, and System Innovation and Technical Assistance (SITA) remaining there, and staff with Provider Standards and Review being relocated temporarily and briefly to the ODMRDD location at 1810 Sullivant Ave., a short distance away in Columbus.

The Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS) blamed corrosion for the failure of a pipe which is a part of the cooling system, and which resulted in water damage to the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Chestnut St. location. The water damage affected the phone system, routers for computer operations, some files and workspace areas for MRDD staff, as well as the air conditioning system.

DAS said Monday that repairs necessary to reopen the North High Complex are complete, and operations are returning to normal for nearly all of the combined total of 1,100 workers affected by the closure Monday. DAS and ODMRDD are working together to restore the damaged work areas as quickly as possible.

All Ohio Department of Health employees who work at 246 N. High St. or 35 E. Chestnut St. are reporting to work as normal today. Most employees of the ODMRDD who work on the 5th floor of 35 E. Chestnut are reporting to work as normal today, as noted above.

*Special thanks to Ron Sylvester at DAS for ongoing communications during the closure.*



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**Wednesday, June 11, 2008**  
**Volume 2, Issue 12**

- 1. Governor Strickland Signs House Bill 405
- 2. National Core Indicators Contractor Selected
- 3. Mediation Resources Available
- 4. Family Advisory Council: Advocates from Across the State Gather for Open Forum
- 5. Developing Affordable Avenues to Accessible Housing
- 6. Gallipolis Developmental Center Waiver Pilot Program

## 1. Governor Strickland Signs House Bill 405



**HB 405 was signed by Governor Ted Strickland on June 2, 2008.**

*On hand for the signing were (l. to r., front) State Representative Kevin Bacon; Governor Ted Strickland; and Judy Murray, President of The Arc of Ohio; (l. to r., back) Sean McCullough, Legislative Aide to Rep. Bacon; Dan Ohler, Executive Director, Ohio Assn. of County Boards of MRDD; Joan Thompson, Co-chair of Governmental Affairs and Gary Tonks, Executive Director, both representing The Arc of Ohio; and Patrick Lanahan, Deputy Director, Ohio Department of MRDD.*

Any bill-signing is an historic event in the Governor's Office at the Ohio Statehouse, and HB 405 was both historic and highly-anticipated by those in the MRDD field. It eliminates the

Long Term Planning Registry and Service Substitution List from state law. Also, HB 405 eliminates the cap on the number of children who can be served by MRDD Waivers and makes the current priorities for waiver services permanent.

Representative Kevin Bacon is the father of a child who has autism, and is one of The Arc of Ohio's 2008 Freshman Legislators of the Year. He is a strong advocate and supporter of MRDD services, and HB 405 is the first bill he has sponsored to become law. As Gary Tonks so aptly stated, "Congratulations to Representative Bacon, and congratulations to us all!" In his next breath he added, "We will now begin work to overhaul the entire waiting list statute."

While the changes in HB 405 effect some changes to the waiting list statute, the Futures Committee recommended broader and more comprehensive changes, and that work is underway.

Governor Strickland summed up the importance of the occasion, noting,

**"Many bills are introduced every General Assembly to go through the legislative process, but it's not very often that you actually get a bill signed into law. Let me say congratulations to Representative Bacon on the signing of good legislation into law."**



## 2. National Core Indicators Contractor Selected



The ODMRDD Futures Committee Final Report (March 28, 2008) recommended the adoption and implementation of the National Core Indicators (NCI) as a basis for measuring the performance of and improving Ohio's MRDD system. In April, ODMRDD announced a Request for Proposal (RFP) [Pipeline Extra!](#), to select a contractor to manage the process, and we are pleased to announce that *The Center for Marketing and Opinion Research, LLC*, has been awarded the NCI survey implementation contract for 2008-'09.

*The Center for Marketing and Opinion Research (CMOR)* is a full service public opinion and research firm specializing in providing innovative research solutions to meet the needs of non-profit and social service organizations, government agencies, colleges and universities, and businesses, and has managed projects for more than 40 different organizations.



The contracted work, which includes administration of the National Core Indicators face-to-face Consumer Surveys and implementation of the Family (Adult-Family, Child-Family, and Adult-Family/Guardian) mail surveys, will take place July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009.

ODMRDD is charged legislatively to, "... examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the current system of separate and concurrent accreditation, licensure, certification, quality assurance and quality improvement activities", and is reviewing and proposing changes to improve that system. National Core Indicators is an excellent fit in this effort, because it is a collaboration among participating state agencies around the nation, along with the Human

Services Research Institute, to develop a systematic approach to performance and outcome measurement.

Participating states pool their resources and knowledge to create performance monitoring systems, identify common performance indicators, work out comparable data collection strategies, and share results. Many of the state agencies use NCI as a key component within their quality management systems.

We are pleased to have CMOR's highly trained team of interviewers working with us on this important project.

*For more information about NCI, visit the ODMRDD website at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/quality/nci.htm> and, CMOR's website at <http://cmoresearch.com/index.htm>*



### 3. Mediation Resources Available

***Mediation:** A friendly or diplomatic intervention designed to settle differences between individuals, groups, nations, etc., with the goal of arriving at a reasonable solution.*

Several ODMRDD staff have received training on the subject of mediation, conducted by the College of Law at The Ohio State University. The training is designed to enhance the mediation skills of key staff, including those working in Medicaid Development and Administration, Community Services, Legal Services staff and others, in an effort to make this resource readily available to the field.

Trained mediators from ODMRDD Central Office are available to provide assistance to County Boards of MRDD, providers, individuals, and families. The Department recommends mediation as a way to reach agreement in many different kinds of disputes. According to ODMRDD Director, John Martin,

**“We believe mediation can help parties resolve what can seem to be very difficult to manage issues. Mediation helps reduce the risk of permanent damage to relationships that can accompany more adversarial processes, and can vastly improve relationships when a solution is forged together. We are pleased to offer resources to parties seeking the potential benefits of mediation.”**



For more information, contact Kate Haller, ODMRDD Legal Services, at (614) 466-5216, or email [Kate.Haller@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:Kate.Haller@dmr.state.oh.us)



## **4. Family Advisory Council**

### **Advocates from Across the State Gather for Open Forum**

It was clear the minute one entered the meeting room at Columbus Developmental Center yesterday, June 10, that the regular meeting of ODMRDD's Family Advisory Council, was going to be remembered as being much more than a 'regular' meeting.

A capacity crowd of approximately 80 people traveled to Columbus from throughout the state, and many of them stepped up to the microphone to share their stories. These parent advocates and self advocates compellingly described their challenges and their successes. We all learned as we listened.

We heard ...

**"I encourage the state to help support families. We want our kids in our homes – just help us. Every year a family keeps their family member at home saves the MRDD system money ... just help us to find the resources we need to do that."**

**" I have some thoughts that I'd like to express. Why is it taboo to describe anxiety, thoughts of suicide, alcoholism, and grief when talking about how lives are affected by the stress of dealing with some things? Coping with family members who have severe disabilities does not always feel like a blessing. Why do we try to suffer in silence? We may not be talking about it, but we are feeling it."**

**"We have a waiver for my daughter. It is a piece of paper. What I want to know is who will love my daughter when I am gone. Who will help her be her best? The relationship between MRDD professionals and families must provide comfort ... the knowledge that they are thinking ahead to what is needed. "**

And ...

**"There is a huge need for qualified, interested providers. We need a code of ethics for people – an accountability. I need to feel trust with the professionals who are so important to my family."**

Several ODMRDD staff and stakeholders also were on hand to learn from family members what we need to do differently, better, and/or do more or less often. Cheryl Phipps, Superintendent, Hamilton County Board of MRDD, shared with the group several programs and ideas built around what Hamilton County families and self-advocates have told them they want and need:

**"If we ask people what services they need and want – they'll tell us. And then we can help them get those services. From this we have developed several innovative ways of helping people get what they need, including a group named, 'Leaders in Action', who are some of the most self-directed self advocates you could ever have the pleasure of knowing! We are committed to finding out what matters most to the people we serve."**

She added, "And I cringe when I hear people talk about self-determination like it's a program. It is not a program – it is a way of life, and it's built on the principles of freedom, authority, support, responsibility, and confirmation." In addition, Cheryl emphasized the importance of getting to know the people we serve.

**“Talk with them, ask questions – don’t just decide what they might need or want, and then hope they’ll agree.”**

ODMRDD Director, John Martin, also joined the group and noted that the Futures Committee recommendations for improving the MRDD system are in the implementation phase, and focusing on actions that will streamline services and make them more easily accessible statewide. He stated,

**“We are working on several specific recommendations that will positively affect how we deliver services, statewide, for Ohioans with disabilities and their families.”**

We thank the many participants who attended this Family Advisory Council meeting, and hope it was helpful to them. We will continue to listen and learn together.



***Capacity Crowd***

The Columbus Developmental Center meeting room was at capacity for the June 10 Family Advisory Council meeting, and provided an open forum for discussion.



***Has Mike, Will Travel***

Peggy Martin, Family Advocate (right) definitely does travel – to counties across the state, helping families get connected to services they need. Here, she gives the floor to Colleen Roth, who shared her thoughts on several issues.

**“We all have dreams and expectations.”**



***“ And let me add one more thing ...”***

Chris Clayton, self-advocate, adds his thoughts on what’s most important.  
**“I’d like to thank all the parents who have helped their kids with disabilities be able to do the things they can do. It’s a lot of work.”**



***“ We love our son ...”***

Richelle Mace from Mahoning County stated, “We love our son, and we want to take care of him. In order to do that we need help in our home. We don’t qualify for so many things that we need -- so many services that could help us as our son grows older. He’s 13.

*NOTE: At right is an interpreter, signing for a Family Advisory Council member.*

**“I need to know what else is out there. More hands that can help.”**



***“ Talk with them – ask questions ... ”***

Cheryl Phipps, Superintendent, Hamilton County Board of MRDD, emphasized the importance of getting to know the people we serve.

**“We need to provide real choices. Real ones.”**



***“The Futures Committee recommendations help us to deal with these challenges ...”***

ODMRDD Director, John Martin, joined the Family Advisory Council gathering to discuss the subject of waivers, and provided a few helpful illustrations in the process.

**“I know we have several individuals out there with unmet needs. Its going to put our system to the test to see how we manage not only waivers, but all of our limited resources in the future, and use the recommendations from the Futures Committee to help us deal with these challenges.”**

**For more information about the Family Advisory Council**

visit: <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/state.oh.us/families/familyadvocate.htm>

Next Meeting: July 23, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Columbus Developmental Center

1601 W. Broad St. Columbus OH 43222

Contact: [Peggy.Martin@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:Peggy.Martin@dmr.state.oh.us)



## **5. Developing Affordable Avenues to Accessible Housing Programs Build Homes and Foster Social Understanding**

*While researching ways that the ODMRDD could provide funds for people with disabilities to live in affordable, accessible residential settings, it became clear that statutory limitations for this purpose were unnecessarily restrictive and did not allow state funding for nonprofit organizations to construct single-family homes for people with MRDD. The ODMRDD has worked to add language to the Capital Bill, HB562, to allow state dollars to support these efforts. Through collaborative arrangements such as the example below, scarce capital dollars can be stretched nearly twice as far to achieve results -- which equates to, roughly, two accessible homes for the price of one. Aside from the obvious boost to the budget, there are other benefits:*

Once students from the Delaware Area Career Center (DACC) got to know Josh Wagner, they were working on a whole different level as they built the accessible home he would be living in. “Most of these kids would probably not have the opportunity to spend time talking to someone like Josh, but he’s such a social guy, such a likable guy, that they got more fired up

about the building project just knowing who was going to be living there,” says Mike Corbett, Director, Delaware Creative Housing (DCH).



**Mike Corbett (right), Director of Delaware Creative Housing, with Josh Wagner, at the Ohio Statehouse in March.** *Josh lives in an accessible home built by the Delaware Creative Housing group that includes students from the local vocational school in the building process. Corbett’s efforts earned the firm the Award of Excellence this year from Ohio Public Images, an information and advocacy organization promoting positive opportunities for people with disabilities throughout Ohio.*

The collaborative effort between the vocational/technical school, DACC, and the housing entity, DCH, has generated more than just accessible homes for people who need them – it has generated social understanding and opportunities previously unexplored, for all involved. Quite simply, the students need real-world venues to build and modify homes, and Creative Housing has people who need homes that will meet their needs for accessibility and affordability.

In fact, the Delaware County concept is now becoming a model for similar programs across the state. In mid-2007, Creative Living Systems, Inc., an outgrowth of the nonprofit Delaware Creative Housing, received a 5-year grant from the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council to help bring the building program to 15 other Ohio County Boards of MRDD.

Specifically, the “Blueprint for Accessible Housing” grant is designed to assist DCH in helping establish partnerships with vocational/career centers and County Boards of MRDD in their communities. The nonprofit acts as a client to the vocational/career center by providing it with either new-builds, or homes that need modification in order to allow the homeowner (person with a disability) to continue to live there.



According to Corbett,

**“The part I like best about this is that hundreds of kids in Ohio now will think about the need for accessibility as a natural part of living in a home.”**

The part Kim Miller, Superintendent, Union County Board of Developmental Disabilities, likes best about the DCH plans being developed in Union County is,

**“Our capital dollars can go further. The reality is that today’s dollars are shrinking, and it is incumbent upon us to manage the dollars that we do have to make meet the needs of the people we serve. In serving the residential needs of people with developmental disabilities who want to live in the community, collaboration between career and vocational schools and entities that can own properties, such as DCH, is a total win-win situation.”**

Miller adds, “The work is done without cost to us, in a teaching setting, and, with new-builds we can access other targeted state and federal dollars. It’s basically giving us the opportunity to provide two homes for the price of one.”

So far, DCH has produced about 40 accessible homes, following strict accessibility guidelines, serving individuals with disabilities in Delaware and Union Counties.

And what does all of this mean to Josh Wagner? Speaking to a group at the MRDD Awareness Month kickoff event in March, he was pretty clear in his assessment. He carefully paused before stating,

**“It’s awesome. My house is awesome, and I want to live in it forever.”**

*For more information about Delaware Creative Housing contact Mike Corbett at [mcorbett@dcbdd.org](mailto:mcorbett@dcbdd.org) or visit their website at [www.delawarecreativehousing.com](http://www.delawarecreativehousing.com)*

*Acknowledgements to the Delaware Gazette for background information on the Delaware Creative Housing projects.*



## **6. Gallipolis Developmental Center Waiver Pilot Program Original Waiver Pilot Amended to Conform to Budget Realities**



**Gallipolis Developmental Center** is in ODMRDD Region 3, serving the counties of Fayette, Pickaway, Highland, Ross, Pike, Vinton, Jackson, Athens, Meigs, Gallia, Lawrence, Scioto, Adams, and Brown.

The ODMRDD is exploring a community-based service model that will afford individuals opportunities to live in smaller environments, with state employees providing community services and supports. When a reduction in Developmental Center capacity in light of state budget reductions was announced, there was a strong response from families supporting the services and staff available to their family members who reside at Developmental Centers. We also heard that some individuals may prefer to live in smaller settings, but may not want to use the waiver options that are being offered, and, considering what state employees are paid to provide these services, the waiver rates did not support this original plan. Therefore, it has become necessary to amend the original waiver pilot program envisioned for Gallipolis Developmental Center.

This amendment will provide additional choice to individuals currently living in Developmental Centers to choose a smaller setting while retaining connections to services and providers through the Developmental Centers. ODMRDD also is offering some waivers funded by the *Martin v. Strickland* settlement for individuals wishing to move into the community.

The *Gallipolis Developmental Center Pilot Program*, established by the FY2008-2009 Budget Bill 119, Section 337.40.15, has proven to be somewhat problematic despite the best efforts of the ODMRDD the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association (OCSEA). Challenges include the following:

- Wages and benefits for Therapeutic Program Workers (TPWs) exceed the reimbursement rates established in rule 5123:2-9-06, Appendix A, for Gallia and surrounding counties (\$18.08 per hour one-to-one up to \$23.48 per hour for one-to-four [or more] individuals). Therefore, there is no reimbursement available for supervision, professional services, or any overhead costs associated with running an Individual Options (IO) Waiver-funded service model (all required elements under the IO reimbursement system);
- Costs within an IO Waiver Service are capped, and are on a fee-for-service basis versus a cost-of-service model, and to-date have not been adjusted for inflation, wage increases, and other anticipated or unanticipated increases in costs;
- Only direct services, transportation and limited professional services are covered under IO waivers -- only these services are billable and eligible for federal financial participation;
- Developing housing options for individuals with MRDD will take time, since these options are limited in the Southern Ohio region and capital housing money is limited;
- Concerns regarding having to renegotiate with CMS a new “firewalls” document related to IO waivers since ODMRDD would have a conflict of interest by monitoring itself as a provider;
- The federally-protected basic rights of individuals to have freedom of choice of provider, and the ability to change providers as desired, prevent a guarantee that state employees will continue to provide services in this pilot project.

**During the process of examining approaches to this amended waiver pilot program, all parties involved, including the ODMRDD, The Arc, the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA), union representatives, and other stakeholders, learned first-hand how challenging it can be to provide and support effective home and community-based waiver services.**

This new approach is more economically viable due to the following reasons:

- The difficulties with the home and community-based waiver service model do not present themselves in the ICFMR program -- thus, the pilot project could access federal financial participation for more of the costs;
- This program offers a more comprehensive service package to individuals based on their needs. Services (other than direct) such as supervisory, nursing, psychology, occupational and physical therapy, etc., can be provided and reimbursed;
- Professional and support staff wages and benefits are directly reimbursable (with some limitations in smaller environments);

- Rates are cost-based vs. fee-for-service and historically have been periodically adjusted for inflation;
- Capital costs are reimbursable;
- If successful, the program could more readily be replicated elsewhere throughout Ohio.



### Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)



The ODMRDD toll-free hotline number for reporting abuse/neglect and other MUIs is **1-866-313-MRDD (6733)**. Please note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of MRDD, however, it is understood that there may be times an individual, staff member, or family member may feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember that the hotline number exists, and is to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.



### *Pipeline feedback ... direct from you to the state ...*

*Questions? Comments?* *Pipeline* is an electronic publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD), distributed approximately twice monthly to update and inform readers of time-sensitive, relevant information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us about *Pipeline* at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us), or contact Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us), phone (614) 644-0262.

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# Pipeline . . . direct from the state . . .

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



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**Wednesday, June 25, 2008**  
**Volume 2, Issue 13**

- 1. Governor Strickland Signs Capital Appropriations and Corrections Bill, HB 562
- 2. What's in a Name? Weighing in on the MR in MRDD
- 3. ODMRDD Continues to Restructure, Gain Efficiencies
- 4. Futures Implementation Teams Progress Toward Goals
- 5. ODMRDD Website Earns Enterprise-Wide Compliance, Meets Accessibility Standards
- 6. Ohio Adult Siblings (SIBS) Conference, Nov. 7-8, 2008

## **1. Governor Strickland Signs Capital Appropriations and Corrections Bill, HB 562; Issues Line Item Vetoes**

**“ As we deal with the current economic situation, my Administration remains committed to living within our means, while investing in the things that are truly important to Ohioans.”**

**– Governor Ted Strickland**

### **Living Within Our Means and Investing in What Matters**

Governor Ted Strickland has signed into law H.B. 562, the Capital Appropriations and Corrections Bill. Governor Strickland and the General Assembly worked together closely to achieve bipartisan agreement on nearly everything in the final bill, which passed the General Assembly. The measure, signed Tuesday, June 24:

- Makes policy and appropriation changes to the current SFY 2008-2009 Biennial Budget (H.B. 119) to address a projected biennium budget imbalance of more than \$730 million;
- Appropriates about \$1.3 billion for state facility construction and improvements, and local ‘community projects’ during fiscal years 2009 and 2010.

The Governor said that the shortfall in the current operating budget was being caused by “...a weakening national economy, a spike in oil prices, the housing crisis and slowing retail sales.” By upgrading our infrastructure and improving our communities through capital improvements, H.B. 562 “...reflects our continuing efforts to make Ohio an attractive place for increased economic development and job-creating opportunities.”

### **Veto Message Excerpt**

Governor Strickland vetoed 13 line items before signing the bill, deciding against use of the 'rainy day' Budget Stabilization Fund for various purposes, and striking a provision that would have imposed a six-month moratorium on the closure of mental health facilities in Cambridge and Dayton. ([Veto Message](#))

"The administration recognizes the hardship these closures represent for these communities, but, unfortunately, the project cost savings for FY2009 is based on the July 1, 2008 closure date. The state will continue working with local communities to explore alternative uses for the [ODMH operated] facilities."

*Note: ODMRDD has been working closely with ODMH in planning for the transition that will occur July 1, 2008. ODMRDD is NOT closing the Developmental Centers at the Dayton and Cambridge sites.*

## The Bill's General Impact on ODMRDD

**" 'Living within our means' requires us to look at what we are doing, and how we do it. Our approach is being driven by improving dialogue with stakeholders, adhering to our goals, and the guidance from the MRDD Futures Committee. I believe that HB 562 enables ODMRDD to meet its reduced spending target, while making strategic investments in what matters to the 80,000 Ohioans who receive MRDD services."**

**ODMRDD Director, John Martin**

H.B. 562 includes a number of provisions of interest to Ohio's MRDD community. Highlights include the following:

- Makes \$21,500,774 in capital improvement appropriations to address facilities' infrastructure and improvement needs, and to assist County Boards of MRDD efforts to addressing community housing needs;
- Streamlines and improves State Agency purchasing (Sec. 127.16)
- Changes reporting regarding the autism scholarship program (Sec. 3310.42);
- Adds a requirement that ODJFS report, on a quarterly basis, on a set of specified activities to increase administrative efficiency of the program and to promote better outcomes Medicaid cost control activities (Sec. 5111.091) *Note: ODMRDD and other state agencies continue to work closely with ODJFS on these activities, already underway.*
- Requires reports from County Boards of MRDD providing a child with special education and related services (Sec. 3317.20);
- Relocates the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence ("OCALI") to the Franklin County Educational Services Center and making OCALI's Executive Director a member of the Interagency Workgroup on Autism, being led by ODMRDD (Sec. 3323.30 et seq);
- Provides statutory authority to accommodate providers, County Boards of MRDD, and advocates requesting or needing to increase community-based options through a one-time, voluntary process for licensure and funding of up to 100 ICFMR beds to be converted to increase slots the availability of home and community based services (Sec. 5111.874-810);
- Uses an increase in the ICFMR franchise permit fee to continue funding for home and community based waiver programs operated by ODMRDD, enhance reimbursement rates for ICFMRs, and to provide funds for a new program for

children with intensive behavioral needs to be established by the Director of ODMRDD (Sec. 5112.31, 5112.37, 5112.371 and 5123.196);

- Removes Medicaid case management services from the formula governing a 1.5% annual fee being charged to each County Board of MRDD to provide funds supporting ODJFS and ODMRDD Medicaid administration and oversight (Sec. 5123.0412);
- Requires the Director of ODMRDD, working in collaboration with ODJFS and in consultation with OCALI and university-based programs specializing in services for individuals with MRDD to establish a new program for children with intensive behavioral needs, including individuals diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (Sec. 5123.0417);
- Gives more flexibility to County Boards and private nonprofit agencies working to construct housing by creating an exception to the requirements in Chapter 153 of the Revised Code;
- Corrects the Tax Equity appropriation to mitigate the significance of changes to funding for County Boards MRDD, in the absence of this change (Sec. 337.30.43);
- Revises the focus of the Gallipolis Developmental Center Pilot Project to test state operated smaller ICFsMR in response to unique circumstances posed by the budget recalibration plan for staffing and funding reductions, and difficulties implementing the original Pilot Project model. (See [Pipeline Volume 2 Issue 12.](#))  
*NOTE: ODMRDD wants to clarify that it is NOT planning to expand this model statewide, but tailored this pilot to the unique situation posed by budget reductions and problems with the original model.*

ODMRDD worked closely with all of its partners in the field to arrive at the changes in the bill. The Department has already begun working with the MRDD community to plan for the SFY 2010-11 biennium budget and implement the recommendations of the MRDD Futures Committee.

Please go to <http://www.ohio.gov/news/#062408> at the [www.ohio.gov](http://www.ohio.gov) website for further details on this bill..



## 2. What's in a Name? Weighing in on the 'MR' in MRDD

*Many interesting discussions are underway across Ohio regarding the choice of the words 'Mental Retardation' within the name referencing Ohio's 88 County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. The ODMRDD is aware of and interested in the variety of approaches advocating for or against the removal of "Mental Retardation" from the name. While we have no set position on the subject at this time, we recognize the issue's importance as a part of doing business in a changing system, and offer here the viewpoints of stakeholders as a springboard to further discussion.*

### In Ohio

In July 1967, as a result of Senate Bill 169, Ohio established County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MRDD), then known as "169 Boards". Every county in Ohio formed an entity carrying that name, charged with providing services to people with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities, who resided in their county.

Now, some 40 years later, the terminology is being revisited for several reasons – among them:

- By definition, mental retardation is one type of developmental disability, and thus could be considered redundant when used with the term developmental disability;
- The perception that modern usage of the slang variant, ‘retard’, has a demeaning connotation and negates the legitimate use of the word ‘retardation’. In short, some people find the words ‘mental retardation’ offensive.
- A desire to shorten the name in general, without greatly changing the nature of it.

People who are inclined to support the idea of dropping ‘mental retardation’ from the name point to the reasons above, as well as to a general feeling that ... “it’s been a long time since we’ve looked at why we are called what we are.” According to discussions involving members of the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD (OACBMRDD), Executive Director, Dan Ohler, notes that some people with disabilities and their families are finding the term to be offensive.

**“Many believe it to be a generational issue. To some extent, perhaps it is. But regardless, the great history of our nation suggests that as times change, so too does the sensitivity of the human beings that call this country, and this state, their home.**

He continues, “By its very definition, mental retardation is itself a developmental disability, making the terms in unison somewhat redundant.”

In Ohio, ten of the 88 counties have changed their County entity’s name to the *County Board of Developmental Disabilities*, choosing to drop the term ‘Mental Retardation’. The OACBMRDD notes that in some of those counties, it was the participants in Board services who requested that the term be removed from the agency name. “They found it to be offensive and felt stereotyped in a very negative way,” Ohler related.

The ten counties who have made the change are:

- Athens, Belmont, Delaware, Fulton, Harrison, Henry, Noble, Pike, Union, and Washington.

At least eight additional counties are considering such a switch -- these include:

- Butler, Fairfield, Guernsey, Hocking, Huron, Knox, Richland, and Vinton.

### **Ballot Language is Important**

It is also important to note that inconsistencies in ballot language are an issue when putting a levy on the ballot under a name different from the one that is recognized by law as the entity’s name. For example, Lon Mitchell, Executive Director of Ohio Public Images, an information and advocacy group promoting positive images of people with disabilities, notes the importance of paying attention to ballot language:

**“It becomes an issue when an entity places a renewal or replacement levy on the ballot calling themselves, ‘Acme County Board of Developmental Disabilities’, for instance, when their legal name (SB 169) is ‘Acme County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities’. It is up to the County Commissioners and County Prosecutors offices to agree on what they are comfortable with in terms of ballot issues.”**

He adds, "The description of what is to be voted for and who will benefit from the passage of the issue needs to be clear and correct in the ballot language."

### Across the Nation

OACBMRDD's Dan Ohler notes, "There are only eight states out of the 50 in the nation that still utilize the term 'Mental Retardation' in their official name. Two of those - Massachusetts and New York - have held legislative hearings to make the change, but at this point I cannot ascertain if the bills have passed or been signed by their Governors. I have made some contacts in both of those states trying to determine where they are."

The eight states that still use Mental Retardation in the name are:

- Alabama, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, Ohio, and Virginia

**As a percentage, then, 84% of the states do not utilize the term 'Mental Retardation' officially.**

Researching the issue across the nation there are a variety of designations/names for the primary state agency that oversees services for people with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities. It is also important to note that MRDD is not a cabinet-level agency in every state -- in many cases it is housed as a Bureau or Division in a larger Human Services Agency. The information we are reporting considers the 'name' used for the bureau or division, cabinet-level or not.

Keeping this in mind, a number of states have dropped the term 'Mental Retardation' from their official agency name. They are:

- Connecticut, Georgia, Iowa, Maine, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Tennessee

### Viewpoints Vary

Both within Ohio and nationally there is evidence of a trend toward re-thinking the terminology used. Viewpoints include some thoughtful insights, such as this one, from an article, "Mental Retardation Shouldn't be Blacklisted," by Marion County Board of MRDD Superintendent, Lee Wedemeyer, and printed in the Columbus Dispatch in February 2007:

*"Several years ago, members of my staff and I took a group of individuals with disabilities to a carnival. Like everyone else, they love the sights, sounds, activity, and junk food. We were walking across the midway when a woman charged up to me and yelled, "Why did you have to bring those people here? You've ruined my entire day."*

*Apparently the sight of people with disabilities was an affront to her delicate sensibilities. I suspect, however, that someone ruined her day long before she caught sight of our little entourage. It was her use of the words 'those people' that has resonated with me over the years. Despite the advances we have made in the treatment and training of individuals with disabilities, they remain 'those people' to a segment of our society."*

*Changing words will not get to the heart of the issue -- which is making society more accommodating and understanding of people who have characteristics that always seem to get labeled, often badly. Until that occurs, they will remain 'those people' to a large segment of our society."*

The article continues,

**“ You can’t change societal opinions by changing a name. People might argue that ‘mental retardation’ should be dropped because the words are redundant when used along with ‘developmental disabilities’, but the real reason is that some people are offended by the words ... Society often uses good words in a demeaning way until they become offensive. This has happened throughout the history of agencies designed to treat and assist individuals with disabilities.”**

There are other issues that can confuse the matter further. It was noted recently in a public relations professionals’ email exchange that, “ ‘DD’ also is an acronym for Dually Diagnosed, and in the MRDD world that means an individual not only has MR and/or DD but also a mental health diagnosis. “DD” in the mental health system means an individual has a Mental Health diagnosis but also a drug or alcohol addiction (dual diagnosis). This has to be confusing to the general public.”

And the conversation continues ...

### **What do you think?**

If you would like to comment on this subject, please Please share your questions or comments at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us) , or contact Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us) , phone (614) 644-0262.

*Special thanks to Dan Ohler and Linda Oda of the OACBMRDD, Lon Mitchell of Ohio Public Images, and Lee Wedemeyer, Marion County Board of MRDD, for their time and information.*



## **3. ODMRDD Continues to Restructure, Gain Efficiencies**

*This Pipeline update includes new information, as well as some excerpted from a memo to all ODMRDD staff distributed earlier this month, from Director John Martin.*

It has been a few months since our announcement earlier this year that we would need to reduce the number of ODMRDD staff in order to streamline operations and align ourselves with the State’s ongoing financial concerns, as outlined by Governor Strickland. Since that initial round of information and the resulting staffing announcements in April, we have continued to focus on the needs of the approximately 80,000 Ohioans who receive MRDD services, and the functions that are necessary to sustain our Mission:

*The Mission of the ODMRDD is continuous improvement of the quality of life for Ohio’s citizens with developmental disabilities and their families.*

### **Central Office**

Specifically within ODMRDD Central Office, consistent with the announcement of initial staffing reductions in April, we expect to have reduced the number of staff within Central Office from 309 positions, to 282 positions by July 5, 2008. This is a result of taking a close look at how we do business, and at how we will need to do business in the future with even fewer dollars. In addition, it takes into account staff attrition and those who choose the Early Retirement Incentive Plan option.

There will continue to be changes in staffing throughout the year which are not related to the staff reduction plan announced in April, but which are necessary due to changes in operation or procedure, and are a normal and usual occurrence in any employment arena.

### Developmental Centers

As we stated at the outset of this process earlier this year, we are adjusting capacity at the ten Developmental Centers (DC's). Residents are being supported as they choose to live in community-based settings through the use of waivers funded by the Martin v. Strickland settlement. As individuals are able to transition successfully into the community, ODMRDD expects to be able to reduce capacity by one residential unit at Mount Vernon Developmental Center (July 5, 2008), and in September, to reduce by one unit at Gallipolis Developmental Center. Additional information about this is at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/topics/martin/settlement.htm>

ODMRDD Director John Martin comments,

**"I would like to reinforce the message that we are not closing any Developmental Centers in the restructuring and reorganization process. We value and support the nearly 1600 residents who have chosen to make these facilities their homes – as well as the staff that serve them."**

### Other Efficiencies

The April 16, 2008 issue of *Pipeline* [Pipeline Volume 2 Issue 8](#), provided an update on ODMRDD's support of Governor Strickland's *Efficiency Review and Continuous Improvement Initiative*. The ODMRDD participates in this coordinated effort among state agencies to assure that state government is working as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.

As of June 15, ODMRDD has received 26 suggestions. They have been reviewed according to a standard procedure developed by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and several of the suggestions are in the implementation phase. Visit the website at [www.efficiency.ohio.gov](http://www.efficiency.ohio.gov) to review the status of suggestions, submit one, or learn more about the initiative. The site also carries a message from the Governor on the subject at:

[CLICK HERE TO SEE A MESSAGE FROM GOVERNOR STRICKLAND](#)

*Pipeline will continue to update readers on restructuring and other changes within ODMRDD.*



## 4. Futures Implementation Teams Progress Toward Goals

*ODMRDD staff implementation teams are continuing to make progress on the MRDD Futures Committee's 31 recommendations detailed in the March 28, 2008 Final Report. Please visit <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/> for information in detail. Here is a snapshot of one workgroup's progress and how it fits into the big picture.*

ODMRDD staff are working on steps to implement the recommendations under the umbrella area of 'Empowering People'. Some examples include:

- Improving the ODMRDD website to more actively engage individuals and families in accessing and creating content. An example would include new listserves and interactive tools and applications;
- Assuring that the continuous feedback loop is participated in by the broadest range of participants possible. Examples would be increasing the number of Family Advocates, statewide, and increasing the membership of the ODMRDD Family Advisory Council.
- Fostering self-determination as the natural way to help individuals plan their use of available resources. Examples would be working with direct service staff to ask individuals and families the kinds of questions that will help them define services they need and want, as well as provide peer mentors as resources to families.

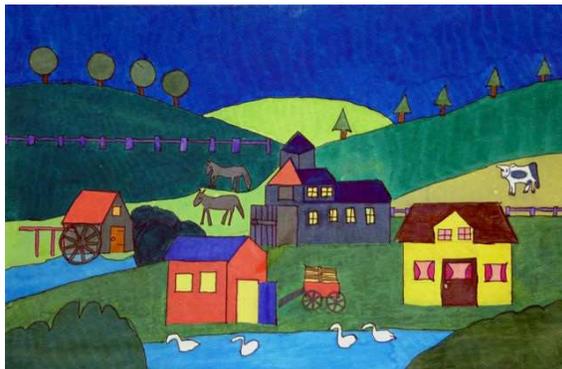
Newly posted on the ODMRDD website are two presentations on the subject of Futures implementation. They are at the bottom of the page at this location:  
<http://mrdd.ohio.gov/futures/FuturesImplementationInformation.htm>



Looking Toward the Future



## 5. ODMRDD Website Earns Enterprise-Wide Compliance, Meets Accessibility Standards



[www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov)

ODMRDD's website artwork is created by people with disabilities from throughout the state.

*This piece, 'Summer Valley Farmer' was created by Kim Wolfe, an artist with Art on Main, a part of the Champaign County Board of MRDD.*

The ODMRDD's newly re-designed website, launched in April 2008, has been designated as 100% compliant with Governor Strickland's cabinet-level agencies' [www.ohio.gov](http://www.ohio.gov) standards for ease of use, consistency in design, accessibility, and overall performance.

According to Chris Wilkin, Project Manager for Ohio's Office of Information Technology, and [www.ohio.gov](http://www.ohio.gov)'s enterprise-wide web presence initiative, the ODMRDD will also be

recognized as an 'early adopter' of the standards, joining a handful of other agencies who made the project a priority communications tool. He stated,

**"I would like to commend ODMRDD, on behalf of the Governor's Office, on the fine work that has been done to relaunch your website – and doing it all in-house is very impressive."**

Kathy Luebbert, Acting Deputy Director for ODMRDD's Information Technology Services, "I am very proud of the ODMRDD team who pulled together the look and the content of this new site, and am very excited about the accessibility features that will allow us to better serve site visitors using adaptive programs. We will continue to work on several new tools this year to enhance the usability of our site for everyone."



## 6. Ohio Adult Sibling "Sibs" Conference, Nov. 7-8, 2008

The Eighth Annual Ohio Adult Sibling Conference will be held November 7-8, 2008, at the Columbus Airport Marriott Hotel. The conference's goal is to promote sibling awareness and activity in the life of their brother or sister with a developmental disability. For registration and conference information, visit the website at [www.ohiosibs.com](http://www.ohiosibs.com). For additional information contact Tom Fish, Ohio SIBS, The OSU Nisonger Center 257C McCampbell Hall 1581 Dodd Drive, Columbus, OH 43210. Phone (614)-292-7550 or email [fish.1@osu.edu](mailto:fish.1@osu.edu).



OHIO SIBS

SPECIAL INITIATIVES BY BROTHERS & SISTERS



### Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)



The ODMRDD toll-free hotline number for reporting abuse/neglect and other MUIs is **1-866-313-MRDD (6733)**. Please note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of MRDD, however, it is understood that there may be times an individual, staff member, or family member may feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember that the hotline number exists, and is to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.



### *Pipeline feedback ... direct from you to the state ...*

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# Pipeline . . . direct from the state . . .

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



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We hope you enjoy Pipeline!

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**Wednesday, July 9, 2008**  
**Volume 2, Issue 14**

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- 5. Caregivers Conference Focuses on Making Choices Faced by Aging Caregivers
- 6. Reminder: Ohio Adult Sibs Conference, November 7-8, 2008

## **1. Your Feedback on Pipeline's June 25 Article, Asking, "What's in a Name? Weighing in on the MR in MRDD"**

*If the definition of feedback is, as stated in one source, 'A process in which the factors that produce a result are themselves modified, corrected, or strengthened by that result,' we certainly have set such a process in motion.*

The June 25, 2008 *Pipeline* carrying the article, "What's in a Name? Weighing in on the MR in MRDD," [Pipeline Volume 2 Issue 13](#), opened the virtual floodgates to a free-flowing discussion via [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us) and prompted readers throughout the state to share their thoughts, air their opinions, and guide us to think about all the options. What's the consensus? The general direction is change.

What change, and worded in what way -- is the point debated. The conversations across Ohio regarding the use of the words 'Mental Retardation' within the name for Ohio's 88 County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities are spirited, and speak volumes supporting the importance of understanding perception and reality. While some state that perception *is* reality, what one person thinks is represented under a certain banner can mean something entirely different to someone else.

ODMRDD received dozens of written responses and phone calls representing individuals and groups across the state. Beyond that, a Dayton Daily News article, [Ohio organizations want to change name](#) featured the subject rooted in the June 25 *Pipeline* article, and the story was picked up by newspapers across the state, prompting general statewide interest and even more conversations throughout the MRDD system.

Clearly, the dialogue regarding the words 'mental retardation', and how words and labels affect people and perceptions is gaining momentum. ODMRDD Director, John Martin, comments,

**“I am excited about what I am reading and hearing on this subject. The nature of the discussion hits squarely on the issue of empowering people – people with disabilities and without disabilities. If the description of a person or a condition is a detriment to their success, or makes them feel less willing to participate in services and supports, it is not empowering them. It’s really important for us to take a look at this and think about the ‘big picture’ of how we treat people.”**

One parent advocate suggested we should ...“come out of the dark ages of disability rights and see the light.” She brought this nugget our way,

**Listen to the Mustn’ts, child, listen to the Don’ts,  
Listen to the Shouldn’ts, the Impossibles, the Won’ts.  
Listen to the Never Haves, then listen close to me,  
Anything can happen, child, Anything can be. (Shel Silverstein)**

This same parent, along with all but two responders, requested that the MR in MRDD be removed. She stated that the MR reference implies that people with this disability are not able to learn. Another parent advocate noted that she did not want to walk under ‘that sign’ (MRDD) when she brought her child in to her local County Board office for services. She and others stated that a child with cerebral palsy, spina bifida, or other physical developmental disability and no diagnosis of mental retardation would be unfairly and negatively labeled if receiving services from an entity with that name. One woman wrote:

**“Our 10 year-old son was born with Down syndrome. I never considered taking him to the (local) MRDD facility for early childhood education because of the name. I told this to the first professional who came out to the house to give us information. She also had a son with developmental delays. She hadn’t taken him there for the same reason. She couldn’t handle walking in under the sign.”**

Most interestingly, there is no across-the-board agreement on what the County Boards of MRDD or, in fact, the Ohio Department of MRDD, should instead be named. Some suggest that it be simply, ‘County Boards of Developmental Disabilities,’ and ‘Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities,’ the latter leaving a rather odd acronym. Many suggest an entirely different name be devised, focusing on Special Needs Assistance, Disability Services, or Intellectual Disabilities. Still others wonder if the services may be combined some day under another state department or set of agencies, thus stirring the pot further and causing one to wonder, “How often do we want to change names?”

There is, however, some across-the-board agreement on one general area – and that is that it’s nice to be asked what one thinks about a subject. One responder (family) wrote, “We appreciate being asked what we think about this, because it’s important to our lives and how we view ourselves, and how other people view our son.”

Because *Pipeline* wishes to respect confidentiality and allow people to express opinions freely, we do not directly attribute the quotes contained in this article, and share them simply to illustrate where the conversation is, in July 2008. Where it will be at some point in the future is a position the MRDD Futures Committee recommendations will, no doubt, play a part in implementing as the conversations continue. [CLICK HERE](#) for updated Futures information.

### **Feedback Excerpts**

**“ Our group consists mainly of self advocates, and our purpose is to support self advocates as they express themselves and to help them gain skills and understanding of the “way our system**

works.” When this subject was discussed, the self advocates were very adamant about not liking the word “retardation” and they wondered what they could do to let others know their feelings.”

---

*“The primary reason that I would like to see the ‘MR’ disappear is this – yes, the word ‘retarded’ is a valid word that means slowed or delayed. However, it has been used as a slang word, an insult, for so long that the very essence of the word has changed. To label a person as mentally retarded is to automatically give them less value in the eyes of the general public than people without disabilities.*

*While this is terribly unfair and just downright wrong, it seems to be the way things are. If dropping those two letters from the phrase “MRDD” can contribute to equality for people with that disability, why would we not do it?”*

---

“ ... We need to see the smaller picture - the picture from the family or individual's point of view. That includes all the individuals and families that are enrolled for services from us and do not have mental retardation. I believe that they inherently understand what we have been slow to recognize: by keeping Mental Retardation in our name we are furthering the perception that all individuals we serve have the attributes of one particular developmental disability when, in fact, they have a variety of abilities. “

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*“ While I do fully appreciate that the terms ‘retardation’ and ‘disabilities’ were placed with good intent, the times and interpretation have changed. It is time our name reflected our belief – ability is what counts, not retardation or disability.”*

---

“ Several months ago I sat down with the director of (another agency) to discuss our programs. As an agency that helps low income families in smaller rural communities, she confided to me that she had trouble referring people to our program... "There is this one lady," the (agency) director said, "A wonderful, strong, Appalachian woman that you can't help but care for. But her child - well, she very obviously needs your services... I try to encourage her, but she says 'my daughter is not a retard' and that is it."

---

*“I find that the word MRDD is just another acronym used to define a person-- not to label or belittle nor disrespect that individual. I view the word with respect and understanding of those individuals that have special needs due to their mental & physical differences. Why not just do away with the name MRDD altogether?”*

---

This item was shared as part of a longer email by an MRDD professional who had lived in Canada:

**Excerpt from ‘Full Citizenship: A Manitoba (Canada) Strategy on Disability’**  
Our understanding of disability is founded on the knowledge that abilities and disabilities are an essential and natural part of human existence. All persons are more or less able in a variety of ways that depend on their individuality and the circumstances in which they find themselves. Although early childhood and old age are times when abilities are less and disabilities are more evident, many persons experience mobility/agility, vision, hearing, speaking, cognitive/mental or other disabilities at various times in their lives ...”

---

**The simple truth is many of our consumers *do* have mental retardation and there is no shame in the name *or* the condition.**

---

A mile is taken by the first step. I think taking the “mental retardation” out of the name is a “first” step to a more acceptable social change regarding people through probably no fault of

their own have indeed some challenges, but are putting forth the effort to live on this earth just as God has allowed us to do also!

---

*No matter what individuals with disabilities are called it is about how they are treated. The system is moving forward in integrating people with disabilities in their communities and we should be more concerned with how they are embraced or accepted than what they are called.*

*In another 20 years we will want to change the name again but the bigger question is how have we worked in those 20 years to improve their lives and provide them with the opportunity to be a part of their community and society?*

As we stated in the June 25 *Pipeline*, the ODMRDD is interested in the variety of approaches advocating for or against the removal of “Mental Retardation” from the name. The Ohio Association of County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities is to vote Oct. 27 about whether or not to take the words "mental retardation" out of its name, and is actively discussing this subject as well, among its membership.

We thank each individual and agency that has provided feedback to us on this subject, and will continue listening and considering all options. If you would like to comment, please share your comments at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us) , or contact Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us) , phone (614) 644-0262.



## 2. Individual Options Waiver Transition Completed

“June 30, 2008, has come and gone, and it is with great pleasure that I announce that Ohio has completed the Individual Options (IO) Waiver Transition,” noted Patrick Stephan, Deputy Director, ODMRDD Medicaid Development and Administration, in a recent memo to the field.

### What does this mean?

It means that of the 11,290 individuals in Ohio’s MRDD system affected by the transition, 100% have successfully transitioned from the old county-based negotiated waiver rate system to the new statewide waiver reimbursement system. Moving forward, systems are now in place to make sure a county does not inadvertently use the pretransition codes when creating a new Payment Authorization for Waiver Services (PAWS) document. This should be helpful to County Boards of MRDD, as well as to our billing process.

In understanding the waiver transition it is important also to note that Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 5123:2-13-07(F)(2) states: “Individuals who share the Homemaker Personal Care (HPC) services of the same residential provider in the same setting, and whose service reimbursement has already been converted to the statewide 15-minute unit reimbursement system, shall convert to the daily billing unit reimbursement approach described in this rule within one year of the effective date of this rule.” (Effective December 31, 2008)

The ODMRDD is particularly pleased to note the completion of this waiver transition, as our request to work through this process over an extended period of time was granted by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and received the strong support of Governor Strickland’s office. We greatly appreciate the Governor’s leadership in this matter and the approval by CMS. In addition, when we agreed to make this transition in the time

allotted, it was done with a total commitment to making sure it was completed on time, and it was. (See <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/topics/waiver/transition.htm> for additional information.)

Stephan continues,

**“On behalf of ODMRDD, I would like thank all the county and provider staff who have worked so diligently to assure this project was completed within the designated timeframes. This has been a huge undertaking, and our success is reflective of our commitment to those we serve. Job well done!”**

John R. Corlett, Deputy Director, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) adds, “Congratulations to everyone at ODMRDD and the County Boards across the state. ODJFS and ODMRDD have worked closely together for several months to complete the transition and maintain the momentum needed to complete this work.”



### **3. National Forum on Disability Issues to Feature Presidential Candidates in Columbus, July 26<sup>th</sup>**



*Information provided courtesy of The Arc.*

The Ohio Disability Vote Coalition (ODVC) is co-hosting The National Forum on Disability Issues, a nonpartisan event that will feature the invited presidential candidates. The event is Saturday, July 26, 2008, from 12:30 pm – 3:30 pm at the First Church of God Conference and Technology Centre, 3480 Refugee Rd., Columbus, OH 43232. There is no charge to attend, and the event is open to the public.

The ODVC is co-hosting the historic event with the Washington, D.C.-based American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD). More than 70 national and state disability-related organizations, veterans groups, and others are co-sponsoring the event. While the Forum is free and open to the public, registration is required to attend. To register, visit [www.aapd.com](http://www.aapd.com).

Journalist, Judy Woodruff, of PBS' *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, will serve as event moderator. More than 1,000 participants from Ohio and neighboring states are expected to attend. The invited presidential candidates will address their disability policy positions on issues such as: Employment, Healthcare, Long-Term Community-based Supports, Housing, Transportation and Education. All are vital topics to people with disabilities. The event will be streamed 'live' on the Internet to a national audience, and will also be made available for broadcast to radio reading services throughout the United States.

The Forum will be the *only event of its kind* to take place in the country as the November General Election approaches, and coincides with the 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), landmark civil rights legislation that has improved the lives of the more than 50 million Americans who have disabilities.

“This unique opportunity allows voters with disabilities learn firsthand from the candidates themselves what each candidate’s positions are on disability issues and national policy that affect so many today,” said Sue Hetrick, ODVC co-chair, and director of advocacy at The Ability Center of Greater Toledo.

**The mission of the Ohio Disability Vote Coalition is to maximize the political power of Ohioans with disabilities through nonpartisan voter education, registration and participation of all people with disabilities at all levels of the election process.**

*For more information contact ODVC Sue Hetrick, co-chair [shetrick@abilitycenter.org](mailto:shetrick@abilitycenter.org)  
ODVC, 670 Morrison Road – Suite 200, Gahanna, OH 43230*



## 4. Children’s Buy-In Program, a New Initiative



A child might be eligible for CBI if he/she is:

- Younger than age 19
- A United States citizen and resident of Ohio
- In a family whose gross income is more than 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).
- Has not had any insurance for at least 6 months before enrolling
- Is not eligible for Medicaid

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) office of Ohio Health Plans has provided new information describing the Children’s Buy-In (CBI) program, which may assist many families whose income is too high to have qualified for Medicaid in the past. According to ODJFS, the program is one of Governor Strickland’s TurnAround Ohio initiatives that has helped expand health care coverage to more Ohioans including uninsured children.

CBI is a cost-sharing health care program for certain children with special needs or expensive insurance premiums. Children may qualify for this program if their families have an annual income that is more than 300% of the federal poverty level (about \$63,600 for a family of four). Applications are accepted online only. For more information, please visit: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/OHP/cbi/>.

In addition, Ohio’s Medicaid program is covering more Ohioans than ever before. For links to brochures, flyers, facts sheets and more, check out the TurnAround Ohio Medicaid Expansions Toolkit online at: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/OHP/tao/toolkit.stm>.



## 5. Caregivers Conference Focuses on Making Choices Faced by Aging Caregivers, as Well as for Senior Care

Serving Seniors Inc., a non-profit organization developed to educate seniors to make informed choices regarding healthcare, lifestyles, and finances, is hosting a Caregivers Conference on

August 7, 2008, at the Makoy Center, 5462 Center St. in Hilliard, OH 43026. Cost is \$10 and seating is limited. Contact Kim Jackson at 614-316-9002 for registration. Topics include effective financial planning, Medicaid myths, and homecare services.



## 6. Ohio Adult Sibling “Sibs” Conference, Nov. 7-8, 2008

**Reminder:** The Eighth Annual Ohio Adult Sibling Conference will be held November 7-8, 2008, at the Columbus Airport Marriott Hotel. The conference's goal is to promote sibling awareness and activity in the life of their brother or sister with a developmental disability. For registration and conference information, visit the website at [www.ohiosibs.com](http://www.ohiosibs.com). For additional information contact Tom Fish, Ohio SIBS, The OSU Nisonger Center 257C McCampbell Hall, 1581 Dodd Drive, Columbus, OH 43210. Phone 614-292-7550 or email [fish.1@osu.edu](mailto:fish.1@osu.edu).



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Ted Strickland, Governor John L. Martin, Director



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**Wednesday, July 23, 2008**  
**Volume 2, Issue 15**

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- 2. Policy Leadership Roundtable Discussion
- 3. Family Advisory Meeting Features Retiring DD Council Exec Director, Dave Zwyer
- 4. Students Ably Assist ODMRDD Staff
- 5. National Forum on Disability Issues, July 26 in Columbus
- 6. Twenty Old Rules Leave the Books ... Rescission of Purchase of Service Rules, and More
- 7. Sixth Annual MH/MR Conference, Sept. 3 & 4
- 8. Updated ADA Technical Assistance CD ROM Available

**Note: An article reviewing the “MR in MRDD” subject will appear in a future issue of Pipeline. Thanks to the many readers who shared their thoughts on this subject.**

## **1. Director Martin Marks Progress on Implementation of Futures Recommendations**

*- by ODMRDD Director, John Martin*

It is interesting to me to step back once in a while and take inventory of where we are in the implementation process that has followed the publishing of the ODMRDD Futures Committee Report on March 28, 2008 [CLICK HERE](#). The comprehensive report featured 31 recommendations, and has been distilled into what are termed ‘deliverables’ – or concrete outcomes to be completed – and there are currently 17 of those.

Some of these deliverables are as well-defined as adding a section or topic area to our website at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov), while others could be described as a combination of efforts to produce a specific result, such as to help families and caregivers make better-informed decisions or access a broader range of resources.

**It has been most gratifying to me that the momentum which began nearly a year ago at the outset of the mandated Futures Committee work has continued to gather energy. In addition to the many stakeholder groups, individuals, and families who have been involved in this process from the beginning, many ODMRDD staff are now digging into projects that will produce positive results. This concerted effort throughout the agency will allow us to find more ways to use available resources for the empowerment of people with disabilities throughout Ohio.**

I invite you to visit <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/futures/FuturesImplementationInformation.htm>, where we post updates and new information on Futures progress. When I am asked what is happening with 'Futures' now that the original committee has completed its many months of work aimed at improving Ohio's MRDD system, I am hard-pressed to come up with only one answer. The best answer is probably, "We are working on everything, all the time, and you will begin to see progress very soon!"

In August and September we will have more clear-cut direction in several areas currently under discussion, which will bring us closer to our five goals:

- Less complex service delivery, with fair and logical payment systems;
- Good stewardship of limited resources;
- Quality outcomes, through a combination of people and processes;
- Service delivery models designed in response to choices made by the people served, in alliance with community supports;
- A system-wide vision developed with stakeholders.



Looking to the Future

It will be my pleasure to update Pipeline readers again next month regarding this progress. Meanwhile, we continue to meet with stakeholders, individuals, and families to continue this important work. The Policy Leadership Roundtable, noted below, is a part of this effort.



## 2. Policy Leadership Roundtable Fosters Collaboration



**" Leaders don't force people to follow ... they invite them on a journey. " - Charles S. Lauer**

The table wasn't round, but the discussion around the table was lively July 16, as the second meeting of the Policy Leadership Roundtable took place in Columbus.

To support the work of implementing the Futures Committee recommendations, and to foster collaborative transformation of the MRDD service delivery system, ODMRDD Director John Martin has invited several system partners from the Committee to join forces, creating a Policy Leadership Roundtable. The Roundtable is intended to monitor the Department's progress implementing the 31 Futures recommendations [CLICK HERE](#), and includes a representative of each of the following organizations:

- ARC of Ohio
- Autism Society of Ohio

- Family Advisory Council
- Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD
- Ohio League for the Mentally Retarded
- Ohio Provider Resource Association
- Ohio Superintendents of County Boards of MRDD
- People First of Ohio

The group meets periodically to guide implementation of the recommendations, as well as to serve as a sounding board on emerging policy and legislative matters. Other system stakeholders and staff will provide input as content experts throughout the process.

At the July 16 meeting, the group reviewed and provided feedback on the first phase of Futures implementation. Lead ODMRDD staff representing Futures Implementation Teams [Implementation Team Organizational Structure](#) presented work in-process to the group, and addressed questions and concerns.

“This is phase one,” stated Michael Rench, Deputy Director, Community Services, who also leads the Services Management implementation team. “What we are trying to do is put in place several things that will move the MRDD system forward now, as well as in the future, toward the goals outlined in the Futures Report.” ODMRDD internal team leaders presented several ideas taking shape that will be brought forward in the coming months for broad review by the MRDD community.

One such proposal includes the establishment of a Family Advisory Council (FAC) in each county, comprised of individuals and families who receive services. The Councils would be independent of the local County Board of MRDD and have specific, well-defined roles connected to the County Board annual planning process. Roundtable participants discussed how the concept might be best communicated, and how it could be shaped to serve the needs of the local MRDD community.

Patrick Lanahan, Deputy Director, explained, “With this idea, like all the others, you will have the opportunity to see and shape it on its way towards implementation.” He added, “Be assured that this work will include in it key elements brought forth by the Futures Committee.”

Also discussed was the upcoming state budget planning process for fiscal years 2010 and 2011. Director Martin has engaged many stakeholders as the process moves forward, and the Policy Leadership Roundtable will play an important ‘clearinghouse’ role. He noted,

**“We want to be focused on positive actions and tangible outcomes. We want to think about how we can get something done soon, in a practical way, that moves ODMRDD toward the Futures goals. As we look at the overall 2010-2011 budget, we will be connecting the Futures recommendations to the available dollars to help us get where we need to be.”**

Visit <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/futures/FuturesImplementationInformation.htm> for information regarding progress made on Futures recommendations, Phase One deliverables, and the status of project workgroups, as shared with the Roundtable members on July 16.



### **3. Family Advisory Council Meeting Features Zwyer** **Retiring Exec Director, DD Council, Dave Zwyer Shares** **Information on Guardianship and Estate Planning**

*Photo courtesy DD Quarterly*



Dave Zwyer, who recently announced his retirement effective September 2008 as the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council ('DD Council') executive director, spoke to ODMRDD's Family Advisory Council (FAC) today on a subject he literally helped write the book on – Guardianship and Estate Planning. Dave will retire in September after leading the agency for nearly 12 years, and has, during his tenure there, significantly influenced disability policy in the State of Ohio.

#### **Dave Zwyer**

For example, while serving as chair of the Disability Law Committee of the Ohio State Bar Association, Zwyer co-edited a book for the legal community on special needs trusts, and also has written booklets about estate planning and guardianship. Peggy Martin, ODMRDD Family Advocate comments, "Dave Zwyer is a household name when it comes to estate planning and guardianship issues. Families depend upon his knowledge, and as an advocate in the field of MRDD, I have as well."

Family Advisory Council members welcomed Dave's wealth of information on the subject of guardianship and estate planning, and warmly wished him well in his future endeavors. FAC member and former president of People First of Ohio, John Hannah, noted, "Dave Zwyer has been very helpful with getting People First involved with the legislature of Ohio. We really appreciate his help."

Dave's commitment to Ohioans with disabilities is apparent, and we thank him for and recognize his efforts over the course of the past 12 years.



### **4. Students Aply Assist Staff at ODMRDD Central Office**

On July 17, 2008, Summer Work Experience students representing Functional Training Services, Inc. were recognized at a 'thank you' reception for their hard work and commitment to a five-week assignment at ODMRDD Central Office in Columbus. The students were presented a letter of recognition and thanks from Director John Martin, as well as letters of recommendation and a Certificate of Success to commend them for their efforts and acknowledge their performance in a competitive work environment.



*(Front) James (Jim) Coady and Brittany Arndt, and  
(Back) Kassin Mohamed and Patrick Riddle  
display their professional yet friendly demeanor,  
as well as their Certificates of Success for jobs well done.*

Participating students this year included Ben Etson, Robert Scott, Rebecca Anthony, Patrick Riddle, Anthony Galvin, Kassin Mohamed, Brittany Arndt, and James Coady. The students participated in two different shifts or crews during the course of the assignment, and performed various tasks including filing, typing, internet researching, mail delivery and pick-up, copying, phone back-up and working as a team to meet daily deadlines.

ODMRDD staff members Kimberley Oliver and Leslie Paull (Summer Work Experience site coordinators) acknowledge Peggy Martin (Family Advocate); Michele Kanode (Policy and Constituent Support); Joyce DeLeo and Debbie Lowe (Information Technology Services); and Debbie Hoffine, Debbie Brown and Kelly Erdy (Fiscal Administration) for their assistance in assigning daily tasks to the students. Special thanks also to Peggy Martin, Michele Kanode, Melody Moon, Lisa Walsh, Leslie Paull, Joyce DeLeo, and Debbie Brown for donations, including McDonald's gift cards, toward the reception.

Functional Training Services, Inc., the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired have provided competitive, transitional work for students from Columbus and surrounding city schools for more than ten years. This year, the nine students and two job coaches were assigned to the Rhodes State Office Tower, where ODMRDD Central Office occupies two floors.

*Congratulations to each of these students for a job well done.*



## **5. Reminder: National Forum on Disability Issues to Feature Presidential Candidates in Columbus, July 26<sup>th</sup>**

The Ohio Disability Vote Coalition (ODVC) is co-hosting The National Forum on Disability Issues, a nonpartisan event that will feature the invited presidential candidates or their designees, Saturday, July 26, 2008, 12:30 – 3:30 pm at the First Church of God Conference and Technology Centre, 3480 Refugee Rd., in Columbus. More than 70 national and state

disability-related organizations, veterans groups, and others are co-sponsoring the event. The Forum is free and open to the public, and registration is required to attend. To register, visit [www.aapd.com](http://www.aapd.com).

The ODVC is co-hosting the historic event with the Washington, D.C.-based American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD). Journalist, Judy Woodruff, of PBS' *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, will serve as event moderator. More than 1,000 participants from Ohio and neighboring states are expected. Topics to be addresses include policy positions on issues such as: Employment, Healthcare, Long-Term Community-based Supports, Housing, Transportation, and Education.

Sue Hetrick, ODVC co-chair, and director of advocacy at The Ability Center of Greater Toledo, states,

**"This unique opportunity allows voters with disabilities learn firsthand from the candidates themselves what each candidate's positions are on disability issues and national policy that affect so many today."**

The event will be streamed 'live' on the Internet to a national audience, and will also be made available for broadcast to radio reading services throughout the United States.

*For more information contact ODVC Sue Hetrick, co-chair [shetrick@abilitycenter.org](mailto:shetrick@abilitycenter.org)  
ODVC, 670 Morrison Road – Suite 200, Gahanna, OH 43230*



## **6. Twenty Old Rules Leave the Books ... Rescission of "Purchase of Service" (POS) Rules, and More**



*In February 2008, Governor Strickland issued an Executive Order, "Implementing Common Sense Business Regulation," that was intended to provide a blueprint for reform. It detailed various steps needed to ensure that while Ohioans' interests are protected, businesses do not suffer from needless paperwork and expenses to comply with state regulation. Legislators followed up by passing a bill to that effect, later signed into law.*

Governor Strickland's Executive Order hit another issue squarely on the head: "Proposed rules should focus on achieving outcomes rather than the process used to achieve compliance," the Governor wrote in that order. "The process" is precisely why many rules exist, and why some stay on the books beyond their useful life.

**The good news is that the ODMRDD has made excellent progress this month in rescinding 20 administrative rules for the former Purchase of Service (POS) program.**

The POS program served as a mechanism to fund residential services necessary for individuals to live in the community prior to development of the Residential Facility Waiver in the late 1990s. The rules will be rescinded effective July 31, 2008.

In another action to support common sense business regulation, ODMRDD filed its intent to rescind five rules related to Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waivers. Two of the rules contain out-of-date payment standards, no longer necessary since transition to the newer waiver reimbursement method on June 30:

- 5123:1-2-08 (Payment Standards for HCBS Individual Options Waiver)
- 5123:1-2-11 (Payment Standards for HCBS Waivers for Individuals Residing in Facilities Licensed and Operated in Accordance With Division (W) of Section 5123.18 and Section 5123.19 of the Revised Code and Enrolled on the Individual Options or Residential Facility Waiver)

Three of the rules slated for rescission pertain to services that ceased to exist on January 1, 2008:

- 5123:2-9-10 (HCBS Waivers – Day Habilitation)
- 5123:2-9-12 (HCBS Waivers – Payment Standards for Day Habilitation)
- 5123:2-9-13 (HCBS Waivers – Supported Employment)

A public hearing for these rules is set for August 22. For more details, visit ODMRDD's Rules Under Development website at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/rules/development.htm>

ODMRDD will continue to review and streamline rules as we move forward with the implementation of Futures recommendations.



## 7. Mental Health Aspects: Treatment and Support – Ohio's MH/MR Annual Conference, Sept. 3 & 4

*Mental Health Aspects, Treatment and Support*, the sixth annual conference for professionals and others focusing on mental health and mental retardation issues, will be held at the Crowne Plaza North Hotel in Columbus, Ohio, September 3 - 4, 2008. The conference, in collaboration with the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (NADD), is sponsored by:

Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH)  
Ohio Coordinating Center of Excellence in MI/MRDD  
Ohio Department of Mental Retardation & Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD)  
Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission  
Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council  
Governor's Council on People with Disabilities

According to advance conference materials, the following would benefit from the conference: Administrators • Psychologists • Direct Care Providers • Physicians • Educators • Residential Providers • Family Members • Social Workers • Nurses • Students • Persons with Disabilities • Vocational Staff • Psychiatrists.

The NADD is a not-for-profit membership association established for professionals, care providers and families to promote understanding of and services for individuals who have developmental disabilities and mental health needs. The mission of NADD is to advance mental wellness for persons with developmental disabilities through the promotion of excellence in mental health care. NADD sponsors regional, annual and international conferences, and provides consultation services.

*For more information on NADD visit [www.thenadd.org](http://www.thenadd.org)*



## 8. Updated ADA Technical Assistance CD ROM Available

The US Department of Justice (DOJ), Civil Rights Division has issued an updated Technical Assistance CD ROM that contains Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Status Reports, regulations, and other technical assistance documents.

Order on-line at <http://www.ada.gov/cd%20order%20forms/cdrequestform.htm> or call the DOJ Technical Assistance Line at 800-514-0301 (voice) or 800-514-0383 (TTY).



### Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)



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# *Pipeline* ... direct from the state ...

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



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We hope you enjoy Pipeline!

Please share your thoughts with us at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us)

**Wednesday, August 6, 2008**  
**Volume 2, Issue 16**

- 1. Results, August 5<sup>th</sup> Special Election, Preble County Board of MRDD Passes Levy
- 2. Director Martin Reports 'Phase One' Progress on Futures Implementation
- 3. National Forum on Disability Policy Spotlights ADA Amendments Act, Related Issues
- 4. Medicaid Buy In ... A New Scenario Empowering People
- 5. U.S. Senate Adopts ANCOR Resolution Designating Direct Support Professionals Week
- 6. Reminder: OSDA Conference, September 16-17

## **1. Results, August 5<sup>th</sup> Special Election – Preble County Board of MRDD Passes Levy**

*The following information is provided in cooperation with the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD.*

Congratulations to members of the Preble County Board of MRDD, Superintendent Diane Knupp, and all staff members for doing an outstanding job of educating their community about the need for additional money. As a result of their hard work,

**Preble County Board of MRDD passed a 1 mill continuing levy by nearly 53%.**

The final numbers were 2358 votes *for* the levy, and 2101 *against* (47%). This same levy request in March of this year failed by more than 1200 votes, and failed by about 400 votes in November 2007. According to Superintendent Knupp, the difference was,

**“The grassroots efforts by the volunteers, phone calls to voters, going door-to-door, and meeting with people. We talked, talked, talked.”**

She adds, “When the final numbers were announced, it was very emotional – there were about 15 people there who weren’t going to have jobs Monday if the levy didn’t pass.”

*Preble County Board of MRDD was the only County Board with a levy on the August 5 Special Election ballot.*



## **2. Futures Implementation**

### **Director Martin Reports Phase One Progress, Policy Leadership Roundtable Reviews Products**

Visit <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/futures/FuturesImplementationInformation.htm> for updated information regarding progress made on Futures recommendations.



Today, at the third meeting of the Policy Leadership Roundtable, participants reviewed the first group of ‘deliverables’ (products) related to the 31 recommendations of the MRDD Futures Committee. We took those recommendations, identified who would support that work internally, and defined the sequence in which it would be performed. Today we share the work we have completed to-date in Phase One, which includes 17 deliverables.

These deliverables are being presented as drafts for the field to review and provide feedback. We hope you will find the process to be an efficient way of moving forward. We continue to manage all of the Futures efforts as transparently and inclusively as possible, and take fresh approaches to achieve positive outcomes. This includes sharing drafts and works-in-progress.

**I invite the entire MRDD community to review this work, along with members of the Policy Leadership Roundtable. As you review this work, we hope you will note a number of things:**

- First, we have remained true to the recommendations given us by the Futures Committee. Our work, most definitely, will lead to the implementation of those recommendations.
- Second, these recommendations allow us to progress in accordance with the themes and values we stated as important at the outset:
  1. Less complex service delivery, with fair and logical payment systems;
  2. Good stewardship of limited resources;
  3. Quality outcomes, through a combination of people and processes;
  4. Service delivery models designed in response to choices made by the people served, in alliance with community supports;
  5. A system-wide vision developed with stakeholders.
- Third, we hope you will note some creativity in this work – ideas or concepts that one might not immediately connect to the Futures recommendations, but that are imbedded in the intent of those recommendations.

I am very pleased at the participation we have seen from staff and stakeholders as the implementation process moves forward, and am encouraged by the role of the Policy Leadership Roundtable, as it supports the work to implement system changes in Phase One, and looks at the challenges ahead in Phase Two. Thanks to each of you who has been a part of Phase One. – *John Martin*

#### **PIPELINE FEEDBACK REQUEST –**

**For updated information on the 17 deliverables presented today, please visit**

**<http://mrdd.ohio.gov/futures/FuturesImplementationInformation.htm> August 7, and respond to [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us) with any comments. We appreciate hearing from you.**



### 3. National Forum on Disability Policy Spotlights ADA Amendments Act, Related Issues

On July 26, 2008, the 18th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), thousands of people with disabilities, their families, friends, employers, and care providers convened in Columbus, or watched via a live webcast, as history was made. Republican presumptive presidential nominee *Senator John McCain* (R-AZ) and, on behalf of Democratic presumptive presidential nominee *Barack Obama* (D-IL), *Senator Tom Harkin* (D-IL) participated in a national forum on disability policy. ODMRDD was one of the many governmental entities represented at the forum.

Organized by the American Association of People with Disabilities and the Ohio Disability Vote Coalition, 84 national, state and local disability-related organizations sponsored the event that included spirited panel discussions, notable stars and political leaders from around the country. The forum focused on the importance of 35 million voters with disabilities having a strong voice in elections, and on the power that 54 million Americans with disabilities should have in setting public policy.

Actor, Robert David Hall, (coroner Dr. Albert Robbins on *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, who is a double amputee) spoke about how he came to see himself as a person with a disability and to embrace the power of that. He also spoke of the responsibility of people with disabilities to educate others about where political candidates stand on issues of interest, including health care, community living, and employment. Hall challenged each candidate to respect the needs of 54 million Americans with disabilities who are a vital thread in the nation's fabric.

In a panel discussion moderated by PBS Broadcaster Judy Woodruff, John Hannah, past President of Ohio People First, and ODMRDD Futures Subcommittee Member, commented on the status of the ADA and observed that Ohio's larger cities have done a good job of making their communities accessible, while smaller towns and villages are still struggling to obtain funding to make accommodations to sidewalks and buildings.

**A strong advocate of empowering people, Hannah also suggested, "The National Council for People with Intellectual Disabilities should be chaired by a person with an intellectual disability, because the chair sets the example and the agenda."**

Advocates for school-age youth, veterans, and a parent advocate also were on the panel. One such panelist, Rebecca Hare, observed, "The American dream is available, but it's not yet ADA compliant." After the panel discussion, the presidential campaign representatives had an opportunity to outline their positions on disabilities issues.

Senator Harkin stressed the need for economic self-sufficiency, self-determination, and passage of the ADA Amendments Act (H.R. 3195, S. 1881) and the Community Choice Act (H.R. 1621, S. 799) as vehicles to achieve these goals. He also noted that Senator Obama is the first presidential candidate to have a dedicated disability policy advisor. Speaking last, Senator McCain articulated his support of the ADA in 1990, as well as various bills to support veterans with acquired disabilities. However, he stated his opposition to the Community Choice Act, citing its cost as a barrier. Senator McCain expressed that all Americans should

live to the best of their ability and, for the first time publicly, said that he, “supported the idea of the House-passed ADA Amendments Act.”

The day ended with a screening of the Public Service Announcement, “Get out the Vote,” encouraging Americans with Disabilities to vote. This was followed by Darren Jernigan, Past Chair of the Tennessee Disability Commission and current member of the Nashville City Council, who provided four strategies that can make a difference:



## Feel the Power of the Disability Vote

1. Register to Vote – get in the fight!
2. Get involved in campaigns – run, volunteer, let people know who you are and what you care about.
3. Donate a little money – it can be \$10, not hundreds, candidates keep lists of contributors and communicate with them.
4. Get involved in the community – join, be a leader, share information, become someone who can get information out and influence others.

For additional information, access this link for a Webcast of the National Forum event: <http://player.broadbandvideo.com/VideoPlayer.asp?Station=disaboom&Id=58702&ShowOrClip=s&MediaType=v&ResizeX=&ResizeY=&CheckPayment=> or, visit the AAPD website at [www.aapd.com](http://www.aapd.com)

*Special Thanks to Lisa Walsh, ODMRDD Assistant Deputy Director, who attended the National Forum, and provided information contained above.*



## 4. Medicaid Buy In ... A New Scenario Empowering People



Ben Hollinger, Superintendent of the Hocking County Board of MRDD, is more than a little enthusiastic about the potential presented by the new availability of Medicaid Buy-In for Workers with Disabilities (MBIWD, or MBI). He notes,

**“The potential for improving peoples’ financial situations and allowing them to work without worrying about losing their healthcare coverage – this is huge. In fact, it has already helped one person we serve to obtain about \$500 in additional income per month.”**

Ben continues, “What people need to think about in terms of accessing the capability of Medicaid Buy-In, is to target the individuals who have a certain level of liability right now – what would be termed a large ‘patient liability’ or ‘spend-down’. They may have income

above the usual Medicaid guidelines, they may receive residential assistance, such as through the Individual Options (IO) waiver, and they are employed in the community. MBI also can help people who have a trust fund or other source of additional income that would have previously made them ineligible to access Medicaid funds.”

He adds, “It’s important that local County Board of MRDD service and support administrators (SSA’s) and local Department of Job and Family Services offices (which administer the MBI) work together closely now while this program is new. A year from now it will be a smoother road to determine who can be helped.”

### **Exactly What is Medicaid Buy-In?**

The Medicaid Buy-In program allows workers with disabilities to earn \$26,000 or more annually and keep their Medicaid coverage. Those earning more than \$15,600 a year pay premiums, which can be as low as \$10 a month. Each situation is determined individually.

The program was authorized last year by Ohio House Bill 119, and participants began enrolling in April 2008. MBI is designed to eliminate a disincentive to work, and enables this significant part of the workforce to access Medicaid benefits while contributing to the local economy. An MBI applicant must be employed at the time they file their MBI application with their local DJFS office.

**ODJFS encourages people with disabilities earning more than \$26,000 a year to apply and emphasizes that deductions are available for items such as medical expenses and adaptive equipment.**

Ben Hollinger explains, “I think we may have between 10 and 15 people we serve here in Hocking County who could be eligible for MBI, and we’re looking into how to get these individuals enrolled. It frees up some of our resources as well, once they are on a waiver, plus they can participate more meaningfully in the work force without the concern that they’re going to work themselves out of necessary medical benefits.”

### **MBI Update from the Office of Ohio Health Plans (OHP)**

The Office of Ohio Health Plans (OHP) reports that the number of MBIWD enrollees statewide is 456, as of July 31, 2008. More than 50% do not pay a premium. Hamilton, Cuyahoga, and Summit counties have enrolled nearly 40% of the participants in the first three months.

It is important to note that OHP continues to receive information indicating there are counties turning individuals away, stating that MBIWD does not exist or providing other misinformation. County Technical Assistance staff are available to assist with questions. Email [MEDICAID\\_ELIGIBILITY\\_TA@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:MEDICAID_ELIGIBILITY_TA@jfs.ohio.gov) for assistance.

*Information contained in this article includes excerpts from the Youngstown Vindicator, July 28, 2008, article, titled, “Disabled Ohioans Can Work and Keep Benefits,” and OHP news from Mary Butler, Olmstead Task Force. Thanks also to Ben Hollinger at Hocking County Board of MRDD for his examples of how this program can work.*



## 5. U.S. Senate Adopts ANCOR Resolution Designating Direct Support Professionals Week

The American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) is pleased to note that the U.S. Senate adopted a resolution July 14, 2008, designating the week beginning September 8, 2008, as [\*“National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week”\*](#) (S. Res. 613). ANCOR worked on the resolution with Senator Ben Nelson (D-NE) as a means of recognizing the important contribution that Direct Support Professionals (DSP’s) make in every community throughout the nation.

The designation of DSP Recognition Week coincides with ANCOR’s 2008 Governmental Activities Seminar and September 7-9 in Washington, DC. Senate Resolution 613 provides a specific opportunity for ANCOR members, Direct Support Professionals and others to discuss with Senators the role they play every day in enhancing the lives of people with disabilities of all ages, and the challenges faced in recruiting and retaining a competitively paid, quality workforce.

**PIPELINE FEEDBACK REQUEST – Send your response to [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us)  
? What would you say should be done to provide better support for direct support professionals?**

*For additional information about this resolution and about ANCOR, visit their website at: [www.ancor.org](http://www.ancor.org)*



## 6. Reminder

### Ohio Self-Determination Association Conference, Sept. 16-17

Registration deadline is September 5, 2008, for *“What People Really Want”* – the Ohio Self-Determination Assn. (OSDA) conference at the University Plaza Hotel, 3110 Olentangy River Rd. in Columbus. This year’s conference will address how to make home and community based waivers more self-directed; how to help people connect with their communities; and how to deal with issues of loneliness. The ideas for these topics are from people throughout Ohio, which is why the conference is titled, *“What People Really Want.”*

The conference is a unique opportunity for Ohioans to gather with self-advocates, family members, administrators, professionals, staff, friends, and experts on the subject of self-determination from across the country.



OSDA encourages people from all areas of the MRDD system to attend this conference. The complete conference brochure, including registration form and information about registration fees is at [mrdd.ohio.gov/families/self.htm](http://mrdd.ohio.gov/families/self.htm) and [www.ohiosda.org/Conference/2008Conf.pdf](http://www.ohiosda.org/Conference/2008Conf.pdf)

*For more information, please contact (614)890-9822 or email [Ohiosda@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Ohiosda@sbcglobal.net)  
Special thanks to Christina Miller for information contained in this article.*



### **Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)**



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**Wednesday, August 20, 2008**

**Volume 2, Issue 17**

- 1. Director Martin Addresses State Budget Issues
- 2. DOE Invites Public Comment on Autism Scholarship Rules Through September 15, 2008
- 3. Yes We Can! Statehouse Event August 29, 2008
- 4. Funding Empowerment: Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Supports Medicaid Buy-In
- 5. People First of Ohio, Ten-Year Anniversary Celebration, September 16, 2008
- 6. Opportunities for Success: Young Adult Transition Corps
- 7. Ohio Young Adult Sibling "SIBS" Conference, November 7-8, 2008

## **1. Director Martin Addresses State Budget Issues**

*Information contained below was shared with ODMRDD staff on August 14, 2008. Director Martin felt it was appropriate to address these same issues with Pipeline readership.*

I wanted to share directly with you my thoughts about Governor Ted Strickland's recent comments regarding the State of Ohio's budget, and resulting articles in the news media concerning the nation's struggling economy. Ohio's economy feels the same effects being experienced in nearly every other state. In addition, Ohio's overall revenue picture this biennium (and next) reflect tax reductions and reforms enacted by the previous Administration and taking effect during the Strickland Administration. Taken together, the budget is under significant pressure.

Despite this changing picture when it comes to the economy and the state's revenues, several important things have not changed ...

**First and foremost, during anxious and difficult times, ODMRDD's employees will continue, day in and day out, to show professionalism in maintaining a commitment to quality services, and to focus on the individuals and families we serve.**



**ODMRDD Director John Martin, introduces Governor Ted Strickland, at the final meeting of the MRDD Futures Committee, March 20, 2008.**

*Governor Strickland shows a keen interest in the work of each of his cabinet-level agencies. The ODMRDD is especially pleased to note the interest he has shown in the MRDD Futures Committee recommendations.*

Another thing that has not changed is that Governor Strickland shares the concern that all of us in the MRDD community have about the impact of budget reductions on *people*. And this includes not only the individuals and families needing services, but also the people and agencies supporting them. The Governor has stated many times his belief that we must live within our means, and that he will make the tough decisions necessary to deal with the budget situation. We are committed to making decisions that are guided by the principles of care and concern, while being good stewards of the state's resources.

**The Administration is focused on understanding the revenue picture. At this point I have not been given instructions regarding any more budget cuts this year. And, we all are hoping that August revenues look better than July.**



I recognize that we have just completed a difficult downsizing at ODMRDD, and it would be my hope that future budget reductions would not require staff reductions, but rather economies of operation and further collaboration with partners in the system, to further offset costs of doing business. It is essential that we maintain adequate staffing levels to carry out our essential mission:

**The Mission of the ODMRDD is continuous improvement of the quality of life for Ohio's citizens with developmental disabilities and their families.**

I understand the anxiety everyone is feeling -- I feel it, too. However, I am determined to be guided not by fears, but by hopes. I find that inspiration in our staff, and in the many wonderful people in the MRDD field. Most of all, I see such hope in the successes of the individuals and families we serve. We are involved in an exceptional enterprise that is about very simple things - Help and Hope.

I am committed to keeping our staff, stakeholders, and others with an interest in our work, fully apprised of any additional information regarding budget issues as we receive it. I also assure you that I will do the best I can to lead us through these challenges. *—John Martin*



## 2. Public Comment Invited Through September 15, 2008, on Autism Scholarship Program Rules

*The ODMRDD is a partner to the Ohio Department of Education in serving individuals with autism, and, as such, we share the following information:*



Autism Ribbon

Several months ago, Governor Strickland's office asked the ODMRDD to coordinate and facilitate the *Interagency Work Group on Autism*, and named us as the lead agency on the subject of autism. In that role, Director Martin spoke to our many partners on this issue at the April 2008 Autism Rally in Columbus, noting,

**“ We are working diligently to put together a comprehensive plan. In that effort we have some very aggressive short-term goals to clarify issues, and have developed an interagency work group that is looking at concrete ways to break down barriers to accessing services. We are also looking at the environment nationally ... particularly, how other states and other entities are accessing funds.”**

### Autism Scholarship Program Rules

Rule updating is a part of this comprehensive process, and is part of a five-year review plan required by Ohio Law. This requirement gives a department an opportunity to make any changes and/or any necessary clarifications to reflect the current language of the Ohio Revised Code. In the case of the Autism Scholarship, for example, the original law referred to the program as a ‘pilot program’, and the current law changed the name to the Autism Scholarship. Also, the maximum amount of the scholarship was \$15,000 and is currently \$20,000. Therefore, the rules must be updated to reflect these changes.

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) Office for Exceptional Children leads the process of updating the Autism Scholarship Program Rules. The current rules (3301-103-01 through 3301-103-08) of the *Ohio Administrative Code* define how the ODE administers the program. These rules have been in effect since the beginning of the Autism Scholarship, January 2004.

**The Autism Scholarship Program allows ODE to pay a scholarship to the parents of a qualified child with autism. The scholarship gives parents a choice of sending their child to a special education program, other than the one operated by their child's school district, to receive services outlined in the child's individualized education program (IEP).**

The process to update these rules requires and invites the input of all interested parties, including parents, providers, school districts, and autism-related organizations and interest groups. The ODE welcomes any input from the public.

Proposed draft rules are listed on the Ohio Department of Education's website at [www.ode.state.oh.us](http://www.ode.state.oh.us) . Use the ‘Search’ feature to find “Autism Scholarship Program”. Input may be submitted by email to [ocp\\_asp@ode.state.oh.us](mailto:ocp_asp@ode.state.oh.us) or by U.S. Mail, as noted on the site.



### 3. Yes We Can! Statehouse Event August 29, 2008



#### **The Ohio Statehouse**

Written by songwriter and ODMRDD employee, Jeff Smith, and business partner Michael Coleman (not Columbus Mayor, Michael Coleman!), the song was conceived as an anthem for recognizing the worth in everyone. The performance is hoped to gather a large audience for the last in the *Summer Fridays at the Statehouse* series, a free lunch-time outdoor performing arts series on the West Plaza (High Street) of the historic Statehouse. Anyone who is interested in joining the group on the lawn for this event is welcome to do so.

For more information, visit the following websites: [www.seeyourshadow.com](http://www.seeyourshadow.com); [www.ohiostatehouse.org](http://www.ohiostatehouse.org)



#### **Funding Empowerment**

### 4. Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Supports Medicaid Buy-In

The ODMRDD has received approval from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to apply for a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, which will provide a foundation for funding to support the Medicaid Buy-In program for people with disabilities, previously noted in [Pipeline Volume 2 Issue 16](#),

According to Kevin Aldridge, assistant deputy director in ODMRDD's Office of System Innovation and Technical Assistance, whose team is leading the initiative,

**“ This grant will assist in areas where there would otherwise be service gaps, which would not be addressed. This funding will allow us to accomplish some of the Futures ‘deliverables’ focusing on employment issues and opportunities for people with disabilities, and will support the ongoing work of the Olmstead Task Force.”**

The ODJFS Office of Ohio Health Plans announced earlier this month that Ohio applied for the Federal 2008 Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, continuing the work of educating Ohioans about the Medicaid Buy-In program for workers with disabilities. ODJFS and ODMRDD agreed that the 2008 application be developed and submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) by ODMRDD. Infrastructure Grant money cannot be used for direct services.



ODJFS has fully supported making this application to enable greater participation of working and eligible participants in the Medicaid Buy-In program. It allows workers with disabilities to earn \$26,000 or more annually and keep their Medicaid coverage. Those earning more than \$15,600 a year pay premiums, which can be as low as \$10 a month. Each situation is determined individually.

Medicaid Buy-In was authorized last year by Ohio House Bill 119, and participants began enrolling in April 2008. It is designed to eliminate a disincentive to work, and enables this significant part of the workforce to access Medicaid benefits while contributing to the local economy. An applicant must be employed at the time they file their Medicaid Buy-In application with their local ODJFS office.



## 5. People First of Ohio, Ten-Year Anniversary Celebration

People First of Ohio will celebrate their ten-year anniversary from 4 – 7 p.m. on September 16, at the University Plaza, 3110 Olentangy River Rd. in Columbus, as part of the Ohio Self Determination Association (OSDA) Conference.

**All 'People First' past and present members are invited to be a part of this milestone in advocacy in Ohio.**

Registration deadline is September 5, 2008, for the September 16-17 conference titled, “*What People Really Want.*” It is a unique opportunity to gather with self-advocates, family members, administrators, professionals, staff, friends, and experts on the subject of self determination from across the country.

The complete conference brochure, including registration form and information about registration fees is at [mrdd.ohio.gov/families/self.htm](http://mrdd.ohio.gov/families/self.htm) and also at [www.ohiosda.org/Conference/2008Conf.pdf](http://www.ohiosda.org/Conference/2008Conf.pdf)

*For more information, please contact (614)890-9822 or email [Ohiosda@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Ohiosda@sbcglobal.net)*



## 6. Opportunities for Success – Young Adult Transition Corps

*Futures Committee recommendations included items on the subject of improving transition services for young adults. Futures 'Deliverable #5' at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/futures/PhaseOneDeliverables.htm> describes efforts currently in the implementation phase. The Ohio State University Nisonger Center on Excellence in Developmental Disabilities offers this new opportunity supporting these efforts..*



### **What is Young Adult Transition Corps?**

Young Adult Transition Corps (YATC) is a unique AmeriCorps program of the Ohio State University Nisonger Center on Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. YATC is dedicated to serving young adults with disabilities and their families, and promoting successful transitions to adult life.

AmeriCorps/YATC members collaborate with high school students who have disabilities, to develop ongoing service learning projects. Members also engage these students in educational and community-based programs in the Columbus area that promote community service, community access, and social skill development -- three areas critical to successful transition.

### **Who are YATC members?**

Members come from a variety of backgrounds and include high school graduates, current college students (undergraduate or graduate), or college graduates.

**The Nisonger Center is looking for people with a strong desire to work with people with disabilities, and to give back to their community.**

Members receive a modest living stipend and an education award that can be used toward tuition or student loan payments. The largest benefit for members is the satisfaction of making a difference in their community.

### **Application Information**

Visit: <http://www.YATCOhio.org/getinvolved/getinvolvedmember.html>

Complete an application, and email, mail, or fax it to Jillian Ober at the information below.

*Jillian Ober, Program Manager  
The Ohio State University Nisonger Center  
327 McCampbell Hall, 1581 Dodd Drive, Columbus, OH 43210  
614.247.6392 (p)  
Jillian.Ober@osumc.edu, [www.YATCOhio.org](http://www.YATCOhio.org)*



### **Reminder**

## **7. Ohio Adult Sibling “SIBS” Conference, Nov. 7-8, 2008**



**OHIO SIBS**

**S I B S**  
SPECIAL INITIATIVES BY BROTHERS & SISTERS

The Eighth Annual Ohio Adult Sibling Conference will be held November 7-8, 2008, at the Columbus Airport Marriott Hotel. The conference's goal is to promote sibling awareness and activity in the life of their brother or sister with a developmental disability.

**This year, in conjunction with the SIBS conference, the National Sibling Leadership Network Conference will also be hosted at the Marriott on November 6-7. This conference is for adult siblings of people with disabilities interested in becoming more effective advocates for their brothers and sisters and for other people with disabilities**

For registration and conference information, visit the website at [www.ohiosibs.com](http://www.ohiosibs.com). For additional information contact Tom Fish, Ohio SIBS, The OSU Nisonger Center 257C McCampbell Hall, 1581 Dodd Drive, Columbus, OH 43210. Phone 614-292-7550 or email [fish.1@osu.edu](mailto:fish.1@osu.edu).



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Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
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Autism Ribbon

Jody Fisher, Project Manager for the Interagency Work Group on Autism gets right to the heart of the matter when asked how the group's work is proceeding. She comments, "The level of expertise, commitment, and interest shown by state agency representatives\* on the Work Group is absolutely energizing! As a team, all of the members are working diligently to identify opportunities that will further coordinate interagency efforts supporting people across the autism spectrum, statewide. I also am impressed by the continued commitment of our state partners in the face of difficult budget cuts." She adds,

**"The Work Group has developed a list of six priorities to assure that Ohio's efforts to serve individuals with autism are effective, broad-based, and an integral part of the State's plan for serving all individuals with developmental disabilities – this is our over-riding purpose."**

The six priorities are:

1. **Develop a statewide system of early identification of autism and other developmental disabilities;**
2. **Support evidence-based, high-quality, cost-effective models for intervention services for children with autism and other developmental disabilities;**

3. Build the number of qualified professionals serving individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities;
4. Increase support for caregivers and service providers through information exchange about Autism Spectrum Disorders and the service delivery system;
5. Promote the development of regional hubs that are affiliated with the university and medical communities, and serve as the foundation of effective service and support delivery for individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities.
6. Promote successful models for transitioning throughout the lifespan of an individual.

During the past few months, ODMRDD has visited with many families, advocacy groups, and autism-specific Ohio programs to gather information on the subject of treatment interventions, business models, and provider networks across the state. This information, paired with the extensive foundational work of the 2003 Ohio Autism Task Force (see box below) is guiding the Work Group, and creating a coordinated work plan.

Jody, who recently served as a facilitator for the Special Populations Subcommittee of the MRDD Futures Committee, was also quick to note that this fall will be a critical time to vet information to all stakeholder groups, and gather feedback on Work Group activities. She explains,

**“The continued success of our efforts will rely on reciprocal and open dialog among our state agency partners, and the families and providers who care for Ohioans with autism.”**

To assist in this process, ODMRDD is currently building the infrastructure for an Ohio Autism Website, soon to be hosted via [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov) that will provide cross-system information about the Interagency Work Group, and Ohio’s autism initiatives. The site will include a feedback mechanism for use by families and the field. In addition, a new waiver for children with intensive behavioral needs, including individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, is being designed with support from members of the Work Group.

Jody adds, “We are also partnering with the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) regarding the November 2008 ‘Network of Autism Training and Technical Assistance Programs’ (NATTAP) Conference in Columbus. This promises to be a comprehensive forum for information and networking on this subject.” For information about the conference, visit <http://www.ocali.org/>

*\* State agencies involved in the Work Group include The Governor’s Office; Executive Medicaid Management Administration (EMMA); Ohio Department of Job and Family Services; (ODJFS); Ohio Department of Health (ODH); Ohio Department of Education (ODE); Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (ORSC); OCALI; Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH); the Office of Budget and Management (OBM), and ODMRDD.*

#### **Additional Background Information**

In October, 2007, the ODMRDD prepared a status report to introduce the (then) new Administration to the 2003 Ohio Autism Task Force Recommendations. The recommendations were a compilation of work developed in the previous Administration by a time-limited task force of 22 members, 18 appointed by the Governor, and four members of the Ohio General Assembly. ODMRDD’s status report indicated the completion of several recommendations, but also revealed much work still to be done to address the service and support needs for Ohioans with autism spectrum and related disorders. In 2008, ODMRDD was designated as the lead agency for the Strickland Administration to assure that Ohio’s plan to serve individuals with autism was effective, broad-based, and an integral part of the State’s efforts for all individuals with developmental disabilities.



## 2. A New Approach: Positive Intervention Culture Initiative



**John McGee**

In conjunction with the Statewide Behavior Support Advisory Committee, September 2, 2008 saw the first of several planned trainings on the subject of *Gentle Teaching* – a component of the Positive Intervention Culture Initiative. This initiative is founded on the belief that all people can interact in ways that promote respect, trust, and safe and healthy relationships. The September 2 training in Columbus featured John McGee, internationally known expert on the subject of gentle teaching.

McGee reinforced the challenge that ODMRDD Deputy Director, Michael Rench, introduced:

**To work toward the reduction and eventual elimination of aversive interventions, especially timeout and restraint, except where there is imminent risk to health and safety.**

According to both Michael Rench and John McGee, the Positive Intervention Culture is essential for building an environment that enhances the quality of life for the individuals we support throughout the state. The ultimate goal of the trainings, which will be scheduled throughout the year, is an aversive-free approach to behavior supports.

Basically, the gentle teaching concept acknowledges that *all* people need to feel that others are connecting with them. They need to feel safe and loved. Once we take the time to see that the heart of each person is valued, then positive changes in behavior can result. Says McGee:

**“We are dealing with the inner person more than the behavior. We have seen some amazing results in doing this – all over the world. Ohio, are you ready for this?”**

Michael Rench adds, “We are committed to bringing approaches like gentle teaching to Ohio’s MRDD community, and are very excited about working with staff and service providers to support this kind of positive interaction with all of the people we serve.”

Look for more information on this subject in future issues of *Pipeline* and on the [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov) website in the coming months. Additional information about John McGee’s gentle teaching concept also is available at <http://www.gentleteaching.com/>



### **3. Key Staff Profile**

## **Brent Baer Named Superintendent, NODC**



Brent Baer, formerly Program Director at Northwest Ohio Developmental Center (NODC) has been named Superintendent of the Center, effective September 1, 2008. Baer earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Work from the University of Toledo, and a Master's Degree in Social Administration from Case Western Reserve University. He currently serves as an Adjunct Professor of Health Care Administration at Mercy College of Northwest Ohio, and previously served as a Program Consultant to the Epilepsy Center of Toledo.

Ginnie Whisman, ODMRDD Assistant Deputy Director, Developmental Centers, announced the staffing news, noting, "Brent has dedicated his career to providing services to individuals with MRDD, and brings a wealth of knowledge, skill, and experience to the job of Superintendent. I look forward to working with him in his new role as Superintendent. Brent was instrumental in the opening and on-going success of NODC's special unit for individuals who do not require Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) services. His commitment to working with these individuals and developing a team of staff to address the needs of people with unique challenges is remarkable."

*Additional information about all of Ohio's Developmental Centers is at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/residential/dc.htm>*



### **4. New Staff Profile**

## **Bryant Young Named Deputy Director, Information Technology Services**



**Bryant Young**

Bryant Young has been named Deputy Director, Information Technology Services (ITS) at ODMRDD Central Office in Columbus. Bryant joins the ITS team with more than 16 years of related experience, most recently at Sentry Insurance, as Enterprise Infrastructure Manager, in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. Bryant also was employed for several years by Huntington Bancshares Inc., most recently as Vice President, Group Manager, End User Computing. During his tenure with Huntington he managed a broad perspective of information systems projects, and developed a working knowledge of all facets of the information systems function.

Bryant was graduated from Central State University, is Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) Certified, and is a credentialed Project Management Professional.

ODMRDD Director, John Martin, noted,

“ I am very pleased to welcome Bryant to the ODMRDD leadership team, and know that our agency will benefit from the depth and breadth of his experience with IT systems in the private sector, as well as his demonstrated project management background.”

Bryant comments, “I’ve worked in all areas of IT, from writing code, to managing various aspects of infrastructure within IT, to leading a variety of high-level projects. I am really looking forward to working with the ODMRDD team in this leadership role, and returning to my native Ohio!” Bryant is relocating from Wisconsin, and joined ODMRDD staff in late August 2008.

With the hiring of Bryant, Kathy Luebbert, who held the (interim) position as Acting Deputy Director, ITS, will return to her previous responsibilities as Assistant Deputy Director, Quality Management.



## 5. Getting Involved in National Preparedness Month 2008

**September is...  
National Preparedness Month**

**Get a Kit, Make a Plan,  
Be Informed and Get Involved**



The U.S. Department of Homeland Security – and locally, the Ohio Department of Public Safety – sponsor National Preparedness Month (September) and encourage people to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and communities. This year’s effort includes a coalition of more than 600 national, regional, state, and local organizations pledging support. *The ODMRDD is among those supporting these efforts and will focus on what we can do to assist people with disabilities to be better prepared for emergency situations.*

### **ODMRDD Free Trainings**

Again this year as last, the ODMRDD will be offering free trainings to staff, individuals, and families throughout the state. A listing of these and other events will be posted at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov) this month, through the *National Preparedness Month* link on the homepage.



## At training, in 2007...

*Representatives of People First of Ohio attended the Emergency Preparedness training at Mount Vernon Developmental Center. They tested the contents of a sample preparedness kit, and found that, for one thing, the whistle worked just fine!*

The *Ready* campaign promotes activities that encourage individuals to have an *emergency supply kit*, make a family emergency plan, and be informed about the different threats that may affect them, as well as take steps to get trained and engaged in community preparedness and response efforts. Visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) or call 1-800-BE-READY to receive free materials.

The ODMRDD homepage features information about Emergency Preparedness Month at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/topics/preparedness-month/september.htm>



## 6. PAR Convention, 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, October 8-10, 2008

PAR is now accepting registrations for the 40th Annual Convention on October 8-10, 2008, at the Embassy Suites in Dublin, Ohio. The keynote speaker will be Al Condeluci, CEO, United Cerebral Palsy of Pittsburgh. His topic will be “*Why We Do What We Do: Bringing Back the Passion in Our Lives.*” PAR notes that Condeluci is a popular speaker on inclusion and social capital, and is a featured speaker at many national conferences.

Session topics include: Autism, habilitation, aging services, mental health, criminal justice, sexual offenders, leadership, positive behavior interventions, communication, recreation, music therapy, and much more. Convention information, booklets and group registration forms are available online at [www.par-ohio.org](http://www.par-ohio.org) and you can register either online, via Fax or U.S. mail, or contact Emma at the PAR Office at 419-522-6207.



### Reminder

## 7. Register NOW to Vote in the November General Election

*Thanks to Ohio Legal Rights Service (OLRS) for the following reminder. If you are in a position to help someone with a disability register to vote, or otherwise understand their voting rights, please keep this information in mind:*

In order to vote in the upcoming Ohio general election, individuals must be registered to vote at least 30 days before the election. The deadline to register for the November general election is *October 6, 2008*.

The OLRS website at <http://olrs.ohio.gov/asp/VoterFaqRegister.asp> features a Fact Sheet listing Frequently Asked Questions. You may also contact the Ohio Legal Rights Service Intake Department at (voice) 614-466-7264 or 1-800-282-9181; (TTY) 614-728-2553 or 1-800-858-3542.



## 8. *Pipeline Quarterly*

### Sneak Preview: Summer Issue Publishes September 5th

Here are just a few of the interesting people you will meet in the summer issue of ODMRDD's *Pipeline Quarterly* newsmagazine, publishing electronically on September 5<sup>th</sup>. If you are a regular *Pipeline* subscriber, you will receive it! Due to budget constraints, ODMRDD does not print (paper) hardcopies, however you are encouraged to print one, if desired, and review the colorful photos and articles at your leisure.



'Safety Tycoons' from Gallia County



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5. Promote the development of regional hubs that are affiliated with the university and medical communities, and serve as the foundation of effective service and support delivery for individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities.
6. Promote successful models for transitioning throughout the lifespan of an individual.

During the past few months, ODMRDD has visited with many families, advocacy groups, and autism-specific Ohio programs to gather information on the subject of treatment interventions, business models, and provider networks across the state. This information, paired with the extensive foundational work of the 2003 Ohio Autism Task Force (see box below) is guiding the Work Group, and creating a coordinated work plan.

Jody, who recently served as a facilitator for the Special Populations Subcommittee of the MRDD Futures Committee, was also quick to note that this fall will be a critical time to vet information to all stakeholder groups, and gather feedback on Work Group activities. She explains,

**“The continued success of our efforts will rely on reciprocal and open dialog among our state agency partners, and the families and providers who care for Ohioans with autism.”**

To assist in this process, ODMRDD is currently building the infrastructure for an Ohio Autism Website, soon to be hosted via [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov) that will provide cross-system information about the Interagency Work Group, and Ohio’s autism initiatives. The site will include a feedback mechanism for use by families and the field. In addition, a new waiver for children with intensive behavioral needs, including individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, is being designed with support from members of the Work Group.

Jody adds, “We are also partnering with the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) regarding the November 2008 ‘Network of Autism Training and Technical Assistance Programs’ (NATTAP) Conference in Columbus. This promises to be a comprehensive forum for information and networking on this subject.” For information about the conference, visit <http://www.ocali.org/>

*\* State agencies involved in the Work Group include The Governor’s Office; Executive Medicaid Management Administration (EMMA); Ohio Department of Job and Family Services; (ODJFS); Ohio Department of Health (ODH); Ohio Department of Education (ODE); Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (ORSC); OCALI; Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH); the Office of Budget and Management (OBM), and ODMRDD.*

#### **Additional Background Information**

In October, 2007, the ODMRDD prepared a status report to introduce the (then) new Administration to the 2003 Ohio Autism Task Force Recommendations. The recommendations were a compilation of work developed in the previous Administration by a time-limited task force of 22 members, 18 appointed by the Governor, and four members of the Ohio General Assembly. ODMRDD’s status report indicated the completion of several recommendations, but also revealed much work still to be done to address the service and support needs for Ohioans with autism spectrum and related disorders. In 2008, ODMRDD was designated as the lead agency for the Strickland Administration to assure that Ohio’s plan to serve individuals with autism was effective, broad-based, and an integral part of the State’s efforts for all individuals with developmental disabilities.



## 2. A New Approach: Positive Intervention Culture Initiative



**John McGee**

In conjunction with the Statewide Behavior Support Advisory Committee, September 2, 2008 saw the first of several planned trainings on the subject of *Gentle Teaching* – a component of the Positive Intervention Culture Initiative. This initiative is founded on the belief that all people can interact in ways that promote respect, trust, and safe and healthy relationships. The September 2 training in Columbus featured John McGee, internationally known expert on the subject of gentle teaching.

McGee reinforced the challenge that ODMRDD Deputy Director, Michael Rench, introduced:

**To work toward the reduction and eventual elimination of aversive interventions, especially timeout and restraint, except where there is imminent risk to health and safety.**

According to both Michael Rench and John McGee, the Positive Intervention Culture is essential for building an environment that enhances the quality of life for the individuals we support throughout the state. The ultimate goal of the trainings, which will be scheduled throughout the year, is an aversive-free approach to behavior supports.

Basically, the gentle teaching concept acknowledges that *all* people need to feel that others are connecting with them. They need to feel safe and loved. Once we take the time to see that the heart of each person is valued, then positive changes in behavior can result. Says McGee:

**“We are dealing with the inner person more than the behavior. We have seen some amazing results in doing this – all over the world. Ohio, are you ready for this?”**

Michael Rench adds, “We are committed to bringing approaches like gentle teaching to Ohio’s MRDD community, and are very excited about working with staff and service providers to support this kind of positive interaction with all of the people we serve.”

Look for more information on this subject in future issues of *Pipeline* and on the [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov) website in the coming months. Additional information about John McGee’s gentle teaching concept also is available at <http://www.gentleteaching.com/>



### **3. Key Staff Profile**

## **Brent Baer Named Superintendent, NODC**



Brent Baer, formerly Program Director at Northwest Ohio Developmental Center (NODC) has been named Superintendent of the Center, effective September 1, 2008. Baer earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Work from the University of Toledo, and a Master's Degree in Social Administration from Case Western Reserve University. He currently serves as an Adjunct Professor of Health Care Administration at Mercy College of Northwest Ohio, and previously served as a Program Consultant to the Epilepsy Center of Toledo.

Ginnie Whisman, ODMRDD Assistant Deputy Director, Developmental Centers, announced the staffing news, noting, "Brent has dedicated his career to providing services to individuals with MRDD, and brings a wealth of knowledge, skill, and experience to the job of Superintendent. I look forward to working with him in his new role as Superintendent. Brent was instrumental in the opening and on-going success of NODC's special unit for individuals who do not require Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) services. His commitment to working with these individuals and developing a team of staff to address the needs of people with unique challenges is remarkable."

*Additional information about all of Ohio's Developmental Centers is at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/residential/dc.htm>*



### **4. New Staff Profile**

## **Bryant Young Named Deputy Director, Information Technology Services**



**Bryant Young**

Bryant Young has been named Deputy Director, Information Technology Services (ITS) at ODMRDD Central Office in Columbus. Bryant joins the ITS team with more than 16 years of related experience, most recently at Sentry Insurance, as Enterprise Infrastructure Manager, in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. Bryant also was employed for several years by Huntington Bancshares Inc., most recently as Vice President, Group Manager, End User Computing. During his tenure with Huntington he managed a broad perspective of information systems projects, and developed a working knowledge of all facets of the information systems function.

Bryant was graduated from Central State University, is Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) Certified, and is a credentialed Project Management Professional.

ODMRDD Director, John Martin, noted,

“ I am very pleased to welcome Bryant to the ODMRDD leadership team, and know that our agency will benefit from the depth and breadth of his experience with IT systems in the private sector, as well as his demonstrated project management background.”

Bryant comments, “I’ve worked in all areas of IT, from writing code, to managing various aspects of infrastructure within IT, to leading a variety of high-level projects. I am really looking forward to working with the ODMRDD team in this leadership role, and returning to my native Ohio!” Bryant is relocating from Wisconsin, and joined ODMRDD staff in late August 2008.

With the hiring of Bryant, Kathy Luebbert, who held the (interim) position as Acting Deputy Director, ITS, will return to her previous responsibilities as Assistant Deputy Director, Quality Management.



## 5. Getting Involved in National Preparedness Month 2008

**September is...  
National Preparedness Month**

**Get a Kit, Make a Plan,  
Be Informed and Get Involved**



The U.S. Department of Homeland Security – and locally, the Ohio Department of Public Safety – sponsor National Preparedness Month (September) and encourage people to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and communities. This year’s effort includes a coalition of more than 600 national, regional, state, and local organizations pledging support. *The ODMRDD is among those supporting these efforts and will focus on what we can do to assist people with disabilities to be better prepared for emergency situations.*

### **ODMRDD Free Trainings**

Again this year as last, the ODMRDD will be offering free trainings to staff, individuals, and families throughout the state. A listing of these and other events will be posted at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov) this month, through the *National Preparedness Month* link on the homepage.



## At training, in 2007...

*Representatives of People First of Ohio attended the Emergency Preparedness training at Mount Vernon Developmental Center. They tested the contents of a sample preparedness kit, and found that, for one thing, the whistle worked just fine!*

The *Ready* campaign promotes activities that encourage individuals to have an *emergency supply kit*, make a family emergency plan, and be informed about the different threats that may affect them, as well as take steps to get trained and engaged in community preparedness and response efforts. Visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) or call 1-800-BE-READY to receive free materials.

The ODMRDD homepage features information about Emergency Preparedness Month at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/topics/preparedness-month/september.htm>



## 6. PAR Convention, 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, October 8-10, 2008

PAR is now accepting registrations for the 40th Annual Convention on October 8-10, 2008, at the Embassy Suites in Dublin, Ohio. The keynote speaker will be Al Condeluci, CEO, United Cerebral Palsy of Pittsburgh. His topic will be “*Why We Do What We Do: Bringing Back the Passion in Our Lives.*” PAR notes that Condeluci is a popular speaker on inclusion and social capital, and is a featured speaker at many national conferences.

Session topics include: Autism, habilitation, aging services, mental health, criminal justice, sexual offenders, leadership, positive behavior interventions, communication, recreation, music therapy, and much more. Convention information, booklets and group registration forms are available online at [www.par-ohio.org](http://www.par-ohio.org) and you can register either online, via Fax or U.S. mail, or contact Emma at the PAR Office at 419-522-6207.



### Reminder

## 7. Register NOW to Vote in the November General Election

*Thanks to Ohio Legal Rights Service (OLRS) for the following reminder. If you are in a position to help someone with a disability register to vote, or otherwise understand their voting rights, please keep this information in mind:*

In order to vote in the upcoming Ohio general election, individuals must be registered to vote at least 30 days before the election. The deadline to register for the November general election is *October 6, 2008*.

The OLRS website at <http://olrs.ohio.gov/asp/VoterFaqRegister.asp> features a Fact Sheet listing Frequently Asked Questions. You may also contact the Ohio Legal Rights Service Intake Department at (voice) 614-466-7264 or 1-800-282-9181; (TTY) 614-728-2553 or 1-800-858-3542.



## 8. *Pipeline Quarterly*

### Sneak Preview: Summer Issue Publishes September 5th

Here are just a few of the interesting people you will meet in the summer issue of ODMRDD's *Pipeline Quarterly* newsmagazine, publishing electronically on September 5<sup>th</sup>. If you are a regular *Pipeline* subscriber, you will receive it! Due to budget constraints, ODMRDD does not print (paper) hardcopies, however you are encouraged to print one, if desired, and review the colorful photos and articles at your leisure.



'Safety Tycoons' from Gallia County



### Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)



The ODMRDD toll-free hotline number for reporting abuse/neglect and other MUIs is **1-866-313-MRDD (6733)**. Please note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of MRDD, however, it is understood that there may be times an individual, staff member, or family member may feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember that the hotline number exists, and is to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.



### *Pipeline feedback ... direct from you to the state ...*

*Questions? Comments?* *Pipeline* is an electronic publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD), distributed approximately twice monthly to update and inform readers of time-sensitive, relevant information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us about *Pipeline* at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us), or contact Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us), phone (614) 644-0262.

**Editor's Notes:** ODMRDD values subscriber confidentiality and does not intentionally share subscriber addresses with others. *However, in the event of a public records request, the ODMRDD will comply with all applicable Public Records Laws.*

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# Pipeline ... Extra!

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



A *Pipeline* EXTRA will be published as needed to cover hot news.  
Visit us at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov)

Wednesday, September 10, 2008

## State Budget, as Impacts ODMRDD

### Governor Takes Action to Preserve Balanced Budget

Governor Ted Strickland today ordered \$540 million in budget adjustments in order to assure Ohio's budget remains in balance. As the national economic slowdown continues to deprive Ohio of expected revenues pertaining to state budget issues, it presents a challenging environment for the state.

**The cuts take the form of a 4.75% across-the-board reduction for all agencies, while holding harmless homestead tax cuts, some education line-items, a children's health care expansion and tuition freezes for state colleges and universities.**

ODMRDD and other agencies will continue to work with the Governor's Office to ensure that Ohio maintains a balanced budget, in a way that strives to reduce harm to the state's ability to serve the people of Ohio. ODMRDD Director John Martin stated,

**"These are tough economic times and we will be making tough decisions, but we will be doing that in a way that is guided by our focus on our essential mission - services for individuals and families."**

When confronted with major changes, having reliable information helps us to deal with what will happen and what must be done. ODMRDD leadership is mindful of and sensitive to the impact that required budget changes will have on our systems, and we are absolutely committed to sharing information in an open and inclusive fashion during these difficult times. Earlier today ODMRDD Director John Martin, Deputy Director Ann Rengert and Deputy Director Patrick Lanahan spoke personally with key stakeholders to address the budget issues.

The ODMRDD Administration is focused on understanding the revenue picture, and will work to address cost-saving opportunities that attempt to minimize the impact of budget cuts on services.

"Our department has approached each of the budget reductions made necessary by these difficult circumstances from the perspective of preventing direct cuts to the field as much as possible," Director Martin said. "I recognize that the reductions will be painful and not without impact in your communities. We will be working with County Boards to see how together we can work to mitigate the impact on people being served."

Of the \$540 million in budget reduction measures, \$198 million will come from agency budget reductions. The remaining \$342 million shortfall will be made up through a variety of cash management actions. At ODMRDD, this means a reduction of \$16.9 million. The first phase of cuts occurring earlier this year were absorbed by Central Office Administration, including taking a multi-tiered approach as it relates to staffing, a reduction to increased funds slated for protection services, and adjusting the census at Developmental Centers.

For this second phase of reductions, it will be necessary to once again look at the ODMRDD Central Office Administration, as well as make further reduction to protective services. As Governor Strickland said in his announcement today, unlike the first round of cuts, this round will significantly affect county subsidies. Through this phase of reductions we have maintained the GRF dollars needed to maintain the Medicaid waivers.

So far the approximate figures for the areas affected are:

- **Central Office Administration** - \$273,555
- **Protective Services** – A reduction of \$127,595
- **Residential and Support Services** – A reduction of \$554,642
- **Family Support Services** – A reduction of \$624,501
- **County Board Subsidies** – A reduction of \$14,059,796
- **Tax Equity** – A reduction of \$1,260,000

As with the previous round of budget reductions, ODMRDD offers the email feedback system at [budget-rumors@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:budget-rumors@odmrdd.state.oh.us) for any questions you may have as this process moves forward. Please consult us, not the rumor mill, regarding specific concerns, or information you wish to have verified, and someone will respond to you directly with accurate, up-to-date information.



### *Pipeline Extra feedback ... direct from you to the state ...*

*Questions? Comments?* *Pipeline Extra* is a publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) and is distributed infrequently, to highlight breaking news in the MRDD arena. The regular *Pipeline* publication publishes twice monthly to inform readership of relevant information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us) or contact Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us) , phone (614) 644-0262.

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# Pipeline . . . direct from the state . . .

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



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**Wednesday, September 17, 2008**  
**Volume 2, Issue 19**

- 1. Governor Strickland Supports Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Awareness
- 2. People First of Ohio Celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- 3. Ohio Provider Resource Assn. (OPRA) Conference Honors Many
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- 8. Ohio Dept. of Administrative Services Provides Opportunity to Network for Success
- 9. Ohioans Still Eligible for Economic Stimulus Checks

Reminder: PAR Conference, 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, October 8-10, 2008

Reminder: Register NOW to Vote in the November General Election—reminder

## 1. Governor Strickland Promotes FASD Awareness



**Did you know that Governor Strickland has designated September as “National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Prevention and Awareness Month” in Ohio?**

To help raise awareness around Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), and around other alcohol and drug addiction treatment and recovery, Governor Ted Strickland has designated September 2008 as *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Prevention and Awareness Month* in Ohio.

**The designation encourages citizens to observe the month to promote awareness of the dangers of women consuming alcohol during the entire nine months of pregnancy.**

FASD is an ‘umbrella term’ describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drinks alcohol during pregnancy. These effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities with possible lifelong implications.

Early diagnosis and treatment for FASD can help children reach their fullest potential, lessen secondary disabilities, substance abuse issues, and disrupted school experiences, and help families better understand and cope with FASD.

The ODMRDD currently has an Interagency Agreement and a close working relationship with the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS) in support of Ohio's FASD Initiative to promote a message of prevention, enhance early detection and referral for services, and increase effective and evidenced-based intervention strategies.

**FASD website at [www.notasingledrop.org](http://www.notasingledrop.org)**

Under ODADAS' leadership, several other state agencies including the ODMRDD have formed the Statewide FASD Steering Committee. The Committee's primary goals are public awareness and FASD-specific education & training for agencies and other professionals. For more information and up-to-date FASD news and resources visit: [www.NotASingleDrop.org](http://www.NotASingleDrop.org).

The FASD Statewide Steering Committee is a partnership that includes representatives from nine state agencies, two universities, providers, and parents. *The mission is to establish efficiency in state systems resource allocation, coordination of services, and augmentation of available resources to address and prevent FASD.*

**FASD is 100 percent preventable!**

**Prenatal exposure to alcohol is the leading cause of preventable birth defects, mental retardation, learning disabilities, attention deficits and behavior disorders.**

Each year, as many as 40,000 babies are born with FASD, costing the nation about \$4 billion, according to the FASD Center for Excellence. In Ohio, Department of Health officials estimate that FASD affects approximately one in 100 births at a cost to taxpayers of nearly \$300 million annually for providing special services for education, juvenile justice, medical and mental health services, foster care, and unemployment.

Director of ODADAS, Angela Cornelius Dawson, notes, "Prenatal exposure to alcohol is the leading cause of preventable birth defects in Ohio. In response to that knowledge, our message is simple -- if you are pregnant, nursing, or even thinking about getting pregnant, no amount of alcohol is safe."

Ohio's FASD Prevention and Awareness Month builds upon the success of International Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Awareness Day (observed on the ninth day of the ninth month, annually) and aims to raise awareness that *no amount of alcohol is safe to consume during pregnancy, and that help is available for those families already affected.*



## **2. People First of Ohio Celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Ask Mary Brewster if one thing sticks out in her mind about her last ten years with *People First of Ohio*, and she's quick to say "Linda".

"Linda" is Linda Kunik, past president of People First of Ohio. Mary remembers the quiet woman sitting in the back of the room at board meetings, able to tell Mary about her desire to be up front, but too shy to make her way toward the front of the room.

"I encouraged her to speak out, and say what she felt," Brewster said. Not long afterward Linda was President of People First of Ohio, and Brewster says her story is the perfect example of why People First is an organization essential to the advancement of self advocacy in Ohio.

“Linda is a person I always think about as ‘People First’,” Brewster said, adding,

**“I have seen so much growth in the individuals who have participated. You can plant a seed in them and watch as they turn into better advocates for themselves.”**

Brewster was one of many celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of People First of Ohio during the Ohio Self Determination Association (OSDA) Annual Conference in Columbus this week. An advisor to the organization, Brewster received the “Advisor of the Decade” award during the ceremony.

The room was decorated in red, white, and blue, celebrating America’s freedom – and individual freedom as self advocates. In keeping with the patriotic theme, each person wore a red, white, and blue T-shirt that marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and they danced to favorite songs as a DJ kept the music playing, including party staples like “YMCA”. Everyone, including People First members and staff, shared memories of the past ten years and looked toward the future.

“I just enjoyed volunteering, so I got more involved,” Advocacy Director Joellen Hunter said of her initial involvement with People First. She explains,

**“Just watching the changes in the last ten years – the growth of people – they’re not afraid to speak out for themselves, and will tell you what they want. It’s overwhelming.”**

“We started with a wing and a prayer,” John Hannah remembers of 1998, the year People First of Ohio was created. Hannah is a past treasurer of People First, and was president from 2003-2006. “It was a group effort, and I think we are doing pretty good.”

So good, in fact, that this ten-year-old organization was given a seat by the Strickland Administration on the Futures Committee and the Policy Leadership Roundtable, impacting the direction ODMRDD takes with its Futures Implementation process.

What’s next for this organization? Mary Brewster foresees a bright future.

“My vision is that we will have more chapters,” she said. People First of Ohio has 51 chapters in 47 counties. “We’ll see a lot more people advocating for themselves. That will be a great change.”



### **3. Ohio Provider Resource Assn. (OPRA) Conference Honors Many**

Phyllis Thomas smiled broadly for the camera as she held the plaque honoring her work, beaming as bright as the small glass award, a symbol of the effort and dedication she had put into her work at Living Arrangements for the Developmentally Disabled.

Thomas was one of seven individuals honored as *Outstanding Frontline Supervisor* at the awards ceremony during the Ohio Provider Resource Association’s (OPRA) 2008 Fall Conference in Dublin, Ohio, September 15 -16. The ceremony was one of many high points during the conference, and served as way to recognize the work of providers around the state.

The event honored dozens of people in several categories: Behind The Scenes; Outstanding Volunteer; Outstanding Frontline Supervisor; Outstanding Team; and, Outstanding Direct Support Professionals.

“Phyllis is a jewel in the crown of humanity,” said OPRA Board of Trustees member Sister Marianne Van Vurst. “This awards ceremony is just a small way to recognize the work you do to improve the lives of those we serve.”

Founded in 1974, OPRA is a non-profit organization that represents community-based providers of services to individuals with disabilities. The OPRA Annual Fall Conference is an opportunity for the more than 300 attendees to interact with hundreds professionals within the field.

Guest speakers at the event included ODMRDD Director John Martin and Olegario (Ollie) Cantos, Special Counsel to the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice. Cantos, who has been blind since birth, discussed fostering closer ties between the Justice Department and disability rights leaders at all levels in his presentation, *Reaching Success by Exercising Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship*.

Director Martin provided an update regarding the Futures Implementation process and the statewide budget adjustment announced by Governor Ted Strickland last week.

“I am thrilled to have the opportunity to come here and talk with OPRA about the progress and support we have seen from staff and stakeholders as the Futures Implementation process moves forward,” Director Martin said, adding,

**“We are going to be making some tough decisions, but I am confident that the Futures work we have done will set a solid path for us to walk down together as we continue to focus on our essential mission - services for individuals and families.”**

Several of the Futures Implementation Team Leaders -- including ODMRDD Deputy Directors Patrick Lanahan, Michael Rench, Patrick Stephan, Ann Rengert, and Chief Legal Counsel Kate Haller – presented information and responded to questions regarding the Phase One Deliverables released last month, and posted on the ODMRDD website at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/futures/MRDDFuturesUpdates.htm>

The conference provided a forum for providers to make important contacts, and learn new and innovative ways to serve their communities.

OPRA President Than Johnson stated,

**“The real lessons of what we do in this field of work lay with those on the front line every day. Without these people, and others like them, the magic doesn’t happen.”**

*Information about the implementation of MRDD Futures Committee recommendations is frequently updated at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/futures/MRDDFuturesUpdates.htm>*



## **4. Annual National Preparedness Month Campaign** **Promoting Preparedness for People with Disabilities**

On September 11, 2008, ODMRDD joined with many agency partners at the Ohio Statehouse in Columbus to observe *Patriot's Day* along with *National Preparedness Month* -- a nationwide effort encouraging Americans to take steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses, and schools.

The 2008 National Preparedness Month campaign in Ohio is spearheaded by the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS), the ODPS Ohio Emergency Management Agency, and Ohio Homeland Security. Partnering agencies from across the state hosted information tables and highlighted the importance of emergency preparedness, targeting the needs of specific groups and offering assistance in connecting people with a variety of needed services.



#### **Partners in Preparedness**

*Ann Weisent, ODMRDD Review Manager and Safety Committee member, shares information about emergency preparedness kits for people with disabilities. The display featured kits made by employees at Vinton County MRDD.*



**The September 11<sup>th</sup> Memorial Field of Flags** honored the 2999 victims who died at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and in the Pennsylvania field where Flight 93 crashed.

“This year’s campaign builds upon the success of past campaigns and relationships we have been developing with partners as part of our everyday business,” said ODPS Director Henry Guzmán. “We are strengthening those relationships to engage families, schools, businesses, and all of Ohio’s diverse communities to ensure that everyone in Ohio can be better prepared to respond to an urgent situation.”

**Getting the word out is critical to encouraging all Ohioans, including Ohioans with disabilities, to make an emergency plan, be informed about the types of emergencies that could occur in their communities, and know appropriate responses to them.**

ODMRDD Review Manager and Safety Committee member, Ann Weisent, encourages self-advocacy organizations and individuals who may be interested in a group training on the subject of emergency preparedness to contact her at [ann.weisent@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:ann.weisent@dmr.state.oh.us). She notes,

**“ I especially like the idea of discussing a Preparedness Plan in a person’s annual overall Individual Service Plan. It makes a lot of sense, and can make everyone feel more comfortable in an emergency situation. ”**

Ohioans experienced a true ‘preparedness moment’ this month already, as hurricane-force winds left many without power for a number days – a real reminder of the importance of preparedness. ODPS’ preparedness website at [www.ready.ohio.gov](http://www.ready.ohio.gov) contains resources to help Ohioans make a plan, put together an emergency kit and share information with families, coworkers, and neighbors. In addition, the ODMRDD website at

<http://mrdd.ohio.gov/topics/preparedness-month/september.htm> contains helpful information, including a 'Be Prepared' flyer, courtesy of Hamilton County MRDD.



## 5. Key Staff Profile

### Cindy Meeker to Lead Tiffin Developmental Center



Cynthia A. (Cindy) Meeker has been named Superintendent at Tiffin Developmental Center (TDC) in Tiffin, OH. Cindy most recently served as Program Director at TDC, and previous to that was Assistant Program Director. In 1983 she began her career at TDC as a Qualified Mental Retardation Professional (QMRP). Cindy earned a Bachelor of American Studies/Health and Physical Education Degree from Heidelberg College, and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Tiffin University.

#### Cindy Meeker

Ginnie Whisman, ODMRDD Assistant Deputy Director, Developmental Centers, announced the hiring decision in early September, and noted,

**“Cindy has dedicated her entire career to the individuals, families, and staff at Tiffin Developmental Center. She brings a lot of energy and enthusiasm to the job. TDC will benefit tremendously from having Cindy as a full time Superintendent, and I look forward to working with her in this next phase of her career. I'm confident she will provide excellent leadership.”**

Located in Seneca County, Tiffin Developmental Center serves the following counties: Williams, Fulton, Lucas, Ottawa, Defiance, Henry, Wood, Sandusky, Erie, Paulding, Putnam, Hancock, Seneca, Huron, Van Wert, Allen, Wyandot, Crawford, Mercer, Auglaize, Hardin, Marion, and Morrow. Approximately 185 residents live on the TDC campus.

*For more information about TDC and all ten of Ohio's Developmental Centers, visit the ODMRDD website at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/residential/dc.htm>*



## 6. Ohio Self-Determination Assn. (OSDA) Conference

### Self Determination is Freedom - Stand Up for Your Choices!”



Gloria Tiller (left) of Sandusky, Ohio, was back again this year at the OSDA conference -- an entrepreneur selling lots of T-Shirts -- as a perfect example of why this conference is so successful! The number of informational and product displays -- as well as the number of attendees that packed the University Plaza Hotel in Columbus this week -- continues to increase each year. Gloria's business, *GJ's Custom T-Shirts*, sells “T-shirts that make you think.” Some shirts proclaimed, “*Label Jars ... Not People!*”

The OSDA conference featured loads of information about promoting, advocating, and facilitating self-determination for all people with disabilities and their families throughout Ohio. OSDA president, Annette Davis Kramp, provided opening remarks and made it clear that all individuals have the right to plan their own lives, and that, simply put ...

**“Self-determination is freedom. Stand up for your choices.”**

Keynote speaker, Gerry Faust, former Notre Dame football coach, wasted no time in providing examples of how everyone, including people with disabilities, can make good things happen in their lives by focusing on doing their best and being their best, every day. He said,

**“If you really want to do something, go out there and do it with heart.  
Put your heart into it. You won’t regret it.”**

Also part of day one of the two-day conference, self-advocate Linda Kunik shared her personal observations in a presentation named, *Butterfly*, which encouraged attendees to use their personal power to get what they want and need. Her enthusiastic, “You’ve got the power!” was a real motivator, and set the tone for the later ‘ESDY Awards’ Luncheon.

In fact, Linda Kunick (Hamilton County) was one of the recipients of the OSDA’s annual ESDY Awards, along with several others including James Henrie, co-leader of the *Empowerment People Reaching Out* program, an advocacy group for people with disabilities in Butler County, and a mentor to many others. When asked why he volunteered so much of his time and worked so hard to help others, he stated without hesitation,

**“Because it makes me feel good. When I help someone they feel good, and so do I.”**

Nancy Richards, former OSDA president and long-time self-determination advocate, noted that Day Two of the conference would include a press conference recommending that the words ‘mental retardation’ be removed from the names of Ohio’s County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, as well as from the state’s Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

The press conference was held today, September 17, 2008, and presented the legislation to be introduced by State Representative Jimmy Stewart (R-Albany) and State Representative Fred Strahorn (D-Dayton). According to remarks by Rep. Stewart, “The legislation is constituent-driven, and we believe it will better reflect the wishes of the individuals served.” Rep. Strahorn added that this bi-partisan legislation would serve as a way to, “...help to preserve and acknowledge the dignity of every person.”

*For more information about the Ohio Self-Determination Assn., email [ohiosda@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ohiosda@sbcglobal.net), or visit their website at [www.ohiosda.org](http://www.ohiosda.org). For information about ODMRDD’s Futures work on Empowering People, visit <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/futures/MRDDFuturesUpdates.htm>*



## **7. National Direct Support Professionals Week Observed**

To show appreciation for a largely ‘unsung’ workforce, the U.S. Senate unanimously approved Senate Resolution 613 (S. Res. 613), co-sponsored by U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown, which

designated the week beginning September 8, 2008, as “*National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week.*” Without the work of caring Direct Support Professionals, the lives of thousands of Ohioans with disabilities and their families would be much different.



**Never known to be shy, John Hannah, advocate, Champaign Residential Services, Inc.,** recently went right up to U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown, and introduced himself. He then presented the Senator with the resolution that designated the week of September 8, 2008, as “*National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week.*” He is also employed by CRSI as a consumer advocate; advocating for the rights, needs and choices of individuals living with challenges. (photo credit, CRSI)

Direct Support Professionals include people who work as direct care workers, in-home support workers, personal assistants and attendants, to ensure that people with disabilities are able to live more independently and in community settings. According to Mike Snow, Superintendent at Columbus Developmental Center,

**“The Direct Support Professional is the backbone of any good residential service system. Individuals residing at CDC, and at our other Developmental centers throughout the state, rely upon the ever-present training and personal support of the Therapeutic Program Worker. We appreciate their efforts all year long.”**

*ODMRDD extends sincere appreciation to all Direct Support Professionals throughout the MRDD system.*



## **8. ODAS Provides Opportunity to Network for Success**

*The following has been distributed to County Board of MRDD Superintendents and others via email earlier this month, and is redistributed in Pipeline as a reminder.*

The Ohio Department of Administrative Services’ (ODAS) Equal Opportunity Division is hosting a "Reverse Trade Fair" on November 5, 2008, at the Rhodes Center on the Ohio State Fairgrounds. Agencies across the state are invited to participate in this important event, and participation will be reflected on agencies’ “scorecards”, as required under Governor Ted Strickland’s Executive Order 2008-13S.



The executive order, issued July 25, 2008, ensures compliance with Ohio regulations regarding the use of minority, women-owned, and socially and economically disadvantaged businesses in State contracts and purchases.

The executive order focuses on:

1. Administration of Ohio's Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and Encouraging Diversity Growth and Equity (EDGE) Programs
2. Implementation of strategies to increase participation in MBE and EDGE Programs
3. Annual required implementation and participation in EOD's outreach programs

The term "reverse" is used because agencies are invited to staff information tables, and discuss upcoming procurement opportunities with minority, women-owned, and socially and economically disadvantaged businesses.

Vendors will have the opportunity to network with agencies and secure information about future contracts and services. This outreach program was designed to connect agencies with MBE and EDGE vendors and ultimately assist agencies in meeting program goals. Procurement officers from all Ohio agencies have been invited to participate to meet their required participation goal as outlined under Executive Order 2008-13S.

**Through agencies' participation, minority, women-owned and socially and economically disadvantaged businesses will have new opportunities for business success.**

Agency information tables are free, and the event will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Agencies must register no later than *October 1, 2008*. To register online, visit [www.das.ohio.gov/eod](http://www.das.ohio.gov/eod). You will need to use this username and password to register online:

*Username: eod customer/ohio ... Password: #welcome2008*

*For more information, contact Blossom Barrett at (614) 466-8380 or by email at [blossom.barrett@das.state.oh.us](mailto:blossom.barrett@das.state.oh.us)*



## 9. Ohioans Still Eligible for Economic Stimulus Checks

Ohioans with disabilities, low-income seniors, veterans and others could inject some \$68 million into the local economy simply by claiming economic stimulus payments from the federal government, according to the Ohio Federal Budget Coalition. The advocacy group has stated that 226,643 eligible Ohioans have yet to file a tax return, which is needed to get the rebate checks the federal government offered this year in an attempt to stimulate the economy. *The deadline to file is October 15, 2008.*



Most Ohioans who haven't yet claimed their payments don't reach the minimum income threshold for filing a tax return, the group said. Those with no other filing requirements need only fill out part of the 2007 tax return form to receive checks worth at least \$300.

**"In many cases, the people who need these payments the most are missing out,"**

OFBC spokeswoman Ericka Thoms said in a news release.

**"We need to make sure that the people who qualify for a payment receive it."**

Many Ohioans that haven't filed yet are homebound, and need special assistance. ODMRDD encourages people in direct support positions, family members, and friends to make sure others are aware they can qualify for the payment and get the help they need. In addition, free assistance is available through the [Ohio Benefit Bank](#).

*Information provided through Gongwer News Service.*



## **Reminder**

### **PAR Convention, 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, October 8-10, 2008**

PAR is still accepting registrations for the 40th Annual Convention on October 8-10, 2008, at the Embassy Suites in Dublin, Ohio. The keynote speaker will be Al Condeluci, CEO, United Cerebral Palsy of Pittsburgh. His topic will be "*Why We Do What We Do: Bringing Back the Passion in Our Lives.*" PAR notes that Condeluci is a popular speaker on inclusion and social capital, and is a featured speaker at many national conferences.

Session topics include: Autism, habilitation, aging services, mental health, criminal justice, sexual offenders, leadership, positive behavior interventions, communication, recreation, music therapy, and much more. Convention information, booklets and group registration forms are available online at [www.par-ohio.org](http://www.par-ohio.org) and you can register either online, via Fax or U.S. mail, or contact Emma at the PAR Office at 419-522-6207.



## **Reminder**

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Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



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**Wednesday, October 1, 2008**  
**Volume 2, Issue 20**

- 1. Family Advisory Council Members Engage Director Martin on Issues Important to Families
- 2. National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2008
- 3. Self-Determination – Persistence Drives Change in Athens County
- 4. ADA Amendments Act Signed Into Law September 25, 2008
- 5. Coordinating Center of Excellence in Dual Diagnosis Introduces Website
- 6. Medicare's New Competitive Bidding Program

*Reminder:* Register Now to Vote in the November General Election

## **1. Family Advisory Council Members Engage Director Martin on Issues Important to Families**

Among the subjects discussed at the September 23, 2008, Family Advisory Council (FAC) meeting were state budget cuts; progress on the implementation of MRDD Futures Recommendations; and, how to get the most from Medicaid and Medicare benefits for family members.

ODMRDD Director John Martin joined the group of more than 50 individuals, family members and other interested stakeholders gathered in Columbus for the group's regular meeting, noting that the most recent budget cuts announced by Governor Ted Strickland this month (See [Pipeline Extra! September 10, 2008](#)) were challenging the Department to continue to oversee services to 80,000 Ohioans with disabilities, while looking very closely at every expenditure, every process, and every efficiency possible. He commented,

**“ We need to re-evaluate, and look at different options. What can we redirect or do differently to make it through these difficult economic times? These are the kinds of things we are going to be working through.”**

Director Martin went on to discuss progress on the implementation of MRDD Futures Recommendations, highlighting several areas of interest to FAC members. One such area focused on providing opportunities beyond the Individual Options (IO) Waiver, to allow for more flexibility in service options. Discussion on this subject included the concept of service 'utilization'. Utilization, in terms of County Board of MRDD services, looks at which services are used most often by most people, and what services may be under-utilized or available through other sources. Director Martin noted,

**“We want to make resources available to meet needs in the most economical way possible, and throughout the MRDD system we need to be asking people what they really need. What do they need now? What might they need later on? What we are trying to do is simplify, simplify, simplify.”**

Family Advisory Council members shared their concerns regarding fewer subsidy dollars going to County Boards of MRDD, and fewer dollars then trickling down to families, in light of budget issues. These concerns and others will be taken into consideration in Futures planning, and are also of great concern to ODMRDD and to the Governor’s office. Director Martin explained,

**“Families as caregivers are the backbone of the service delivery network, and we know that. Governor Strickland cares deeply about how these cuts will affect people. It is our hope that the economy begins to turn around, and that in the meantime we can be creative and get through this.”**



**Attending FAC from Logan County ...  
Bill Adelsberger and son, Matt.**

*Bill had several ideas to share at the Family Advisory Council meeting, including a recommendation that the state encourage employers to hire people with disabilities. He noted the example of Walgreen’s stores setting a desired goal of 20% of their workforce being people with disabilities.*

**“ Not just a person here and there, but a commitment to this workforce, that’s what we need. That’s what would make a difference, economically. ”**



**Self-advocate John Hannah (center) gathers support from fellow FAC meeting attendees, Leona Crogan (left) and Kathy Phillips.**

*Leona is an active FAC participant providing input from her perspective as a parent of a son with a disability and a resident of Mahoning County. Kathy is a service provider, also from Mahoning County.*



## **2. National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

### **‘America’s People, America’s Talent ... America’s Strength!’**

U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao has announced the official theme for this year’s *National Disability Employment Awareness Month*, observed each October by congressional designation, nationwide. The theme, *"America's People, America's Talent ... America's Strength!"* attempts to capture the many accomplishments of people with disabilities.

"Full access to community life for Americans with disabilities is an imperative, and this year's theme conveys the tremendous contributions that these Americans can make in the workplace," said Secretary Chao.

### **People with Disabilities are Redefining the Workforce**

The Labor Department's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) leads the month's activities and produces materials to increase public awareness of the contributions and skills of American workers with disabilities. The ODEP is leading a 21st Century federal response to the historic underemployment of people with disabilities. "It is important to note that having people with disabilities in the workplace is valuable to the individual and to businesses," said Neil Romano, assistant secretary for the ODEP. He continues,

**"People with disabilities are the next great wave of diversity, and diversity fosters innovation to drive our economy and our nation into the future."**

In collaboration with other state government agencies such as the ODMRDD, public and private employers, and other stakeholders, ODEP develops and implements policies and practices to achieve a fully inclusive workplace. For more information about National Disability Employment Awareness Month, visit [www.dol.gov/odep](http://www.dol.gov/odep).

As part of the ODMRDD Futures Implementation work now underway, providing improved community employment opportunities for individuals is an important focus in the planning and development of statewide services and supports. In addition, targeted programs such as Medicaid Buy-In (*see article in [Pipeline Volume 2 Issue 16](#),* ) can assist in making better job opportunities a reality for people with disabilities.

**Progress, one job at a time.**



(L to R., back) Terry Marovich and Linda McElroy, Diagnostic Hybrids Inc. (DHI) management, with Pam Paulk, Alan Robinson, William Peacock, and Jeanne Maxwell, Accessory Manufacturing Dept. Crew Leader. Once associated only with assembly work and janitorial services, workers with disabilities in Athens County now are benefiting from more innovative approaches, and are trading buckets and mops for lab coats and computers, thanks to the efforts of local employers and *PersonnelPlus*, the employment arm of the *Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities (ACBDD)*. "You have to see yourself as a professional organization," said David Barba, director of operations at ATCO, Inc., the adult services group within ACBDD. He adds,

**"We've worked hard to change our business model and create an identity centered on the skills of people with disabilities."**

Excerpted from *Pipeline Quarterly*, [December 2007](#) 



**"I love my job at Cintas. It's the way they treat me. They treat me with respect.  
I would never want to work anyplace else."**

*Bob Frank has worked at Cintas in neighboring Lancaster for more than nine years. This year he was instrumental in that location receiving an Outstanding Achievement Award. Bob is the second person residing in Hocking County to be enrolled in the Medicaid Buy-In program.*

*Excerpted from Pipeline Quarterly, [Summer 2008](#) PDF*



Posters promoting the month are available for ordering at [www.dol.gov/odep](http://www.dol.gov/odep)

**PIPELINE FEEDBACK REQUEST** – Send your response to [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us)

**?** Do you feel that your community/county is open to hiring people with disabilities in community-based or private-sector jobs? If yes, what examples of this have you seen?



### **3. Self-Determination**

## **Persistence Drives Change in Athens County – Self-Advocates Prevail**

*Following is a speech presented by Andy Leinbaugh at the recent Ohio Self-Determination Assn. (OSDA) conference, prior to the official introduction of HB 620 and HB 621, recommending name*

*changes (removing the words 'mental retardation') to County Boards of MRDD and to the Ohio Department of MRDD. Andy is a self-advocate and participant in Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities' PersonnelPlus employment opportunities. We share this presentation, as written and with Andy's permission, as an example of what self-determination can accomplish. Special thanks to Andy for allowing us to share this.*

Hello my name is Andy Leinbaugh.

I am a member of the PersonnelPlus Consumer Advisory Council in Athens, Ohio. Our Council for three years has been discussing the topic of the usage of the words Mental Retardation and its effect on people with disabilities.

The Council members expressed their feelings and anger towards these words. People expressed how hurtful this term is to them. We decided as a Council to address the Athens County Board with our feelings and concerns about the words Mental Retardation.

**We started a petition drive to gather support to remove the words 'mental retardation' at our annual Disability Awareness Festival in March 2007.  
We gathered several hundred signatures.**

We then attended the County Board meeting in May of 2007 and presented to the Board members our petitions. We told our stories and about how we felt about the words mental retardation.

We asked the Board to consider changing the name to the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities. The Board members and the management team agreed to consider changing the name.

They thought about putting this idea into the strategic plan that the County Board was working on. They said they would get back to us with any progress towards this recommendation.

We waited for awhile and did not hear back from the administration or the management team. We invited Jody Harris, our superintendent, to come to one of our Council meetings to update us on the progress. Jody reported about the concerns that she was hearing about changing the name and that some surveys did not necessarily show strong support one way or another for the change.

To our Council members this did not demonstrate to us that our recommendation was receiving the consideration we thought it was due. This upset the Council members.

**We decided to go to another County Board meeting. We also decided to enlist the support of other self-advocates in Athens County by attending the Developmental Disabilities Council Center on Public Policy (DDCCPP) meeting.**

There we spoke with other self-advocates and they also had strong feelings about the words mental retardation. They agreed to send representatives to join us at the May 2008 County Board meeting.

On May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008, we went to the County Board meeting with our Consumer Advisory Council members and some members from the DDCCPP. We asked what progress had been made on changing the name of the County Board and we pointed out that nothing had been done to address this concern.

The County Board members did not know how to respond to our challenge to them. We again told them how we felt about changing the name, how we felt about the words mental retardation, and told our personal stories about discrimination and name calling that we have experience in our lives.

Some speakers told how the term is outdated and contradicts the new mission statement of the County Board. The County Board members were obviously moved by our testimony.

A Board member made a motion to change the name right there and then at the Board meeting. It was seconded and passed unanimously. The self-advocates were surprised and delighted that the Board chose to support our recommendation.

So as of that day, the name is now the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Thank you for listening. This is an important issue to me.



**(l. to r.) Andy Leinbaugh at the podium, assisted by Steve Koch, Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities.**

*Andy's presentation to the OSDA conference also was viewable on-screen for audience members. Steve Koch monitored the text on-screen as Andy spoke to the group. Andy was one of three Athens County self-advocates who addressed the OSDA conference. The other two were Glenda Murray and Jason Licht.*



## **4. ADA Amendments Act Signed Into Law**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendments Act was signed into law on September 25, 2008. *ADA Watch* and the *National Coalition for Disability Rights*, the nonprofit organizations behind the *Road To Freedom* bus tour, praised all of those involved in this successful campaign to advance disability rights.

According to the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), disability rights advocates participating in the *Road To Freedom* bus tour traveled the nation for nearly two years in a modified bus, educating citizens and policymakers about the pressing need to restore vital civil rights protections contained in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

In recent years, the ADA – the world's first human rights law for people with disabilities – has been narrowed in the courts, leaving citizens with epilepsy, diabetes, mental illness, and other disabilities unprotected from discrimination. The *ADA Amendments Act* clarifies the intent of Congress, and reverses the 'judicial activism' that has resulted in a high percentage of employment-related ADA cases being dismissed on summary judgment.

ODMRDD Director John Martin notes this about the landmark legislation:

**"The passage of the ADA Amendments Act is a significant event for the MRDD community, as it better defines the protections that have been eroded by various Supreme Court rulings over the years since the Americans with Disabilities Act was**

**passed in 1990. This Amendments Act strengthens and clarifies areas that will help improve opportunities for people with disabilities in the workforce and the community.”**

For example, the Act makes important changes to the definition of the term "disability" by rejecting the holdings in several Supreme Court decisions and portions of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC's) ADA regulations.

The Act, which becomes effective January 1, 2009, also retains the ADA's basic definition of "disability" as *an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment*. However, the Act changes the way that these statutory terms should be interpreted. For specific information on these changes, see [http://www.eeoc.gov/ada/amendments\\_notice.html](http://www.eeoc.gov/ada/amendments_notice.html) or <http://www.adabill.com/>.

*The National Coalition for Disability Rights (NCDR) is a coalition of national, state and local disability, civil rights, and social justice organizations united to protect and promote the human rights of children and adults with physical and cognitive disabilities. Websites are at [www.adawatch.org](http://www.adawatch.org) and [www.roadtofreedom.org](http://www.roadtofreedom.org).*



## **5. Coordinating Center of Excellence In Dual Diagnosis Introduces Website**

The Coordinating Center of Excellence in Dual Diagnosis (CCOE) has introduced a website at [www.ohiomidd.com](http://www.ohiomidd.com). The Center's mission is to focus on the systemic and clinical treatment needs of persons with co-occurring mental retardation/developmental disabilities and mental illness.

The CCOE is operated by Wright State University Department of Psychiatry in Dayton, the Nisonger Center in Columbus, and Ascentia, in coordination with the Case Western Reserve Department of Psychiatry in Cleveland. It is funded and endorsed by the Ohio Department of Mental Health, the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, and the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council.

The CCOE works to identify best practices; train professionals in mental health, mental retardation and developmental disabilities and related service systems; and, provide systemic and clinical consultation across Ohio. In addition, the CCOE plans to initiate the development of best practices to meet needs, and promote and demonstrate systemic and clinical best practices. Models of such practices will be shared with local communities to help meet needs at local levels.

Prior to the creation of the CCOE, individuals with a dual diagnosis were identified as underserved primarily due to a lack of systems collaboration, lack of specific staff training, and the absence of evidence-based practices for treatment. For more information visit the new website at [www.ohiomidd.com](http://www.ohiomidd.com).



## **6. Medicare's New Competitive Bidding Program**

## What You Should Know if you Need Medicare-Covered Equipment or Supplies

Recently, Congress changed the way Medicare determines how much it pays for certain durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies and, redefined who can furnish these items. In line with this, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has started a pilot program designed to help save beneficiaries money; ensure that they can get quality medical equipment, supplies, and services; and, help limit fraud and abuse in the Medicare program.

The new *Competitive Bidding Program* lets Medicare use competitive bids submitted by suppliers to determine the amount Medicare pays for certain medical equipment and supplies. Under this program, beneficiaries who are permanent residents of, or who visit a zip code that is a part of a Competitive Bidding Area, are required to obtain certain medical equipment and supplies from a contract supplier in order for Medicare to pay for these items. The pilot program has been in effect since July 1, 2008.

You can find information about the new program by visiting [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) or by calling 1-800-MEDICARE. In addition, there is a helpful booklet, written in a question/answer format, at <http://www.medicare.gov/Publications/Pubs/pdf/11307.pdf>.

*Acknowledgments to the National Council on Disability for this information.*



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John L. Martin, Director



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**Wednesday, October 15, 2008**  
**Volume 2, Issue 21**

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*Reminder:* SIBS Conference, November 7-8, 2008

## **1. State Team Forum is Part of Network of Autism Training and Technical Assistance Programs (NATTAP) Conference**

The Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) announces the Second Annual *Network of Autism Training and Technical Assistance Programs* (NATTAP) Conference, November 19-21, 2008 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Columbus, Ohio. NATTAP also spotlights the *State Team Forum*, held in conjunction with the larger NATTAP Conference, with sessions on November 18 and 21, 2008.

The State Team Forum is designed to bring together pre-identified team members from each state to interact and learn from others across the nation, providing opportunities for networking and continuous development of ideas and solutions for issues that all states face in the area of autism. This year's State Team Forum will focus on interagency collaboration and building a continuum of services.

The objectives of the conference itself are:

- To review current systems models for addressing the needs of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD);
- To promote the use of best practices in research and intervention; and,
- To provide methods for capacity-building within the service system.

The 2008 conference is expected to gather an estimated 1500-2000 participants from across the nation and around the world. Participants will engage in numerous opportunities for learning and growth, including:

- More than 230 sessions presented by leaders in the field, including ODMRDD and various Ohio County Boards of MRDD;
- More than 80 exhibitors showcasing products and services for individuals with ASD;
- The opportunity to network with other attendees who share similar stories, concerns, and interests.

ODMRDD Director, John Martin, notes that the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disability Services has joined with several other organizations as a collaborating partner in the conference. He adds,

**“Ohio will be an enthusiastic participant in the State Team Forum, which should be a very exciting opportunity to share information and ideas.”**

NATTAP was established in 1990 by a group of professionals working in statewide autism centers and related programs. Today there are 48 member agencies throughout the United States and Canada. These member agencies include state departments, and various programs that are university-based, state-supported, or privately-funded.

*To learn more about the 2008 NATTAP Conference, please visit the website at [www.nattapconference.org](http://www.nattapconference.org) or visit OCALI at [www.ocali.org](http://www.ocali.org)*



## **2. Continuing Spotlight on ...** **National Disability Employment Awareness Month in Ohio**



All across Ohio, newspapers, billboards, broadcast media, and special events are recognizing National Disability Employment Awareness Month and the 2008 theme, "America's People, America's Talent ... America's Strength!" For example, the above billboard in Richland County was created by the Richland County Board of MRDD and features employees of Richland Newhope Industries, Inc.. The local *Mansfield News-Journal* reported, "Employees with disabilities make significant contributions to their community through local employment," said Amanda South, Richland Newhope's director of adult services. She added,

**"We are dedicated to developing the skills and abilities of this virtually untapped workforce to meet the needs of community employers, and employees with disabilities."**

The local recognition includes an annual employer recognition breakfast, where community businesses that employ people with developmental disabilities, as well as those who contract with Richland Newhope Industries, will be honored. An *Employer of the Year* and *Employees of the Year* also will be recognized.

The Oct. 16 breakfast will be at the area's Mid-Ohio Conference Center, and according to event coordinator, Jane Imbody, this year's featured speaker is former Cleveland Browns coach Sam Rutigliano. For more information on Richland County efforts spotlighting employment, contact Jane at [jimbody@rnewhope.org](mailto:jimbody@rnewhope.org) or call (419) 774-4215.

**Pipeline will feature additional examples of Ohio's celebrations and observations of National Disability Employment Awareness Month in the October 29 issue. See the Feedback Box at the end of this article.**

### **Employment, From Another Perspective**

Also during October, in the spirit of helping to prepare young people to work with individuals who have disabilities -- and ultimately secure employment in the field -- ODMRDD has entered into a volunteer Community Internship agreement with Columbus Public Schools/Columbus Alternative High School (CAHS).

Fourteen students began volunteering this month at the ODMRDD Central Office, in the Fiscal, Legal, Policy and Constituent Services, and Human Resources areas, as well as with Community Services, and Systems Innovation and Technical Assistance. The students perform office-related tasks including filing; records retention; inventory and salvage; data entry; copying; and more. Students also will have opportunities to shadow staff during field visits.

According to ODMRDD Director, John Martin, who welcomed the enthusiastic group at an October 1st work orientation,

**"ODMRDD looks forward to presenting these students with opportunities to observe firsthand, and develop an understanding of what we do and who is served every day. We hope to impact these young people in positive ways, and assist them in making informed decisions about their career choices as future community leaders."**



Columbus Alternative High School students volunteering at ODMRDD Central Office include these students, along with their hosts/supervisors: *Jason Devlin, Qudallas Vasser, Diamond Williams, Juwaan Sims, Christien Alexander, Travonte Cole, Naimah Hill, Sierra Barnett, Neshel Bates, Justin Brooks, Asaud Frazier, Alissia Jones, Adorea Rhodes and Kevin Ross.*

Students participating in the CAHS Community Internship program will work with ODMRDD staff each Wednesday from October, 2008 through April, 2009. For more information contact

Kimberley Oliver, Office of Policy and Constituent Services, (614) 644-7596 or email [kimberley.oliver@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:kimberley.oliver@dmr.state.oh.us) .

Free posters promoting National Disability Employment Awareness Month are available to order at [www.dol.gov/odep](http://www.dol.gov/odep)

**PIPELINE FEEDBACK REQUEST** – Send your responses to [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us)  
Please share any ways that your community, organization, or group celebrated National Disability Employment Awareness Month! Your responses may be included in the October 29, 2008, Pipeline, if received by October 27.



### **3. New Staff Profile**

## **Pamela Berry Joins Community Services Division, as Catalyst for Positive Intervention Culture Initiative**



**Pam Berry**

The September 3, 2008, issue of *Pipeline* introduced the Positive Intervention Culture Initiative, which essentially will work toward the reduction and eventual elimination of aversive interventions with individuals – especially timeout and restraint – except when there is imminent risk to health and safety. New ODMRDD staff member, Pamela Berry, will drive the Positive Intervention Culture efforts throughout the agency, working with staff and service providers to support this kind of positive interaction with all of the people we serve. According to Michael Rench, ODMRDD Deputy Director, Community Services,

**“Pam is exactly the person I had hoped we could bring on board to manage this important initiative. The Positive Intervention Culture is a thoughtful approach to working with individuals in the MRDD community, and we believe it can make a big difference in the quality of life of the people we serve. Looking at ways to empower people to manage how they react to their world is part of the direction in which the Futures Committee recommendations have taken us.”**

Pam came on board last month with a whirlwind tour of ODMRDD Central Office and meetings with various stakeholders. Her official title is Policy Staff, Community Services, Positive Intervention Culture Initiative, and she'll be known as the go-to person on the subject, agency-wide. Pam's background includes a Master's degree in Counseling (Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA); Bachelor's degree in Developmental Psychology (Capital University); and, Associate's degree in Mental Health/ Mental Retardation Studies (North Central State College).

In addition, Pam has approximately 20 years of experience in the MRDD arena, serving in positions with several Ohio County Boards of MRDD, and with provider agencies. Most

recently she was the Longterm Care Manager for the PASSPORT waiver at the Council on Aging in southwestern Ohio. PASSPORT provides opportunities for seniors to live in their homes and receive services, rather than needing to reside in a nursing home. She notes,

**“All of my educational background and experience to-date has brought me now to a job that is a perfect fit with my beliefs. I’ve committed my life to the principles of non-violence and have worked with people in all areas of the human services field to promote these concepts. My goal in this position is to inspire people to begin a new dialog about our work - to open the door for conversations about how to relate to those who are the most fragile- and see where those honest conversations lead us.”**

Pam continues, “Stimulating this dialog about our work and our core belief systems will help us to examine what we are currently doing and, most importantly, how our actions are perceived by those receiving care. By making a commitment to create a culture of non-violence ODMRDD is acknowledging the intrinsic value of the people we support, and agreeing to challenge ourselves to learn and grow in our efforts to serve them. I can’t think of a better position to be in right now and am looking forward to beginning these important conversations.”

Simply put, the Positive Intervention Culture is a belief that all people can interact in ways that promote respect, trust, and safe and healthy relationships. According to both Michael Rench and Pamela Berry, ODMRDD’s commitment to the initiative will include, on an ongoing basis, Positive Behavior Support training opportunities presented regionally and statewide to aid our system with adjustments and acknowledgements as we move forward.

*For details about this initiative please see Information Notice #08-09-02 on the ODMRDD website at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/publications/infonotices.htm#HSInfoNotices>.*

**Simply put, the Positive Intervention Culture is a belief that all people can interact in ways that promote respect, trust, and safe and healthy relationships.**



## **4. Self-Determination and Community Participation** **Down Syndrome Advocates, Takin’ It to the Streets**



**It’s October – time for a Buddy Walk!**

The Buddy Walk™ was established in 1995 to promote acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome. [Learn More...](#)

Since 1995 more than 270 Buddy Walk events have taken place, nationwide, according to the National Down Syndrome Society, whose members note that *October is National Down Syndrome Awareness Month*. In 2007 alone, it is estimated that more than 230,000 individuals participated in a Buddy Walk!

In Ohio, Buddy Walks have proven to be excellent opportunities for communities to improve awareness and understanding of what Down syndrome is, and how people with Down syndrome *can and do* contribute to the fabric of each community.

For example, The Sixth Annual Buddy Walk of Tuscarawas County will be on October 19, 2008, at the New Philadelphia High School Gym. Sponsored by a local family-driven group, 'Standing Up for Down Syndrome,' the event is effective in its mission of awareness and understanding, according to Erin Jones, staff member at Tuscarawas County Board of MRDD. She notes,

**“These families do a great job of getting out there and organizing everything, and making it a success. We salute their work on this each year.”**

For information about this Buddy Walk, call 330-340-8274, and for information about Buddy Walks across the state and nation, go to the National Down Syndrome Society website at <http://www.ndss.org/>

People with Down syndrome and their families also are among the strongest supporters of *National Disability Employment Awareness Month*, as they are often employed in the community in a variety of jobs. According to one parent in Licking County, “I think my son has had perfect attendance at his job for six years, now. He gets up early, puts on his uniform, gets his lunch together, and waits for his ride. He loves his job!”

The incidence of Down syndrome in the U.S. is estimated to be one in every 733 live births. Of all children born in the U.S. annually, about 5000 will have Down syndrome, affecting about 250,000 families. Down syndrome occurs when an individual has three, rather than two, copies of the 21st chromosome. This additional genetic material alters the course of development and causes the characteristics associated with Down syndrome.

**For a useful fact sheet about Down syndrome, visit [http://www.ndss.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=54&Itemid=74](http://www.ndss.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=54&Itemid=74)**

Materials posted on several informational websites note that people with Down syndrome benefit from:

**... quality educational programs, a stimulating home environment, good health care, and positive support from family, friends, and the community. Sounds like people with Down syndrome are no different from people without Down syndrome regarding what they need to develop their full potential and lead fulfilling lives!**



## **5. Governor's Efficiency and Continuous Improvement Initiative Continues to Yield Progress on Suggestions**

Since its inception in early 2008, Governor Strickland's Efficiency and Continuous Improvement Initiative has yielded hundreds of suggestions for participating agencies, statewide. Visitors to the website at [www.encyciency.ohio.gov](http://www.encyciency.ohio.gov) easily can review the status of

suggestions ... submit one <http://efficiency.ohio.gov/Default.aspx> ... or simply learn more about the initiative. The ODMRDD has received 28 suggestions to-date, and the agency's Efficiency Team has met each quarter to review progress on each of them, as well as to review any new suggestions for consideration and action.

The October meeting was a 'first' for the group, as it was a 'webinar' – defined as, “A presentation that uses a person's computer/ internet as the conduit for people to see and hear information in an interactive way.”

Patrick Stephan, Deputy Director, Medicaid Development and Administration, and lead person for the ODMRDD Efficiency Team, explains,



**“Our group is scattered across the state, with members representing various parts of the Department – and we don't have the resources to ask people to drive to four meetings each year. So, we had a teleconference last time, and this time we met via 'webinar'. It was a new way for the Efficiency Team to meet ... and it was efficient!”**

Patrick adds, “With the team we have assembled (see list below) the participation has been great, and I really feel that we are moving along productively on several of the suggestions. Many of them are being worked on as parts of the ODMRDD Futures recommendations, and some are being considered as part of larger efforts or 'big-picture' initiatives that will ultimately save money and time.”

The Efficiency and Continuous Improvement Initiative involves several staff from each of Ohio's cabinet-level agencies in collecting and reviewing feedback from state employees and stakeholders, regarding how best to use available resources.

ODMRDD representatives (and the groups they represent) on the Efficiency Team are:

- Michael Beaver, Operations Director, Gallipolis Developmental Center
- Monty Blanton, Electrician (OCSEA), Gallipolis Developmental Center
- Patrick Stephan, Deputy Director, Central Office
- Stacy Sower, Qual. Mental Retardation Professional, Youngstown Developmental Center
- Sherry Steinman, Public Information Officer, Central Office
- William Ferkan, Police Officer (FOP), Warrensville Developmental Center
- Lottie Blazer, (SEIU/1199), Central Office

*\*Note: Tresa Ide, Maintenance Repair Worker (OCSEA), Mount Vernon Developmental Center, has retired. Her replacement has not yet been named.*

It is important to note that suggestions submitted should demonstrate added value through efficiency and/or continuous improvement (e.g. saving money or time, improving processes, eliminating duplication, improving customer service or communications, etc.). The goal of the program is to garner constructive ideas with reasonable and creative solutions from employees.

Suggestions are reviewed, in part, to determine whether they are operational/programmatic or structural in nature. Structural suggestions are outside the scope of this program and are

defined as those suggestions that would require changes to any of the following: a table of organization, laws, a union contract or departmental governing policy.

If you have questions about any information at [www.encyclopedia.ohio.gov](http://www.encyclopedia.ohio.gov), contact Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us), or call (614)644-0262).



## 6. Voting Rights and Resources for People with Disabilities



People with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities have the right to vote, and should have access to information to help them do that. If you are a person with a disability, or work with someone who may need information, reassurance, or assistance to vote, please note the following:

Laws that protect this right to vote include: The Constitution; The Voting Rights Act; The Americans with Disabilities Act; the Help America Vote Act, and others. If a poll worker says a person with MRDD cannot vote, the law says that the poll worker must allow the person to complete a special ballot named a Provisional Ballot. The person should complete the Provisional Ballot before leaving the polling place. Later, an election worker will determine whether or not the vote can be counted. The law says everyone is allowed to cast a ballot.

**If you have questions before or on Election Day, November 4, 2008, call 1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683).**

At this number people will speak with you (not just an answering machine) and lawyers are available to help voters with disabilities get advice and help with voting issues.



### Reminder

## Ohio Young Adult Sibling (SIBS) Conference, Nov. 7-8, 2008

The Eighth Annual Ohio Adult Sibling “SIBS” Conference is coming soon -- November 7-8, 2008, at the Columbus Airport Marriott Hotel. The conference goal is to promote sibling awareness and activity in the lives of siblings’ brothers or sisters with developmental disabilities.

The importance of sibling relationships is illustrated in an article from the Stark County Board of MRDD’s newsletter, *All in the Family*, March 2008, titled, “*Living with Siblings with Disabilities.*” It profiles the family of Bob Milliken, a former Board member with Stark County MRDD, member of the ODMRDD Futures Committee, and now president of the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD.

In the article, Bob relates, “I didn’t understand that my brothers had disabilities until other children at school started to make comments.” He notes that as his parents aged and his brothers’ needs increased, it became clear that he needed to take on a greater role in their care. “I made a firm decision to not be Randy or Ronnie’s primary caregiver. However, I did

want to oversee who was providing their care. I think it's important to find out what's best for you." He also encouraged siblings to get involved with support groups, stating,

**"One of the most difficult things I experienced as a child was a feeling of loneliness, because I didn't know anyone who could relate to me."**

Providing just such an opportunity for involvement, and in conjunction with the SIBS conference, the *National Sibling Leadership Network Conference* also will be hosted at the Marriott on November 6-7. This conference is for adult siblings of people with disabilities interested in becoming more effective advocates for their brothers and sisters and for other people with disabilities.

For registration and conference information, visit the website at [www.ohiosibs.com](http://www.ohiosibs.com). For additional information contact Tom Fish, Ohio SIBS, The OSU Nisonger Center 257C McCampbell Hall, 1581 Dodd Drive, Columbus, OH 43210. Phone 614-292-7550 or email [fish.1@osu.edu](mailto:fish.1@osu.edu).



OHIO SIBS

SIBS  
SPECIAL INITIATIVES BY BROTHERS & SISTERS



### **Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)**



The ODMRDD toll-free hotline number for reporting abuse/neglect and other MUIs is **1-866-313-MRDD (6733)**. Please note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of MRDD, however, it is understood that there may be times an individual, staff member, or family member may feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember that the hotline number exists, and is to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.



### ***Pipeline feedback ... direct from you to the state ...***

**Questions? Comments?** *Pipeline* is an electronic publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD), distributed approximately twice monthly to update and inform readers of time-sensitive, relevant information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us about *Pipeline* at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us), or contact Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us), phone (614) 644-0262.

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# Pipeline . . . direct from the state . . .

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



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Wednesday, October 29, 2008  
Volume 2, Issue 22

- 1. Governor's Office Hosts Shelby County Self-Advocates
- 2. Continuing Spotlight on National Disability Employment Awareness Month in Ohio
- 3. New Staff Profile: Troy McCollister Named Superintendent at Cambridge DC
- 4. Down Syndrome Advocates Report Participation in Statewide Buddy Walks
- 5. Ohio Assn. of County Boards of MRDD Celebrates 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at This Week's Conference
- 6. Call for Nominations, OSILC

Reminder: Vote! Election Day is November 4, 2008

**For what are you thankful? In November 2007 the ODMRDD published our first-ever Thanksgiving Issue of *Pipeline*, highlighting a few of the many things for which we, at the ODMRDD, were and are thankful. While it was not exhaustive, the issue included articles on caring direct-service staff; parents who struggle to provide opportunities for their children with disabilities; and, extra efforts of all kinds throughout the state.**

**The 2008 Thanksgiving Issue will publish on November 26<sup>th</sup>, the day before Thanksgiving, and this year, we invite YOU to tell us what you are thankful for, as well. Please share your thoughts with us at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us)**

**Thank you!**

## 1. Self-Determination

### Governor's Office Hosts Shelby County Self-Advocates

Tia Braun stood for a moment, paused in thought while looking around the room. After a few seconds of silence, she exclaimed "This is very cool!"

Tia was one of three members of the Shelby County Chapter of *People First* who traveled to the Ohio Statehouse in Columbus recently to meet with a member of Governor Ted Strickland's office. The group, representing the 35 members of the Shelby County Chapter, made the journey that day to discuss the economic situation in Ohio, and gather information on how they can help

people with disabilities in Shelby County. They met in the governor's Cabinet Room with Amy Rohling McGee, Executive Assistant for Health and Human Services Policy.



### **People First Representatives Tell Their Story – in Color**

*Amy Rohling McGee (second from left), Executive Assistant for Health and Human Services Policy in Governor Strickland's Office, listens to a presentation from Bobby Smith (left), Tia Braun (second from right) and Becky Milner (right), representatives of the Shelby County Chapter of People First. Their presentation included a colorful pie chart illustrating budget issues.*

The group, which also included Bobby Smith and Becky Milner, first explained the work performed at S&H Products in Shelby County, the County Board's adult services (workshop) site that contracts with several employers in Shelby County. S&H's 32,000 square-foot facility includes warehouse space and a production floor that accommodates approximately 120 employees <http://www.sandhproducts.com/> .

Tia, who is also Secretary of *People First of Ohio*, works at S&H three days per week. Also at the meeting was Laura Zureich, superintendent of the Shelby County Board of MRDD, and Cheryl Long, advisor of the Shelby County Chapter of *People First*, as well as of *People First of Ohio*.

### **Pieces of the Pie**

The group brought with them a large portfolio created by self advocates, including pictures and descriptions of services and programs in Shelby County. Amy Rohling McGee looked through the book carefully, and asked them what they liked about *People First* and S&H Products. Bobby Smith, a *People First* Board member, responded,

**“It makes me feel important to belong to a group where we work together. *People First* got me through some difficult times. There's a lot of hope out there.”**

On the dark wood of the Governor's Cabinet Room table, Becky and Tia placed six white triangular pieces of paper, illustrating a pie chart outlining their funding. They placed colored pie pieces on top, to indicate what areas of service each dollar represents. They then took away the amount that will be left after recent budget cuts. The pie was a very effective way to get their message across.

Amy commented, “This is a great way to show what you’re doing and where the cuts will come from.” She then asked to keep the pie so it could serve as a reminder to her, and promised to show it to Governor Strickland. The group then asked what they could do to help their own situation. Amy replied,

**“It’s important for you to meet not only with the Governor’s office, but also to develop a relationship with your legislators. And also, keep doing what you’re doing – keep educating people in your community about what is going on.”**

Following the meeting, the group toured the Governor’s Office, and enjoyed a ‘photo op’ at the Governor’s desk. As they left the Statehouse and headed back to Shelby County, Tia’s earlier exclamation resonated throughout the group. It really was cool. And, as Superintendent Zuriech summed it up, the meeting was “... an outstanding opportunity for the group to share information in a meaningful way. I think we all learned a lot today about the importance of in-person communication.”

*Acknowledgments to Dan Ohler, Executive Director, Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD, for providing a heads-up to Pipeline on the scheduling of this important meeting.*



**It must have been a powerful presentation!**

*The group sits at Governor Strickland’s desk after their meeting. (Front Row) Tia Braun (left) and Becky Milner. (Back Row) Amy Rohling McGee (left), Bobby Smith, People First advisor Cheryl Long, and Shelby MRDD Superintendent, Laura Zuriech.*



## **2. Continuing Spotlight on ...** **Disability Employment Awareness Month Shines a Light on Positive Employer/Employee Relationships**

*October has been a busy month across Ohio, as evidenced by this quick look around the state. The theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2008 is, "America's People, America's Talent...America's Strength!"*

### **Cuyahoga County**

Karen Knavel, Community Relations Director, New Avenues to Independence, a nonprofit human services organization headquartered in Cleveland, notes, "Our National Disability Employment Awareness Month recognition this year has included weekly emails to our constituents highlighting employers who have partnered with our vocational services program, *Buckeye Industries*, and our participants' employment success stories. Each employer that has collaborated with us has also received a token gift with the *Buckeye Industries* logo on it."

New Avenues to Independence (formerly PVA Circle of Homes) is dedicated to enhancing the lives of individuals with disabilities residing in Northeast Ohio, and is the parent company to *Buckeye Industries*, which provides employment options.

French Chiropractic and Wellness Center in Madison was the first employer to partner with New Avenues, and purchased New Avenues' services to shred more than 800 pounds of documents from their Madison facility. Five employees are very busy earning a paycheck and feeling good about their contribution.

According to Karen Knavel, French Chiropractic initially approached larger, more well-known shredding companies for their needs, which were going to charge them much more for the job. The employer noted that working with *Buckeye Industries* is cost effective. Julie French, office manager, states,

**"We think it's smart to support local companies, and we feel extra fortunate that this shredding project is supporting the work of individuals with disabilities."**



**"Yes, I can shred 800 pounds of documents! No problem."**

*Kristen Berger, document shredder at Buckeye Industries in Madison, Ohio, works on a job for a local chiropractic care center.*

For more information about Buckeye Industries' approaches to employment in the Cuyahoga County area, contact Karen Knavel, Community Relations Director, New Avenues to Independence, Inc., (216) 481-1909, ext. 224, email [kknavel@newavenues.net](mailto:kknavel@newavenues.net) or visit <http://www.newavenues.net/>.

### **Richland County**

Richland Newhope Industries, Inc. (RNI) has saluted more than 190 area employers during Disability Employment Awareness Month, October. Businesses in the community who employ individuals with developmental disabilities from Richland Newhope's Adult Services program, as well as those companies who contract with RNI, were recognized during the annual Employer Recognition Breakfast, Oct. 16, 2008, at the Mid-Ohio Conference Center in Mansfield. The event attracted more than 200 people. Richland Newhope Superintendent Liz Prather noted,

**“ This was a great opportunity for Richland Newhope to honor employers who have recognized the talents of workers with disabilities. Hiring people with disabilities develops an inclusive workforce, and offers employers a competitive edge. They have found employees with disabilities to be dependable and adaptable – attributes every business needs in their workforce.”**

Among those honored at the breakfast were: MedCentral Health System, community-based Employer of the Year; MTD Consumer Products of Shelby, industry-based Employer of the Year; Deb Sims, Community-based Employee of the Year; and, the RNI facility-based Employees of the Year, Ronald Nacke, and David Martin.



### **Ronald Nacke, recipient of a Richland Newhope 2008 Employee of the Year Award,**

*has worked at Richland Newhope Industries, Inc. (RNI) for approximately four years. Ronald assists his supervisor by ensuring that co-workers continue to be productive in meeting customer demands, and he brings concerns to his supervisor's attention when needed. Ronald is a self-starter and doesn't hesitate to begin working as soon as he arrives at work. Photo courtesy, Dave Polcyn/Mansfield News-Journal.*

The featured speaker at the Employer Recognition Breakfast was former Cleveland Browns Coach Sam Rutigliano. His speech was entitled “Make a Difference.”

For more information on Richland County efforts spotlighting employment, contact Jane Imbody at [jimbody@rnewhope.org](mailto:jimbody@rnewhope.org) or call (419) 774-4215.

### **Athens County**

When 263 people sign up to attend a 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Awards Banquet ‘on their own dime’ and even more actually show up for the event, you know you’re doing something right! Personnel*Plus*, (formerly known as the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities’ ‘ATCO Job Placement Services’ community employment program), drew a crowd of nearly 300 people to Ohio University’s Baker Center on October 23, 2008, and presented several employer and employee recognition awards while celebrating 25 years of growth and success.

Indicative of the excellent community support for Personnel*Plus*, in attendance was Ohio University’s ‘first lady’, Deborah McDavis, wife of OU President, Rod McDavis, and representatives of several local and state governmental offices, as well as dozens of local employers. Terry Marovich, representing Athens-based Diagnostic Hybrids Inc. and the local Business Advisory Council, summed up the enthusiasm at the event this way,

**“I look around the room here and I see hundreds of people – some are working in the community ... some are employing people in the community ... and some are supporting people who work in the community. And you know what else I see here? I see love – there’s a lot of love in this room!”**

And there was. Among the many accolades and awards, the underlying theme was that it’s hard not to love what Personnel*Plus* provides -- great employees who are well trained, well supported, and greatly appreciated by their employers. What better way to celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month?!

Employers were not shy as they stepped up to the podium to praise the virtues of employees hired through Personnel*Plus*. The owner of Avalanche Pizza, John Gutekanst, awarded the Trailblazer Award for a local business, boasted about his Personnel*Plus* employee having been a part of the team since 2001, even outlasting “three industrial pizza ovens.”

For more information on Personnel*Plus* and their 25 years of service to the Athens County community, contact Doug Mitchell at (740) 592-3416 ext. 22, email [dougmi@athenscbmrdd.org](mailto:dougmi@athenscbmrdd.org) or visit their website at <http://www.personnelplus.org/>



**Employees at Avalanche Pizza are like family.**

*John and Deborah Gutekanst (right) with employees, Alexis Rhinehart and Jason Douglas, thank each other for being so supportive on the job. Says John, "You can't find better employees than these!"*

**Pipeline appreciates all responders to the feedback request in the October 15th issue, which resulted in information for this article.**



### **3. New Staff Profile**

## **Troy McCollister Named Superintendent at Cambridge Developmental Center**



**Troy McCollister**

Troy A. McCollister has been named Superintendent for Cambridge Developmental Center (CaDC) in Cambridge, Ohio, effective November 17, 2008. Troy is returning to CaDC, after serving as the Director of the Guernsey County office of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

Troy had previously worked as Personnel Director and Qualified Mental Retardation Professional (QMRP) at CaDC, and has remained active with the organization as President of CaDC's Citizens Advisory Council.

Troy earned a Bachelor of Psychology/Philosophy and Economics degree from Muskingum College, and a Master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Akron.

Ginnie Whisman, ODMRDD Assistant Deputy Director, Developmental Centers, notes,

**“Troy has always stayed involved with CaDC and his support of the Center is apparent. Troy’s commitment and dedication to the individuals, staff, families and others involved with the Center is remarkable. Both Troy and I are excited about the prospect of his leadership at Cambridge, as Superintendent.”**

Troy’s previous experience at Cambridge Developmental Center spanned nine years, and his return to the Cambridge area following the Guernsey County position is much anticipated. Troy comments, “I truly have enjoyed my work at both locations. Both Guernsey County DJFS and Cambridge DC are staffed by a gifted group of professionals who have challenging jobs as they work to deliver services to individuals who need assistance. I am looking forward to the future at CaDC.”

*For more information about Cambridge Developmental Center, visit the ODMRDD website at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/residential/cadc.htm>*



## **4. Down Syndrome Advocates Report Participation in Statewide Buddy Walks**

*The October 15 issue of Pipeline reported on October’s recognition of Down Syndrome Awareness Month and the annual celebratory Buddy Walks. We’ve heard from several successful Walkers, and salute all who participated this month. Here’s one example ...*

### **Madison County**

Madison County’s Buddy Walk took a celebrity turn when some of the group caught up with TV news personality, Andrea Cambern. The October 2008 issue of ‘The Madison Express,’ a monthly newsletter produced by the Madison County Board of MRDD featured a great photo furnished by the local Keaton family. *(See pdf for photo)*

For more information about Madison County’s Buddy Walk, contact Jeff Gates, Madison County Board of MRDD at (740)852-7050 or email [jgates@co.madison.oh.us](mailto:jgates@co.madison.oh.us)



### **Madison County Buddy Walkers in the News**

*Several participants in the Madison County Buddy Walk caught up with local TV news personality Andrea Cambern. Pictured are (from left) Savannah Wilson, Jillian Barton, Andrea Cambern, Brittini Keaton, Briana Keaton, Marcus Harvey, and Brooklyn Keaton (looking rather mature!)*

*Photo courtesy, the Keaton family.*

The Buddy Walk™ was established in 1995 to promote acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome.

Since 1995 more than 270 Buddy Walk events have taken place, nationwide, according to the National Down Syndrome Society. In 2007 more than 230,000 individuals participated in a Buddy Walk! Ohio's Buddy Walks have proven to be excellent opportunities for communities to improve awareness and understanding of what Down syndrome is, and how people with Down syndrome *can and do* contribute to the fabric of each community.

*For information about Buddy Walks [Learn More...](#) across the state and nation, visit the National Down Syndrome Society website at <http://www.ndss.org/>*



## **5. OACBMRDD Celebrates 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**



## Ohio Association of County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities



The Ohio Association of County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OACBMRDD) is celebrating 25 years of service to Ohio citizens with MRDD at their annual conference this week, at the Hilton/Easton in Columbus, concluding today. According to OACBMRDD Executive Director, Dan Ohler, nearly 800 people will have attended at least some part of the three-day conference, participating in an array of nearly 125 seminars and presentations.

He comments, “We are honored to welcome this year as featured presenters, Ohio Department of MRDD Director, John Martin\*, as well as Nancy Thaler, Executive Director of the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disability Services. In addition, we will be presenting several service and recognition awards to outstanding individuals who have impacted the MRDD field, as we celebrate our 25 years of growth.”

**The ODMRDD congratulates the OACBMRDD on 25 years of service, and appreciates the collaborative working relationship which has been fostered in working together on MRDD Futures initiatives.**

For updated information regarding the conference presentations, awards, and outcomes, visit the website at [www.oacbmrd.org](http://www.oacbmrd.org), or contact the office at (614) 431-0616.

*\*Note: Director Martin’s overview presentation, “The Ohio Picture,” will be posted on the ODMRDD homepage at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov) this week.*



## 6. Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council (OSILC), Call for Nominations

The Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council (OSILC) is recruiting new Council members. The Council is an eleven-member body whose members are appointed by the Governor for three-year terms on a voluntary basis. The majority of the members must be people with disabilities.



**SILCs were established in federal law in 1992, as part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.**

The Councils are committed to promoting a philosophy of independent living, including individual control, peer support, self-help, self-determination, equal access, and individual and system advocacy. In addition, according to OSILC,

**... the Councils foster leadership, empowerment, independence, productivity of individuals with disabilities, and the integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the mainstream of American society.**

OSILC recruits, nominates, and recommends candidates to the Governor for appointment. By law, the eleven appointed Council members must meet specific *membership categories*, including:

- > At least 6 of 11 members not employed by an independent living center or state agency;
- > One Executive Director from a Center for Independent Living (CIL);
- > People with disabilities; parents, guardians, and/or advocates of people with disabilities;
- > Diverse representation of many types of disabilities;
- > Representation from various minority/ethnic backgrounds; and,
- > Geographic distribution from around the state.

The Council meets six times per year, every other month. Application packets are available from the OSILC office – see information below, or visit the website at [www.ohiosilc.org](http://www.ohiosilc.org)

*Kay L. Grier, Ohio SILC*

*670 Morrison Rd., Suite 200, Gahanna, OH 43230*

*800/566-7788, 614/892-0390, or email: [kgrier@ohiosilc.org](mailto:kgrier@ohiosilc.org)*



## **Reminder**

### **Vote! Election Day is November 4th**

People with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities have the right to vote, and should have access to information to help them do that. If you are a person with a disability, live with, work with, or care about someone who may need information, reassurance, or assistance to vote, please note the information below, and *remember, you can vote before Election Day this year!*

**If you experience problems on Election Day, you may contact the Ohio Legal Rights Service (OLRS) Election Hotline for assistance. The Hotline will be open from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. – Call (614) 466-7264, or 1-800-282-9181 for voter assistance.**



## Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)



The ODMRDD toll-free hotline number for reporting abuse/neglect and other MUIs is **1-866-313-MRDD (6733)**. Please note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of MRDD, however, it is understood that there may be times an individual, staff member, or family member may feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember that the hotline number exists, and is to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.



## *Pipeline feedback ... direct from you to the state ...*

*Questions? Comments?* *Pipeline* is an electronic publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD), distributed approximately twice monthly to update and inform readers of time-sensitive, relevant information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us about *Pipeline* at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us) , or contact Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us) , phone (614) 644-0262.

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**To subscribe to *Pipeline***, send an email to: [join-pipeline@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:join-pipeline@odmrdd.state.oh.us) and write SUBSCRIBE in the subject line. **To discontinue your subscription to *Pipeline*** ('opt off') write UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line. You also may read issues of *Pipeline* at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/pipeline/odmrdd.htm>

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# Pipeline ... Extra!

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



A *Pipeline* EXTRA will be published as needed to cover hot news.  
Visit us at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov)

Wednesday, November 5, 2008

## Nov. 4, 2008 Election Results, MRDD Levy Issues

13 counties had issues on the November 4<sup>th</sup> ballot. The results as of 7:35 a.m. are as follows:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Ashland County Board of MRDD:</i>   | Two issues: 1.5 mills five-year renewal for Dale-Roy<br>PASSED 67%<br>2.1 mills three-year renewal for Dale-Roy<br>PASSED 64% |
| <i>Ashtabula County Board of MRDD:</i> | 2-mill renewal PASSED 61%   |
| <i>Carroll County Board of MRDD:</i>   | 3.5 mill replacement of two levies for 10 years<br>RESULTS NOT AVAILABLE YET  |
| <i>Coshocton County Board of MRDD:</i> | 2.8 mill renewal for five years PASSED 63%  |
| <i>Greene County Board of MRDD:</i>    | 3.5 mill five-year operating renewal PASSED 61%   |
| <i>Geauga County Board of MRDD:</i>    | 3.3 mill renewal from five-year to continuous<br>PASSED 64%   |
| <i>Hardin County Board of MRDD:</i>    | 4 mill five-year replacement levy PASSED 59%  |
| <i>Henry County Board of DD:</i>       | 2 mill five-year renewal levy PASSED 68%  |
| <i>Monroe County Board of MRDD:</i>    | 1 mill renewal that will change from a five-year<br>levy, to continuous. RESULTS NOT AVAILABLE YET                            |
| <i>Morrow County Board of MRDD:</i>    | 0.8 mill new tax levy for five years FAILED 48% NO  |
| <i>Portage County Board of MRDD:</i>   | 2.0 mill renewal PASSED 67%   |
| <i>Lucas County Board of MRDD:</i>     | 4 mill replacement levy on a continuing basis<br>PASSED 67%   |
| <i>Trumbull County Board of MRDD:</i>  | 1.2 mills new tax levy, 1 mill replacement<br>PASSED 61% with 78% of voting completed.  |

**Congratulations to all who passed a levy, and to those whose did not, we appreciate how much work was involved in your efforts.**

*Thanks to OACBMRDD for updated information.*



## *Pipeline Extra feedback ... direct from you to the state ...*

**Questions? Comments?** *Pipeline Extra* is a publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) and is distributed infrequently, to highlight breaking news in the MRDD arena. The regular *Pipeline* publication publishes twice monthly to inform readership of relevant information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us) or contact Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us) , phone (614) 644-0262.

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# Pipeline ... direct from the state ...

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

Ted Strickland, Governor

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**Wednesday, November 12, 2008**  
**Volume 2, Issue 23**

- 1. Governor Strickland Helps Celebrate ARC Industries' 20 Years of Work in State Facility
- 2. Interagency Work Group on Autism Distributes Draft Work Plan for Comment
- 3. Update on the "MR" in MRDD
- 4. Ohio DD Council *Partners in Policymaking*, December 5-6, 2008
- 5. Healthy Lifestyles: Provider Organizes 'Commit to be Fit' Hike

**Mark Your Calendars!** Statehouse Kickoff Event, MRDD Awareness Month, March 5, 2009

**Reminder:** OSILC Call for Nominations

## **For What Are You Thankful?**

In November 2007 the ODMRDD published our first-ever *Thanksgiving Issue of Pipeline*, which highlighted a few of the many things for which the ODMRDD was thankful. While it was not exhaustive, the issue included articles on caring direct-service staff ... parents who struggle to provide opportunities for their children with disabilities ... and, extra efforts of all kinds throughout the state.

**The 2008 Thanksgiving Issue will publish on November 26<sup>th</sup>, the day before Thanksgiving, and this year, we invite YOU to tell us what you are thankful for, as well.**

Please share your thoughts with us before November 24, at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us)

Thank you!

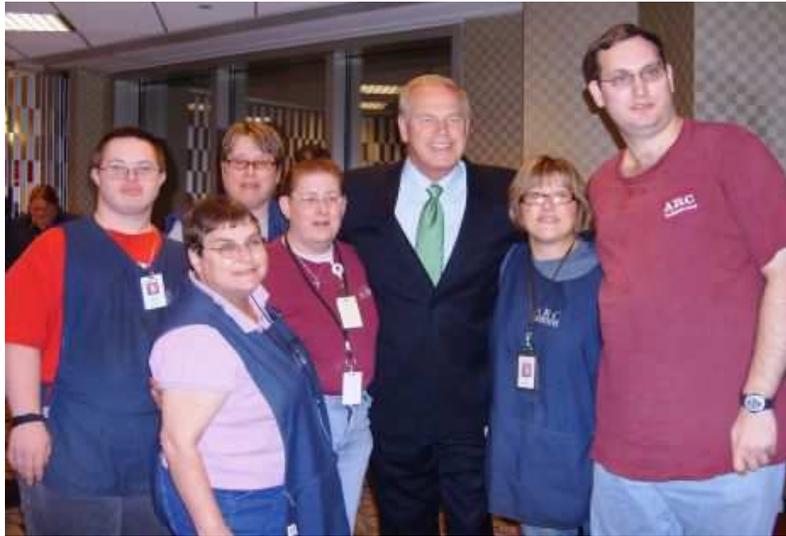
## **1. Governor Strickland Helps Celebrate ARC Industries' 20 Years of Work in State Facility Maintenance**

On November 5, 2008, at the Vern Riffe State Office Tower in Columbus, Franklin County staff and ARC Industries employees gathered to celebrate the 20th anniversary of keeping that formidable building gleaming, day after day – and they had excellent company for the celebration.

Governor Ted Strickland, and ODMRDD Director John Martin just happened to drop in on the 19<sup>th</sup> Floor celebration, and spent some time congratulating all employees and supervisory staff involved. It was a big surprise, and the resulting photos show how excited everyone was to host these gentlemen.

Notes Jed Morison, Superintendent, Franklin County Board of MRDD, “We started cleaning the building when it opened in 1988, and the person who has managed this site for all these years is Doug Meier. Doug and the entire crew do a terrific job.”

**Congratulations, Arc Industries!**



**Governor Ted Strickland congratulates Arc Industries employees for 20 years on the job at the beautiful Vern Riffe Center in downtown Columbus.**



**A 20-year award is presented to Doug Meier, recognizing all of Arc Industries' employees at the Vern Riffe building worksite. Also shown (l. to r.) are John Martin, John Mitchem (CEO, Arc Industries), Jed Morison, and Governor Strickland.**



## 2. Interagency Workgroup on Autism Distributes Work Plan



**Autism Ribbon**

As published in a recent *Pipeline* [Pipeline Volume 2 Issue 18](#), ODMRDD was designated as the lead by the Strickland Administration to coordinate state agency work focusing on autism. To meet this charge, the Department has pulled together key state agency partners to form an Interagency Work Group (IWG) on Autism. The group meets regularly to identify opportunities to better communicate and coordinate the way the state agencies do business to assure that efforts to serve individuals on the autism spectrum are responsive, effective, and an integral part of Ohio's system for serving all individuals with developmental disabilities.

The IWG has drafted a Work Plan identifying *six guiding priorities and accompanying actions* <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/topics/autism-workplan.pdf> as a launching point for its work. These priorities and activities are built on the strength of and history behind the 2003 Ohio Autism Task Force recommendations, as well as current state autism-related initiatives.

The draft Work Plan outlines strategies and activities that can begin immediately, or are already in progress. In difficult economic times, the Plan offers the state some attainable actions or activities that can achieve positive results in the short term with little financial burden, through:

- Building more coordinated state and local partnerships;
- Capitalizing on already existing services and supports statewide; and,
- More creatively and effectively communicating with one another.

The draft Work Plan is posted at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/topics/iagautism.htm> on the ODMRDD website. According to Jody Fisher, Autism Project Manager at the Department, "The plan has designated several state agency leads to facilitate work around particular activities. As leads, these agencies will form the necessary partnerships (including state agencies, individuals and families, advocates, and service providers) to work together to achieve the Work Plan activities." She adds,

**" The plan is about making and keeping connections. ODMRDD embraces two over-riding core values to guide its role as lead for coordinating this work:**

- **Quality outcomes through a combination of people and process, and**
- **Partnership with stakeholders for positive results**

**Input regarding the IWG Work Plan from individuals, family members, advocates, service providers and other leaders in the field, is critical and valued. "**

Comments and feedback should be directed to [autism-feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:autism-feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us). If you have an interest in becoming involved with any of the specific activities outlined in the draft Plan, please include your contact information.

Specifically, the ODMRDD invites comments that will help determine whether or not the Plan hits the mark for moving Ohio in the right direction on this subject. In addition, ODMRDD encourages the sharing of the Plan with others who may be interested in providing their thoughts.

All feedback will be shared with the Interagency Work Group and be used to finalize the work plan. We thank you, in advance, for your participation in this effort.



The work of the IWG is embedded in the Futures recommendations, posted at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/futures/>

### **Reminder: Second Annual Network of Autism Training and Technical Assistance Programs (NATTAP) Conference, November 19-21, 2008**

The Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) is hosting the Second Annual *Network of Autism Training and Technical Assistance Programs* (NATTAP) Conference, Nov. 19-21, 2008 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Columbus. NATTAP also spotlights the *State Team Forum*, held in conjunction with the larger NATTAP Conference, with sessions on November 18 and 21, 2008.

The State Team Forum is designed to bring together pre-identified team members from each state to interact and learn from others across the nation, providing opportunities for networking and continuous development of ideas and solutions for issues that all states face in the area of autism. This year's State Team Forum will focus on interagency collaboration and building a continuum of services.

*To learn more about the 2008 NATTAP Conference, please visit the website at [www.nattapconference.org](http://www.nattapconference.org) or visit OCALI at [www.ocali.org](http://www.ocali.org)*



### **3. Update on the 'MR' in MRDD; HB 620 and HB 621**

In a majority of affirmative votes, 65 to 12, with one abstention, delegates at the Ohio Association of County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OACBMRDD) conference late last month passed a resolution to remove the term "mental retardation" from the legal name of "County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities" with an amendment.

The amendment states that the name change to "County Boards of Developmental Disabilities" would not prohibit a local board from including the words "mental retardation" or "MRDD" in local levy language.

The resolution, which has already been introduced as House Bill 621, co-sponsored by State Representatives Jimmy Stewart and Fred Strahorn, will now be presented to the Ohio General Assembly for passage.

Also under consideration is House Bill 620, sponsored by State Representative Jimmy Stewart and State Representative Fred Strahorn. It would change the name of the Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities to the Department of Developmental Disabilities and to make similar name changes for the Joint Council on Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, the Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Developmental Center Closure Commission, and certain state funds.

The text of HB 620 may be accessed at:

[http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText127/127\\_HB\\_620\\_I\\_N.html](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText127/127_HB_620_I_N.html)

The text of HB 620 may be accessed at:

[http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText127/127\\_HB\\_621\\_I\\_N.html](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText127/127_HB_621_I_N.html)

*Pipeline will continue to report on this issue.*



## **4. Ohio DD Council *Partners in Policymaking*, Dec. 5-6**

Graduates from Ohio Partners in Policymaking will be gathering December 5-6, 2008, at the Hyatt Downtown, 350 N. High St., Columbus. This Fourth Annual Gathering is coordinated by a project funded by the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council (“DD Council”), and awarded to ELP Consulting, Cincinnati, OH. Graduates come together from throughout the state to learn about innovative programs and legislation, to network and make new connections, and celebrate Ohio’s newest Partners in Policymaking graduates from the Portsmouth, OH area.

The program begins Friday, December 5, 3:00 to 8:30 PM; and continues Saturday, December 6, 9 AM to 3:00 PM.

**This year’s theme is “*Leading By Example*”. One hundred and twenty graduates have been invited to participate in this gathering.**

Two nationally-known speakers will be featured: Long-time strong supporter of Partners in Policymaking, Derrick Defresne, will address the “*The Power of Partners in Policymaking*” on December 5. And, on December 6, Chris Burke, actor, advocate and ambassador for the National Down Syndrome Society will speak about his life as an advocate, and, the impact his role as “Corky” on the television program *Life Goes On* has had in educating the world about the talents and abilities of people with disabilities.

*For more information on this event, contact Co-statewide Coordinators, Essie Pederson, [epederson@cinci.rr.com](mailto:epederson@cinci.rr.com), (513) 871-2181 or Linda Kunick, [lkunick@rhcorp.org](mailto:lkunick@rhcorp.org) (513) 619-2955.*



## Toward More Healthy Lifestyles for People with Disabilities

### **5. Provider Organizes 'Commit to be Fit' Hike as Latest Effort**

Aspen Community Living, Franklin County, has introduced a sports-based day program for individuals as a step toward combatting obesity and improving overall fitness levels in people with disabilities. As part of this healthy commitment, Aspen recently gathered staff members, family, friends, and individuals who participated in a "Commit to Be Fit" hike at High Banks Metro Park in the Columbus area. It was Aspen's first organized event for this purpose.



**Committing to be Fit**

*On a beautiful late October afternoon the group set out into the relative wilderness on a 2.5 mile untimed hike consisting of many twists, turns, ups, and downs. These four hikers made a quick rest stop.*



**Hikers 'Walking the Walk'**

*Obviously pleased with themselves, these members of the Aspen group encourage others to 'commit to be fit,' as well.*

According to Aspen's Michael Pierro, in a study conducted at the World Special Olympics games in 1999 it was found that 53% of American athletes competing in the games were above a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 85%, with 33% of American athletes having a BMI greater than

95%, only leaving 14% of the American Special Olympics athletes not considered by the BMI measurement to be obese or overweight.

The same study noted that obesity is an increasing issue among individuals with disabilities and affects their quality of life, just as studies have noted regarding the general U.S. population. But, most importantly, according to Aspen's hike organizers,

**“ ... the impact of obesity on the lives of individuals with disabilities is thought to be even greater than the impact on people in the general population. Challenges associated with having a disability are compounded when an individual is diagnosed with diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, stroke, arthritis, and respiratory diseases – all of which are commonly found in people considered overweight or obese. The overall fitness levels of individuals with disabilities have been described by one researcher as making them, ‘a population at risk.’ ”**

Participants in the recent Aspen hike were pleased to report that everyone started *and finished* the hike together. Michael Pierro notes, “It was evident that this kind of activity was not entirely new territory for the individuals enrolled in the day program at Aspen, as they have completed hikes during the spring and summer months as part of their weekly routine at the day center.” He added with pleasure, “At times the individuals had to push their staff to keep moving! ... as they breezed through the 2.5 miles.”

*For additional information about Sports-Based Day Programs, contact Aspen's Michael Pierro at 614-880-6000 or [michaelp@aspencil.com](mailto:michaelp@aspencil.com)*



## **Mark Your Calendars!**

### **Statehouse Kickoff Event, MRDD Awareness Month, March 5, 2009**



The ODMRDD and Ohio Public Images (OPI) will again collaborate with other statewide organizations to host the annual *MRDD Awareness Month (March) Kickoff Event* at the Ohio Statehouse Atrium in Columbus, on March 5, 2009. *Pipeline* will provide updated information as the date gets closer. Contact for the event is Sherry Steinman at ODMRDD: [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us); phone (614) 644-0262.



## **Reminder**

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*Kay L. Grier, Ohio SILC, 670 Morrison Rd., Suite 200, Gahanna, OH 43230  
800/566-7788, 614/892-0390, or email: [kgrier@ohiosilc.org](mailto:kgrier@ohiosilc.org)*



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*Questions? Comments?* Pipeline is an electronic publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD), distributed approximately twice monthly to update and inform readers of time-sensitive, relevant information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us about Pipeline at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us), or contact Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us), phone (614) 644-0262.

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# Pipeline . . . direct from the state . . .

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director

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Wednesday, November 26, 2008

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Special Feature

## **Giving Thanks – Thoughts from Across the State**

Bonus Item: Non-Fiction, Just for Fun – 'One Tired Turkey'



## **1. Ohio's First Lady, Featured Speaker at Collaborative Symposium Focusing on DD Issues**

Ohio's First Lady, Frances Strickland, was the featured speaker at a 2008 Collaboration Symposium Tuesday, Nov. 18 at the Dublin (Ohio) Embassy Suites Hotel. This is the first event sponsored by the combined efforts of the *Ohio Association of Superintendents of County Boards of MRDD (OASCBMRDD)*, the *Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA)*, and the *Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD (OACBMRDD)*.

"I really appreciate the spirit behind what you're doing here," First Lady Strickland told the crowd at the symposium.

Nearly 200 providers, superintendents and County Board of MRDD staff were registered for the all-day event, ready to hear presentations about successful collaborations, and learn how to reach out effectively to the new General Assembly in preparation for the upcoming biennial budget process.

**“Our top priority is better relationships,” First Lady Strickland said. “In the economic times we’re in, we need to focus on our relationships.”**

“We need to be resourceful, and we have to ask ourselves, ‘How can we share what we have to help these families in need?’” she said. “Instead of thinking of individual agencies, we’re thinking about the whole community.”

OPRA Executive Director, Mark Davis, welcomed symposium participants, stating, “I’m really excited to be here today, and I’m glad all of you are here too.”

OPRA and the OASCBMRDD (“Superintendents’ Association”) convened the symposium to discuss collaboration opportunities between County Boards of MRDD and private providers. The symposium is one of the many things the Collaboration Steering Committee has developed to strengthen relationships at the county level.

Davis said that when the groups were talking about what they should do to improve working relationships, the symposium concept was one of the first ideas they had. Both Davis and Hamilton County Board of MRDD Superintendent, Cheryl Phipps, emphasized that the need to get all interested parties together was clear.

**“When we all work together, it’s better for people with disabilities,” Phipps said.  
“This is just the beginning.”**

OPRA’s Davis challenged participants to, “Think about how the examples presented today can be taken back to your organizations and work for you.”

Participants selected two of four one-hour sessions, focusing on different topics. Included were sessions on Working with Offenders with Mental Retardation; Dual Diagnosis Intervention; the Southeast Ohio Autism Center; the Autism Respite Program in Hamilton County; Community Intervention Centers; and, ‘Teamwork – a Win-Win for Everyone.’

After morning breakout sessions, participants regrouped for an afternoon session focused on the upcoming biennium budget process. It included input from ODMRDD Director John Martin; Ohio Department of Job & Family Services Deputy Director John Corlett; Ohio Office of Budget & Management Deputy Director Tracy Plouck; The Success Group’s Mike Toman; Thomas P. Pappas & Associates’ President, Tom Pappas; Mark Davis, and Cheryl Phipps.

Plouck offered a budget forecast, and Director Martin and Deputy Director Corlett provided a state department view of the current economic situation. “We, as a system, could well be facing the need to make some very difficult decisions together,” Director Martin said.

**“We have to live within our means, yet invest in what matters,” Corlett said. “We need to work to stabilize families, communities, and the state.”**

Mike Toman and Tom Pappas each provided their perspectives on legislative aspects of the budget situation. Both agreed that the current economic environment requires collaboration to solve issues.

“What we’re doing here today is a great start,” Toman said. “The key to collaboration is no infighting during the budget process. Organized advocates tend to be the most successful.”

Pappas added, “History tells us that when we collaborate, we’re successful. A divided front at the General Assembly is a bad thing.”

Cheryl Phipps summarized,

**“It is clear that our system will need to be well aligned to ensure the ongoing state support for programs for individuals with developmental disabilities.”**

*For more about the Collaboration Symposium, visit MRDD Today at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/today/>*



**Collaborative agreement signed.**

*Pictured are several leaders in the field of developmental disabilities who signed a collaborative proclamation on behalf of their agencies. Included are (l. to r.) Mary Ann Chamberlain, superintendent, Washington County Board of MRDD and president of the OASCBMRDD; Cheryl Phipps, superintendent, Hamilton County Board of MRDD and past president of the OASCBMRDD; Mark Davis, executive director, OPRA; First Lady Frances Strickland; John Martin, director, ODMRDD; Dan Ohler, executive director, OACBMRDD; Than Johnson, CEO, Champaign Residential Services and president of the OPRA Board of Trustees; and Ron Kozlowski, executive director, Advocacy and Protective Services. (photo courtesy, OACBMRDD)*



## Key Staff Profile

### 2. Scott Phillips, Asst. Deputy Director, MUI Investigations



Scott Phillips has been named Assistant Deputy Director, Major Unusual Incident (MUI) Investigations, effective November 17, 2008. Scott joins the unit following the retirement of Mick Ihlenfeld, who preceded him in the position.

Scott was most recently employed as Executive Director at Rescare, a private residential services provider, and immediately prior to that was employed with ODMRDD's MUI team during Mick Ihlenfeld's tenure.

In making the announcement, Kate Haller, Deputy Director, Legal and MUI Services, stated,

**" I am so pleased to welcome Scott to his new position as Assistant Deputy Director for the MUI Unit, which is already an impressive team. Scott is an able successor to Mick Ihlenfeld, and he will provide the leadership to make a strong MUI system even more effective. "**

Scott rejoins the unit with a great deal of enthusiasm, and notes, "I am really excited about rejoining this team of motivated and self-directed people here at ODMRDD, and it feels great to be back." He adds,

**"Our MUI team will continue to build relationships with County Boards of MRDD and provider agencies to assure that quality services are supported, and that well-informed decisions are made."**

*Scott can be reached at [Scott.Phillips@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:Scott.Phillips@dmr.state.oh.us)*



### **3. Disability Housing Network Receives Grant to Support Special Needs Housing Research**

The Disability Housing Network (DHN) announced early this month that it has received a \$41,000 grant from The Cleveland Foundation to support research on the cost of special needs housing in Ohio.

As part of the statewide membership organization's effort to increase the knowledge of the special needs housing field, DHN recently applied for a grant to study the costs of providing safe, affordable, and accessible housing across the state. With the support of The Cleveland Foundation, the research is being completed to help housing corporations and County Boards of MRDD better understand the scope and scale of services offered by housing corporations across the state, and the costs associated.

**It is commonly accepted that the cost and quality of housing options available for people with disabilities varies considerably across the state. However, this has not been supported with**

**independently-collected or independently-verified information. This research will reconcile this with hard data.**

Specifically, the DHN study will:

- Determine the average costs of operating special needs housing in Ohio;
- Identify value-added services that are being provided;
- Compare the costs to revenues available;
- Compare the housing costs of the supported living model (3 or 4 in a home) to the group home model (5 to 8 in a home);
- Ascertain sustainability; and,
- Develop recommendations for improvement which will have statewide implications for policy and planning by the ODMRDD.

The research is also in response to the ODMRDD Futures Committee report, March 2008, which called for a data-driven process for policy decisions. It reflects a system-wide priority to use a data-driven process in line with the work of the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) – see Futures Deliverable Number 11 at: <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/futures/documents/Deliverable11.pdf> This work also will complement that which is underway with the Governor’s Interagency Council on Homelessness and Affordable Housing.

**The Futures Committee report states that ODMRDD should review the state’s current and future housing options to identify any needed improvements to ensure the health and safety of those individuals choosing to live in the community.**

Cleveland-based firm, McManus, Dosen, & Co., was chosen to complete the research, which will be completed in four phases:

- Study design;
- Pilot study consisting of a limited number of housing corporations;
- Broader implementation of the survey among housing corporations across the state; and,
- A final report outlining policy recommendations for county and state officials.

The research is scheduled to be completed by June 2009.

*For more information: [members-request@disabilityhousingnetwork.org](mailto:members-request@disabilityhousingnetwork.org)*





**In this issue closest to the observance of Thanksgiving Day, we highlight a few of the many things for which we, at the ODMRDD, are thankful ... and for which you, our *Pipeline* readers, have told us you are thankful. Pipeline also takes this opportunity to thank all our readers for your feedback and comments during the year. Many articles are the result of reader input.**

## Thankful for the Opportunity to Serve Others

### Director Martin, Thankful for Caring Direct Support Staff

*During the course of the year, ODMRDD Director John Martin, has shared many of his experiences with Pipeline readers. He shares these thoughts in the spirit of Thanksgiving ...*

Approximately 24 years ago I drove from Philadelphia to Toledo to interview at Sunshine Inc. for the Director's position. Prior to the interview I was given a tour of the program. The person who gave me that tour was Leola ('Lee') Howe. I was extremely impressed by her caring, commitment, and overall knowledge of all of the individuals I met there that day. Having been a direct care worker myself, I thought, "If everyone here is like Lee, this is a place I want to work."

Lee has just celebrated 50 years as a direct care staff member at Sunshine\*, where I worked for 22 years, immediately preceding my position here at the ODMRDD. Time has a way of moving along pretty quickly!



I share this by way of introducing a larger observation – that as I travel across Ohio in the course of keeping in touch with the MRDD field, I have had the opportunity to tour many programs and meet many direct support professionals. Although few can boast the many years of dedicated service Lee Howe has given, I have seen the caring and commitment Lee exemplifies in many dedicated, and often under-appreciated professionals over and over again.

**This Thanksgiving, as we as a nation and a state face much uncertainty and anxiety due to a dire economic climate, dedicated direct service staff like Lee and thousands of others, will put those anxieties behind them and do what they have always done, provide loving care. It is for them that I am especially grateful this holiday season, and I wish all of our direct service professionals a relaxing and meaningful holiday season.**

*-John L. Martin*

*\*The celebration of Leola Howe's 50 years of service is one of the articles in the next ODMRDD Pipeline Quarterly feature magazine, publishing the week of December 1, 2008.*



## Thankful for Holiday Traditions

### Montgomery County *People First* Participate in Parade

Montgomery County reports that with the holidays on the way, staff and individuals who are members of Montgomery County *People First*, are looking forward to participating in a post-Thanksgiving parade. A float, complete with ginger bread house, shiny snow, and illuminated animated reindeer, has been constructed.

The float will highlight the *People First* chapter, run by and for people with developmental disabilities. Staff and self-advocates of the Montgomery County chapter, will display their float in the *City of Dayton's Children's Parade*, traditionally held on the Friday after Thanksgiving, in downtown Dayton. The parade typically has more than 25,000 spectators.

This is the first time that the *People First*, Dayton Chapter, has built and displayed a float in the parade. They have received help from many volunteers who have provided their assistance in making this project a reality. Torey Brown, President of *People First* of Montgomery County stated,

**“Our float, and participating in this parade, is just another way we can ensure we are a part of our community.”**



**Pam and Paul work on float 'snow'.**



The finished float, with lots of snow!



## Thankful for Acts of Kindness and Inclusion Hancock County Athlete Shows More Than Good Sportsmanship

*Shared with permission from Taryn's mom, Cindy Bregel*

Over the years we have had many trials and tribulations with having a child with developmental delays and working with the school system to have her included. It has been a journey of blessings and frustrations over the last 12 years.

Yes, we were pioneers in this process at Liberty Benton schools, and even once we had to hire an attorney to help keep Taryn's placement at Liberty Benton. We always believe in Taryn and her abilities. We knew that an inclusive education would be best for her. We also knew that she would touch others on her path.

Recently, Liberty Benton was scheduled to play Patrick Henry, which they have never beaten three previous times in State playoffs. And on this subject, there is one very gifted athlete who is our quarterback. His name is Aaron Craft.

Aaron already has been contacted by the University of Tennessee to play basketball. He is a junior, and in Taryn's English class. The Friday before the game, when Taryn got back to Liberty Benton after her morning classes at Millstream, she signed in at the office, and Aaron was waiting for her.

He wanted Taryn to wear his jersey Friday at school. He said it was his idea, and that he had checked with his girlfriend first and she said it was fine.

The picture here shows this unexpected act of friendship and kindness from this wonderful young man. Taryn was thrilled.



Aaron Craft with Taryn Bregel

And oh yes -- we are in the Final Four for the State Division V, and won that Saturday night with a score of 28-0.

I share this with all of you to remind you of the fact that the trials are worth it, and the blessings are too numerous to mention. *- Sincerely, Cindy Bregel*

### More About Kindness

Franklin D. Roosevelt, often perceived as one of the more 'gruff' U.S. Presidents, had his thoughtful side. Here he is quoted as being thankful for human kindness ...

**“Human kindness has never weakened the stamina or softened the fiber of a free people. A nation does not have to be cruel to be tough.”**

*-Franklin D. Roosevelt*



### Thankful for My Son

### What Terry Has Taught Me

*by Leona Crogan, parent advocate and ODMRDD Family Advisory Council member*

At 41 years of age, twenty years ago, I gave birth to a beautiful baby boy with Down syndrome, named Terry Sean. I was told immediately that the necessary bloodwork would be done, but they were just about 100% certain they were correct.

Now, 20 years later, those moments are still so clear in my head. First, I thought someone had punched me in the stomach. Second, I wondered what my 13 year old son would think. And then, all I could think of was that I had to talk to someone else who had a child with Down syndrome.

**I knew I would need support from not just my husband, but from other parents as well. There was nothing short of a small "family reunion" outside the door just waiting to see if it was a boy or a girl. I am sure the thought of a disability never entered their minds.**

With his usual calm demeanor and sense of responsibility, my husband, and our 13 year old son went out first to tell 'the cheerleaders' that we had a beautiful baby boy who was healthy and who also happened to have Down syndrome. It must have been so difficult for them, but I know they wanted to protect me from having to face the first reactions of my dear friends and family.

As they wheeled me out of the delivery room, I could only draw from my usual sense of humor, as I didn't want any pity for me or my baby. Although the task of raising him seemed daunting, I knew we were going to be okay. I told my friends and family, he would be one of the best-dressed kids at school, and he wasn't perfect - just like his mother. It turned tears into laughter as they all breathed a sigh of relief that I was okay with this somewhat awkward situation.

My first look at our beautiful little boy in the neo-natal intensive care unit was of a naked screaming little baby who had lots of dark hair – and I thought, "Was he going to be ready to come out of this 'safe place' where he was protected from any stigma of labeling, bullying, unkind looks and words?" It just didn't seem fair that in a nano-second our lives had changed forever.

**At that point I had no idea what the changes would involve, and questioned whether my maternal instincts would be enough to raise him to be the nice young man his brother was.**

Terry came home from hospital. I had lots of support from family and friends in the beginning. My mother took over as his guardian angel and became not only his best advocate, but mine too. She was at my house daily to ensure I was doing the right thing by him, as by now she was madly in love with this little person whose future was so unknown.

My husband and son comforted me when the tears would come, and I put on a happy face in public so there would be no pity for my precious baby. I'd prove to all of them that I could raise a child with a disability probably better than they could raise one without! Stubborn yes - realistically - whoa.....the inside of me was like jello - scared but determined to solidify our family and Terry's life into something that I could taste that was wonderful - that I could roll around in my thoughts and tell the naysayers.....you're wrong. We're going to be fine.

The early years were not too difficult. School began. My mother had moved in with us by now as she just had to be with the 'golden child' all the time. I had lots of support. Terry started school. We faced the grueling world of 'special education.'

**I read, drove, talked to as many people as I could in order to learn to advocate for him, and as I quickly learned, my knowledge would give me the power I needed in order to get him the best program I could during his school years.**

And, I became a local MRDD Board Member for 10 years.

Raising Terry was much easier than working with the folks in the school systems. When Terry

started high school, we could no longer deal with the ignorance of the administration and filed a 'due process' suit in order to get him into another school district where I wouldn't have to deal with so much stress, and our son would not be put under a microscope every day when he went to school. The children were wonderful - a few of the administration's adults were good - but basically, we were dealing with a school district that wanted parents to stay ignorant of their child's rights.

We won (or shall I say Terry won) the due process suit and he was placed in another school district close to our home. I haven't had a day of stress with his program since.

**Word travels fast in world of special education and by Terry's example, many other parents began to call me. We became fast friends. I helped them with their children's programs. Support came easily from other parents of special needs sons and daughters. Where family and old friends' support had started disappearing, we now had our own support from other families who understood the daunting task that we all were facing and would face for the rest of our lives.**

Terry is still in high school, and we are in the process of 'transition'. Again, more decisions to make. Words like IEP, ISP, Service and Support Administrator, ODMRDD, Ohio Coalition, Ohio Legal Rights, appropriate behavior, least restrictive environment, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Estate Planning, Special Needs Trusts, Supported Living, Waivers (and many many more) ... are the topics of conversation at our home.

With a good respite worker, we can walk away from it sometimes. We got through the first 20 years, and I know we'll get through whatever is coming down the road because now we have supports in place. It's called 'other parents.'

Terry just celebrated his 20th birthday. He had a bowling party with his classmates at school. As I looked at them having the time of their lives at the bowling alley, holding hands with their girlfriends, happy that their parents weren't there, I got a flashback of the day Terry was born and all of the doubts and fears I had about his future. To me, this party looked not much different than any other teenage party. I guess the parents of these young men and women with special needs had all done okay.

I am proud of myself but mostly I am proud of Terry. I have taught him but he has taught me more. I am a better person because of him. Possibly my life would have been much easier had he not had Down syndrome. But our lives were enriched one-hundred-fold by this little fellow who is now a wonderful young man and has far surpassed the expectations we ever had for him.

**As for me - I too have far surpassed the expectations I ever had for myself. I can no longer be superficial and live in a dream world. I live in reality. I know planning his future will be tough - but the years of raising Terry have taught me that we can do it - we have the support and the knowledge.**

And now, my son, -- who was 13 years old when Terry was born -- and his wife, are all beginning the process of planning for his future. My grandchildren are too small to realize that Uncle Terry is different. They just love him for who he is ... a happy young man who loves people, parties, music, and girls (not necessarily in that order). Mostly, we are so thankful for his unconditional love.

Yes Terry, there is a Santa Claus and he doesn't live in the North Pole or Macy's. He lives in the hearts of your family and anyone whose life you have ever touched. -*Thankfully, Leona Crogan*

*If you wish to contact Leona, she has allowed us to share her email address: [michacrog@aol.com](mailto:michacrog@aol.com)*



## Thankful for Emergency Responsiveness

### Direct Support Professionals Respond During Ohio Storm

- Consolidated from statewide reports via the Ohio Provider Resource Assn. (OPRA) -

#### Rose-Mary Center

During the September 14<sup>th</sup> windstorm, power went out at two of Rose-Mary Center's group homes, Grand and Terrace. In addition, the sprinkler system malfunctioned at Grand House, which left bedrooms with inches of water in them. Residents had to be relocated. Patti Linville, Direct Care Worker at Grand organized the residents and staff and provided the leadership necessary to do all of this in a calm, efficient manner. She also went to Terrace House to help, as several of the other Direct Care Workers (DCWs) were new. Patti displayed true team leadership skills.

The next day, power was still off at both Grand and Terrace and since there was no electricity or hot water, the DCWs prepared to move the residents to Rose-Mary Center's main facility. Valisha Sheppard, Patricia Anderson and Janice Holland packed clothing and necessary supplies, made sure the residents were fed and provided medication distribution, all with minimal lighting.

**During this time, they also maintained a calm, reassuring professional manner with the residents, which allowed for a smooth relocation.**

Denise Lee conducted the fire watch at Grand during this time of transition and then came to the Center to help organize the residents. Brandi Harris, Brandon Abrams, Brenda Sanders and Beth Smith, DCWs from Terrace provided the residents with excellent care while packing, organizing and transitioning to the Center. Ruth Ricks conducted the fire watch at Terrace and did a great job troubleshooting any issues that came up.

Once the residents of both houses were safely at the Center, staff from both houses worked as a team to ensure that everything was done smoothly.

#### RHDD

One staffer reports:

“This story pertains to a home that has two individuals requiring total care, who also use electric wheelchairs. One of the individuals also requires breathing treatments, G-tube care etc. The electricity went out Sunday evening.

On Monday the staff called, and we were talking about options for hygiene and food, etc.

The staff on shift lives just about a block away. He had power at his home. I asked if he had any gallon jugs.

He said yes, and offered to bring hot water down for bathing and also a grill for cooking, if needed. Before the night was over he had several gallon jugs of water brought down to the home. He had showered them both, had the grill fired up and they had hot meals and showers the whole time power was out, which was three days.

**He told me every time I called to check on them, “This isn’t so bad – its actually kinda fun, I feel like we’re all camping.”**

My two group homes (four at each home) took residents to a home that had power; they cooked out and showered there. Our maintenance man hauled big barrels of water to the one home for flushing toilets.

I have one more story to share. In one of the group homes the staff coming on shift had power at her house. She came to the office and asked permission to take four folks to her home that evening. I told her not only could she, but I was very grateful that she offered. They went to her home, had showers, supper, hung out, watched some TV. Later in the evening they went back to their home for bed.”

**“ My staff has been stellar! ”**

## **RMS**

A staffer reports:

“During the power outage, we had many caring staff who went above and beyond with our residents, assisting them in trying to manage for days without power. Our staff have taken the individuals out to eat, to Bingo, bowling, movies, Frisbee golf, parks, and opened their own homes to them for meals and hot showers. They have taken individuals to buy batteries for flashlights, and put their food on ice in the freezer and fridge to try to save it from expiring.

They have taken frozen and refrigerated items to their own homes to store in their freezers/ refrigerators until power was restored and the food could be returned to the individual. Staff have even called hotlines for the individuals they serve to request food stamp reimbursement so that replacement food can be bought without the individuals being strapped for money.”

**We have individuals who are afraid of the dark, and staff have gone above and beyond to make sure they are comfortable and secure, and not afraid. I am so proud of how our team has pulled together and shown love and support to those we serve during this time. This is what our job is all about!**

## **Graceworks Enhanced Living**

Nicole Bowers writes:

“I am a program manager at Curtis Street group home in Middletown, with Graceworks Enhanced Living. I just wanted to say how great my residents and staff are.

The guys ‘camped out’ for three and a half days while the power was out here. Although we did not actually stay outside, we used hanging camping showers to have warm water, a grill to cook

all meals, and had activities and played games in the back yard at picnic tables with the help of camping lanterns.

On the second night of the outage we did not have charcoal to light the grill so we all gathered wood and dried leaves from the yard and used it to start a (safe) camp fire to make supper. It was actually fun.

The home staff were positive about being at work even though their own families were without power. They tried to keep the men who live here as comfortable as possible under the circumstances.

### **Champaign Residential Services, Inc. (CRSI)**

On September 14, Ohio was hit with unbelievable hurricane-force winds from a storm that had devastated parts of Texas and other southern states just days earlier. Damages caused by the remnants of Hurricane Ike in Ohio are estimated at \$500 million or higher, making it one of the state's costliest natural disasters according to the *Columbus Dispatch*. With winds reaching 78 mph in some areas, the storm knocked out electrical service for 2.5 million customers.

During natural disasters and power outages, residents' lives are affected and their households disrupted like anyone else's. CRSI staff did what they do best ... take care of people.

**Most of the thirty counties where CRSI provides services experienced power outages of varying durations. Direct support staff rallied quickly to bring a sense of normalcy and safety to those whose households had suddenly become dark and without power.**

A great example is Mary Smith, a direct support professional who truly lives up to her title. Mary provides services for CRSI at Oakland Street in Urbana. According to Nicole Williams, program administrator for Clark, Greene, Clinton, and Champaign Counties, Mary brought in her personal generator to power the refrigerator and freezer to make sure food stayed cold and available for the gentlemen in residence. She also was able to do their laundry during the day and power the TV in the evenings after the men got home from their jobs.

Electrical power was out for three days, and Mary worked around the clock to ensure that all the individuals' needs were met. She motivated other staff members and made the experience more fun than frustrating for everyone.

Also according to Nicole Williams, Rick Collins -- a resident living at Oakwood and an employee at CRSI in the afternoons -- usually works on his artwork during the day. The lack of power didn't affect Rick or his artistic desire. He went out and bought a hat with a light on it and continued to draw!



**Mary Smith assists Lynn Jenkins of Urbana with retrieving a snack from the refrigerator.**

*Power was out for three days, and Mary worked around the clock to ensure that all the individuals' needs were met.*

Thanks to Mark Davis at OPRA for gathering all these great stories for which we are thankful!



## Thankful for People Who Make our Mission a Reality MVDC's Mentoring Program

The November 2008 issue of Mount Vernon Developmental Center's (MVDC) *Beacon* newsletter features information about a newly-organized approach to mentoring staff. Superintendent, Ernie Fischer, is enthusiastic about the concept for a several reasons. He explains,

**“Our Developmental Center was strongly impacted by retirements and restructuring in the last year or so, and we wanted to find a different way to help new staff become more quickly acclimated, as well as offer opportunities to existing staff to be a part of this process. The mentoring program creates a natural dialogue among several levels of staffing, and allows us to create partnerships that might otherwise take a long time to happen, or might otherwise not have an opportunity to happen at all. Our ultimate goal is to develop and maintain quality and continuity of care to the individuals we serve, and the mentoring program is one way we hope to achieve that goal.”**

Ernie also notes, “Through retirements we’ve lost about 50 staff in the last year or so -- mostly TPWs (Therapeutic Program Workers), plus there’s the usual turnover in any staffing situation. It’s so important to support new direct service staff as soon as they come on board. The mentoring teams have been well-received, and right now we have a group of 10-12 who are working together as a support network. Our Human Resources staff have done a good job of putting this together and talking with staff representing all areas of service.”

The *Beacon* further elaborates: “Following much evaluation and input from others, we are very excited to introduce a new program that involves the enthusiasm and teamwork of MVDC employees to mentor new workers.

**The intent behind the program is to improve training by providing a solid foundation of agency goals and expectations. It will utilize the talents of supervisors and seasoned employees to illustrate as many aspects of the job as possible. The hope is that the mentoring program will provide a network of support for new employees that will last well past the initial training period.”**

How does it work? For new employees, the first week is Orientation, the second week is MR Worker, and the third is Mentoring, during which two mentors are paired with a new person for the week. Responsibilities are handled as a team, and the mentors and the ‘mentee’ have the same days off . It is similar to ‘shadowing’, but involves a longer period of time working in the units and is more ‘hands-on.’

Becoming a mentor is totally voluntary, and the Mentoring Committee or a supervisor also may recommend an employee. A good candidate also may be identified because a fairly new employee may have said, “Hey, this person was really helpful and patient with me when I first started.” According to Ernie, “The Mentoring Program is all about teamwork, teamwork, teamwork!”

*Contact MVDC at (740) 393-6200 or visit the ODMRDD website at:  
<http://mrdd.ohio.gov/residential/mvdc.htm>*



**Artistic talent is a richly rewarding gift, possessed by many participants in ODMRDD services. We are thankful that these artists are offered opportunities to express themselves, and we appreciate the staff and organizations that foster them.**



## Thankful for Artists and Their Opportunities

### **Support for Artists with Disabilities is Driven by Talent**

Visitors to the ODMRDD website at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov) have learned to expect an array of pretty classy artwork on the homepage, courtesy of artists with disabilities throughout Ohio. This is just one way we can support and share the amazing work of hundreds of artists who participate in specialized arts programs, developing their individual talents.

How sad would it be to have such talent with no outlet? How sad would it be to feel these feelings and not be allowed the opportunity share them? Yet this is as it was years ago, when many of the people with disabilities creating art today would have been thought incapable of such work, such imaginings. Can you imagine?



**Can you imagine ... not seeing *KanDu* chairs through the eyes of *Brook* in Hancock County?**

From all of us at the ODMRDD, special thanks to the hundreds -- maybe thousands -- of artists with disabilities throughout the state who have been sharing their talents for years. We are thankful that the opportunities to do so are growing.

The ODMRDD encourages all to support the various art and craft fairs in your communities, sponsored by County Boards of MRDD and others in the disability services arena. There is much to be enjoyed, and, in many cases, you will have an opportunity to meet the interesting and talented artists who have created and shared their original works.



**PassionFlowers find many uses.**

*The Athens County PassionWorks Studio was the source of ODMRDD Assistant Deputy Director, Lisa Walsh's wedding 'bouquet' this autumn. She notes, "I am thankful for the artists at PassionWorks. Thanks to them I was able to find the perfect bouquet to carry on my wedding day. The extra bonus is that it will always look as fresh and bright as everything was on that day."*

*(PassionFlowers are made of metal.)*

*To submit artwork for consideration on the ODMRDD website at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov), please email Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us)*



## Thankfulness Potpourri From Around the State ...

**From: Tim Pfister [TPfister@mcmrdd.org] , Montgomery County Board of MRDD**

*I am thankful for people like Bill Eakman.* This is the third year that Bill Eakman, program participant at Jergens Adult Services Center, has been invited to speak at Normandy Elementary School students in Dayton, during their annual 'Everybody Counts' initiative, designed to increase awareness of people with disabilities.

Bill spoke last month to a "... receptive and perceptive group of elementary students," reports Debbie Fannin, Habilitation Specialist at Jergens. When Bill speaks, he shares stories about his life, interests, work, volunteering at Ronald McDonald House, and his church.

Students also learn about Down syndrome, and how people with disabilities have similar interests, abilities, and aspirations as the students. Debbie observes that after meeting Bill, the students have learned that they have a lot in common with him. "It's a wonderful opportunity for all," she says.

Bill is doing an exemplary job of speaking, and of creating awareness for people with disabilities among the younger generation in the Dayton community.

**From: Steiner, Gloria [mailto:SteinerG@starkmrdd.org], Manager, Information Technology, Stark MRDD**

*I am thankful for the opportunity to serve others.* I am thankful for the freedoms that we have in this country. I am thankful that I have good health. I am thankful for all of the wonderful people that I have, and have had, in my life. I am thankful for all of the trials and tribulations which make the good times even better. I am thankful to have been blessed with a good life. I am thankful that we are all unique individuals that contribute to each other.

**From: Mary Hall (Marykhall3@aol.com)**

*I am thankful for the IO waiver for my kids.*

**From: Loretta Hooks [lorettahooks@fuse.net]**

*Thankful for abilities:* As parents of a 37 year old daughter who has Down syndrome, we would like to share our thankfulness for the opportunities this young lady has opened our eyes to in regard to helping her become successful in a Jewelry business called 'Rainbow's End'. Her creative abilities were kept under wraps until she faced medical issues that prohibited her in maintaining her community job. Her 'Smiley' creations surely put a smile on everyone's face.

**From: Nurses at Employee Health News, Rhodes State Office Tower**

*Thankful for well-prepared turkey:* Whether you are an experienced cook or a novice in the kitchen you may need some guidance preparing turkey. Helpful resources are *Poultry*

*Preparation Fact Sheets* available at [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov). Information covers safe storage, handling, and cooling methods.

**From: Patrick Lanahan, ODMRDD Deputy Director ([Patrick.Lanahan@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:Patrick.Lanahan@dmr.state.oh.us))**

*Thankful for constituents who collaborate:* I am very thankful for County Boards and COGS working together with each other and with the Department -- to engage individuals, families, providers, advocates, and other system partners to achieve the *best use of available resources* in response to Ohio's community needs.



## Thankful for a Sense of Humor

### **'One Tired Turkey' – Remembering Thanksgiving 1998**

*Your Pipeline editor is pleased to share with you a memorable family Thanksgiving about which she wrote in 1999 for The Advocate newspaper in Licking County. We all can use a little humor once in a while, and this story is absolutely true.*

This story could have been titled, “Why Our Tom Turkey Could Have Been Named, ‘Bob’”. It’s a Thanksgiving story which, if it hadn’t been true, would have been pretty hard to come up with as fiction. I mean, how many things can happen to a turkey in the span of five minutes?

#### **Good Thing the Video Camera Wasn't On**

Thanksgiving at our house is a time for Grandpa to come from Chicago to visit and enjoy a large family meal. He roams freely throughout the house with a video camera, taking candid film of the meal in-progress, starting in the early morning.

On this particular Thanksgiving (1998) the meal was progressing nicely, and without mishap. We were about five minutes from dinnertime.

A dish of cornbread stuffing was baking en-casserole, with the bulk of it stuffed into the turkey cavity. The sweet potatoes were baking, too, along with the green bean casserole and rolls. Cranberry salad was chilling, and mashed potatoes were in the preparation phase. The turkey was roasting on the Weber grill, outside, as we like to do. It really is delicious this way, and turns a beautiful golden brown. Plus, it frees up the oven for everything else.

Grandpa made the rounds with the video camera. “Ooh,” he said. “Look at that turkey ... it’s almost done, and the dressing looks very inviting, swelling out of the cavity.” (Dad loves to narrate.) “How much longer, Honey?” he asked me.

“About five minutes,” I replied, confirming with Dan, my husband the turkey chef.

Dan came in for potholders to take the turkey off the grill, and got the large ceramic platter, onto which we traditionally transfer the turkey. It was all quite Martha Stewart-ish.

One minute later I looked out the window to see Dan lift the turkey off the grill. He was headed toward the platter a few feet away on the patio table. Sparky, our dog, was vigilant.

I stepped around the corner to the sliding glass door, opening it to let Dan and the turkey come inside.

Within that span of time, the turkey cavity had become empty. Sparky looked alarmed, and Dan was mad.

“What happened?” I asked.

“The dressing fell out of the turkey and hit the bricks. Before I could pick it up, Sparky ate it.”

I paused to absorb this news.

“He ate a boiling hot blob of cornbread dressing that fast?!” I asked incredulously.

“Well, do you see it anywhere?” asked Dan, rhetorically.

I did not.

#### Now What?

The turkey did look good, although empty, and Grandpa was reading the paper in the living room, oblivious to the lost dressing. Plus, I did have a casserole dish full of the same thing.

Dan set the turkey platter on the right side of the double sink. It was dangerously close to the soapy water side, in which I was soaking a few dishes. The double sink is often used as a holding place when we're short of counter space.

Suddenly, the tom turkey slipped into the soapy water and bobbed up and down perilously, fighting for its golden brown life.

I watched in disbelief.

It bobbed up and down, just missing the rim of the empty cavity which could instantly fill and submerge the bird completely.

“Dan! Why did you set the turkey THERE?!” I asked.

No reply. It was too far gone. Or was it?

“Get it out of there now,” I whispered to Dan, emphatically.

We fished it out, rinsed it off, and returned it to the Thanksgiving platter.

“Dad, time for dinner!” we announced proudly.

In came my Dad with the video camera.

“Wow! Looks good!, he said, training the lens on the tired turkey.

“What happened to the dressing?” he asked.

“Oh, I mixed it in with the casserole dishful so it would all be together,” I replied.

Sparky looked bewildered, and scouted around for more cold water. – *Sherry Steinman*

**Happy Thanksgiving!**



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Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



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Visit us at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov)

Monday, December 1, 2008

## National Financial Crisis' Impact on Ohio's Revenues

*The following information was released to all ODMRDD staff this afternoon by ODMRDD Director, John Martin.*

At noon today, Governor Ted Strickland held a press conference to announce what the national financial crisis could mean for Ohio's revenues in fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011. Without some major economic recovery or federal assistance, it means that in the next two years, Ohio will confront a serious erosion in the state's revenues.

I encourage you to review the complete text of the Governor's press release and the related PowerPoint presentation, will be posted later today on the [www.ohio.gov](http://www.ohio.gov) website, on the Governor's page, and on the ODMRDD homepage at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov). In addition, the video of the press conference is available at:

[http://www.ohiochannel.org/multimedia/people/media\\_archive.cfm?file\\_type=Flash%20Video&person\\_id=88901](http://www.ohiochannel.org/multimedia/people/media_archive.cfm?file_type=Flash%20Video&person_id=88901)

Before the state can determine exactly what this economic news will mean to Ohio's budget in the remainder of fiscal year 2009 and specifically, to ODMRDD, we are waiting for three important sources of information, noted below. The current budget will require action to address another *\$640 million gap* depending upon:

1. Total state tax receipts from "Black Friday," the day after Thanksgiving, a traditionally strong shopping day;
2. Analysis from the Governor's economic advisors in December, of the state's economic status; and,
3. A possible federal stimulus package from Washington D.C. that may provide direct dollars to Ohio government.

The Governor leaves this afternoon for Philadelphia to meet with President-Elect Barack Obama and the nation's Governors, who will collectively make the case to the incoming administration for federal assistance to the states. Ohio is not alone; 49 of our 50 states are either in recession now or are at risk of slipping into recession.

As the Governor said today, the work toward managing this budget situation will require *creativity, flexibility, and collaboration* from all state agencies, and will require extraordinary partnerships across the state.

The ODMRDD is working to provide Ohioans with disabilities and their families some help and some hope – and while the announcement made by Governor Strickland today doesn't change any of that – we will need to continue to work even harder toward our mission of improving the quality of life for Ohio's citizens with developmental disabilities and their families.

During this difficult time, I ask each of you to stay committed to your work, providing solutions to the challenges of those we serve. ODMRDD will work with its stakeholders, in line with available resources, and discuss priorities along with any available funding for those priorities.

In addition, the Governor met with legislative leaders this morning from both houses of the legislature. Governor Strickland is committed to working in bipartisan fashion with the legislature to ensure a balanced budget and continued investment in Ohio's 'economic drivers' and its safety net. He is also committed to working closely with stakeholders and, as a community, determining how to best tackle the challenges we may face in the coming weeks and months.

Thank you again for your work and dedication to those we serve. Before closing, I will share two quotes from the Governor today:

**“Our great state is confronted with economic challenges of historic proportions. But armed with a true understanding of the challenges we face, Ohioans will be better equipped to honestly address these difficult circumstances with the same strong resolve and spirit of cooperation we have applied to trying times in our past.”**

**“Now is the time for all Ohioans to join together, in an extraordinary partnership, to meet the challenges before us. There will be shared sacrifice, but we also recognize that historic opportunities lie on the other side of our current economic challenges. I believe that, working together in common purpose, we will be able to address these circumstances with a consensus, bipartisan budget.”**



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Thursday, December 11, 2008  
Volume 2, Issue 25

- 1. Input to Drive Planning for Prospective Budget Requirements

**Note: The next issue of *Pipeline*, regularly scheduled for Wednesday, December 24, will publish on Tuesday, December 23, 2008. Happy Holidays!**

## 1. Input to Drive Planning for Prospective Budget Requirements



**It is important to note that no decisions regarding operational or spending plans for the coming year have been made.**

Governor Ted Strickland has released information today regarding possible scenarios in the event that state agencies need to operate at 70-75% of the originally proposed biennial budget. *Pipeline* follows with ODMRDD's efforts to plan for how we will operate in the current budget environment.

In addition, sharing this information helps the Governor to make his case to the federal government that, without federal assistance to mitigate some of Ohio's budget shortfall, serious impacts to MRDD programs, and the people MRDD programs serve, will be felt.

*It is important to note that no decisions regarding operational or spending plans for the coming year have been made, and that the information represents some examples of what might happen if those reduced funding levels become necessary, in terms of looking ahead to the continued difficult economic environment.*

ODMRDD Director John Martin, will host 'budget conversations' in five locations throughout the state, during the first two weeks in January 2009. Co-sponsors of the meetings include the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD (OACBMRDD); the Ohio Association of Superintendents of County Boards of MRDD (OASCBMRDD), the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA); The Arc of Ohio, and The League (formerly OLMR).

Director Martin will listen to any interested participants in the MRDD community -- including stakeholders, service providers, individuals, and families – as we look at ways to maximize available resources while maintaining quality services. As Director Martin has stated previously,

**“These are tough economic times, and we will be making tough decisions, but we will be doing that in a way that is guided by our focus on our essential mission – quality services for individuals and families.”**

Discussing the challenges ahead in planning for a significant reduction in the state’s budget, Director Martin addressed stakeholders at a budget-related brainstorming meeting on December 5, 2008. During the meeting stakeholders shared budget issues in their respective areas of interest, as well as their federal advocacy efforts. Director Martin stated, “We are open to discussing any and all ways that we can meet needs while helping the Governor to manage necessary state functions within the available level of spending. We need to look at every way resources are used today to make sure we get the most out of them during these difficult times, and serve the nearly 80,000 Ohioans needing services.”

**Schedule of Strategic Planning & Public Input Meetings  
- All Meetings will be from 7-9 p.m. -**

**January 7, 2009**

**Guernsey County Board of MRDD  
60770 Southgate Road  
Byesville, Ohio 43723-9699  
(740) 439-4451**

**January 8, 2009**

**The Findlay Inn & Conference Center  
200 E. Main Cross Street  
Findlay, Ohio 45840  
(419) 422-5682**

**January 12, 2009**

**Cox Arboretum & Gardens Metro Park  
6733 Springboro Pike  
Dayton, Ohio 45449  
(937) 434-9005**

**January 13, 2009**

**Holiday Inn Columbus/Worthington  
7007 N. High Street  
Worthington, Ohio 43085  
(614) 436-0700**

**January 15, 2009**

**Sheraton Suites Akron/Cuyahoga Falls  
1989 Front Street  
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio 44221  
(330) 929-3000**

Director Martin reiterates that, “ODMRDD staff remain committed to keeping the budget conversations open with the MRDD community, and focusing on the agency’s mission: To plan for and encourage *the continuous improvement of the quality of life for Ohio’s citizens with developmental disabilities and their families.*”



#### [MRDD Today, online news](#)

Visit ODMRDD’s website at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov), and click on the *MRDD Today* icon (as below) for a variety of news briefs and other information.



#### [Toll-Free Hotline](#)

#### [ODMRDD Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents \(MUIs\)](#)

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Friday, December 19, 2008

## National Financial Crisis Continues to Impact ODMRDD Budget

Following closely on a press conference December 1, 2008, at which Governor Ted Strickland announced what the national financial crisis could mean for Ohio's revenues in fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011, the Governor today announced a budget cut of 5.75% across the board for state agencies, representing an impact of approximately \$19 million for ODMRDD.

According to ODMRDD Director, John Martin,

**"It is important to note that ODMRDD expects that this cut will be alleviated by an increase in federal funding. During the next few weeks we will decide how these cuts will be applied to line items, and we are working to adhere to the goals and strategies set forth in the ODMRDD Futures initiatives in this process. We will share with the MRDD field more specifics as our work progresses."**

In a press release issued today, (*see attachment to this email*) Governor Strickland recognized state employees for their hard work and dedication during this difficult time:

**"I honor and appreciate the hard work every state employee does every day," Strickland said. "While any budget cuts mean pain and difficulty for state workers, I want you to know that I would not have made this decision if I did not believe it was absolutely necessary and the right thing for the people of Ohio."**

Budget reductions announced today will result in \$180.5 million less being spent by state agencies through June 30, 2009. The remaining \$460 million shortfall will be made up through Medicaid spending adjustments and various cash management strategies.

Earlier in the month Governor Strickland had noted, "Without some major economic recovery or federal assistance, it means that in the next two years, Ohio will confront a serious erosion in the state's revenues." Today's announcement further underscores the deterioration of the national economy, which continues to deprive Ohio of revenue.

The complete text of the Governor's press release will be posted today on the [www.ohio.gov](http://www.ohio.gov) website, on the Governor's page, and on the ODMRDD homepage under the 'Budget Information' section at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov).

As Governor Strickland has stated consistently, the work toward managing the budget situation will require *creativity, flexibility, and collaboration* from all state agencies, and will require extraordinary partnerships across the state. The ODMRDD will work with its stakeholders, in line with available resources, and discuss priorities along with any available funding for those priorities.

ODMRDD Director John Martin reaffirms that,

“ It is important to stay focused on our mission to provide opportunities for the continuous improvement of the quality of life for Ohio’s citizens with developmental disabilities and their families. It is our hope that with an increase in federal funding, the impact of these cuts can be softened. ”



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Tuesday, December 23, 2008  
Volume 2, Issue 26

- 1. Legislative Update, Recent House Bills
- 2. December 29<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing, Location Change
- 3. Ohio Public Images Announces 2009 Campaign Theme, “Just Like You”
- 4. *Steppin’ Out* in Franklin County, Family Advocacy in Action

· 5.

## **Pipeline Special Feature 2008 – The Year in Review**

### 1. Legislative Update, Recent House Bills

**HB 129** Video Meetings: To authorize for a two-year period a pilot program that allows the members of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council, the Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council, the Governor’s Council on People with Disabilities, and the facility governing board and judicial advisory board that govern or advise on the STAR Community Justice Center in Franklin Furnace, Ohio, to be present at board meetings by teleconference or interactive video teleconference, and to require reports on the effects of member participation in meetings in this manner.

- *Passed* the Ohio House 05/07/08; *Passed* the Ohio Senate 12/17/08, and the House concurred with any changes by the Senate on the same day. *It will now be sent to Governor Strickland to be signed into Law.*

**HB 620 & HB 621** were heard in the Ohio House Health Committee – 12/17/08 –

- **HB 620** Agency Name Change: To change the name of the Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities to the Department of Developmental Disabilities and to make similar name changes for the Joint Council on Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, the Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Developmental Center Closure Commission, and

certain state funds. (1<sup>st</sup> Hearing-Testimony by the Sponsors – Representatives Jimmy Stewart and Fred Strahorn)

- **HB 621** County Boards Name: To change the name of County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities to County Boards of Developmental Disabilities, and to make similar name changes for certain county funds.(1<sup>st</sup> Hearing-Testimony by the Sponsors – Representatives Jimmy Stewart and Fred Strahorn)

Both of these bills will die as the 127<sup>th</sup> Two-Year General Assembly ends at the end of 2008. Since Rep. Jimmy Stewart was elected to the Ohio Senate beginning in January 2009, it is expected that these two pieces of legislation will be reintroduced in the Ohio Senate in 2009 (with new Senate Bill numbers).

*Pipeline will continue to report on these bills as information is available.*



## 2. December 29<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing, Location Change

The location for the December 29<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing on administrative rules has been changed from Room 1240 of the Rhodes State Office Tower, to the Lobby Hearing Room of the Rhodes State Office Tower, in Columbus. The Lobby Hearing Room is located on the ground floor of the building, and is accessible from the Broad Street entrance and the Statehouse underground parking facility. Please note that visitors to the building may be asked to show identification and/or be subject to having their bags inspected. These safety and security measures are for the benefit of all building visitors and employees.

**The Public Hearing is slated for December 29, at 10:00 a.m.,  
in the Lobby Hearing Room of the Rhodes State Office Tower, 30 E. Broad St., Columbus, OH.**

The Department is proposing to amend rule 5123:1-1-03 (*Distribution of Community Assistance Funds for the Acquisition of Housing*) which sets forth a process to make available community assistance funds to assist county boards of MRDD to acquire housing for individuals they serve. The rule is being amended to clarify requirements for purchasing newly constructed housing.

The Department is proposing to adopt new rule 5123:2-2-01 (*Provider Certification*) that establishes procedures and standards for certification of providers of supported living services and providers of services under Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waivers administered by ODMRDD. The rule is responsive to several recommendations of the MRDD Futures Committee and is intended to streamline and simplify rules by replacing three existing rules:

- 5123:2-9-09 (*HCBS Waivers - Application, Issuance, and Denial Procedures*)
- 5123:2-12-02 (*Supported Living Provider Certification*)
- 5123:2-12-06 (*Certified Supported Living Providers of Level One Waiver Services*)

The proposed new rule implements the Department's existing statutory authority to time-limit provider certification and collect application fees.

In a related action, ODMRDD is proposing to rescind existing rule 5123:2-3-19 (*Licensed Providers of Level One Waiver Services*) and replace it with a new rule of the same number. The purpose of the rule is to set forth that licensed residential providers seeking to provide HCBS waiver services shall submit an application to provide waiver services and comply with service-specific waiver requirements.

Copies of the proposed rules are available at the ODMRDD website, at the *Rules Under Development* page: <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/rules/development.htm>



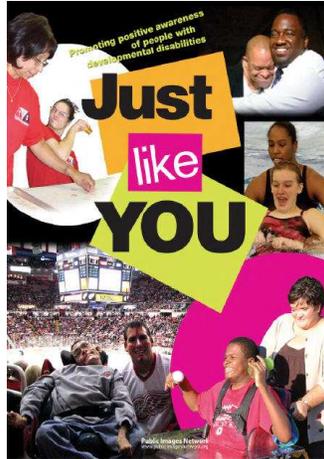
### 3. Ohio Public Images Announces 2009 Campaign Theme 'Just Like You'

Ohio Public Images (OPI), a statewide information and advocacy organization promoting positive perceptions of people with disabilities, has announced the 2009 MRDD Awareness campaign theme for 2009, *Just Like You*. Themed materials and products for promoting MRDD Awareness activities in 2009 will be available in early January, and are already shown online at the OPI website, [www.publicimagesnetwork.org](http://www.publicimagesnetwork.org).

Lon Mitchell, OPI Executive Director, and Public Affairs Manager for the Lucas County Board of MRDD, explains that the materials available this year include new products such as pencils, to provide low-cost items that are useful in school outreach activities and other public venues. He adds, "Along with the Awareness themed materials for 2009, I'd also like to remind the MRDD community that the entry deadline is January 5, 2009, for entries for the 2008 OPI Media and Awareness Awards. The *Call for Entries* is available on the website, and was also sent via U.S. Mail to the OPI mailing list. This year, our Awards Luncheon will be a part of the Ohio Superintendents Association Conference on March 9 in Columbus." (*details in 2009*)

Ohio Public Images and the allied Public Images Network were organized more than 20 years ago to develop effective and consistently-themed awareness materials that could be shared by organizations that have a similar mission. Lon Mitchell explains, "OPI can buy in larger quantities, which allows even small agencies with very low budgets to order quality informational and promotional materials that they can then personalize if desired, and use in conjunction with their events and programs."

Below is a sneak preview of the 2009 campaign poster for *Just Like You*, illustrating the fact that all people have similar basic emotions, desires, and needs.



*For more information, contact the OPI Office at  
Lucas County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
1154 Larc Lane, Toledo, OH 43614  
419-380-4049 fax 888-273-1623; e-mail [info@publicimagesnetwork.org](mailto:info@publicimagesnetwork.org)*



## 4. “Steppin’ Out” -- Family Advocacy in Action

*Speaking of ‘Just Like You,’ ODMRDD Family Advocate, Peggy Martin, shares this exciting news about an original program, “Steppin’ Out,” that was started this year and could be replicated just about anywhere. Peggy tells it like this ...*

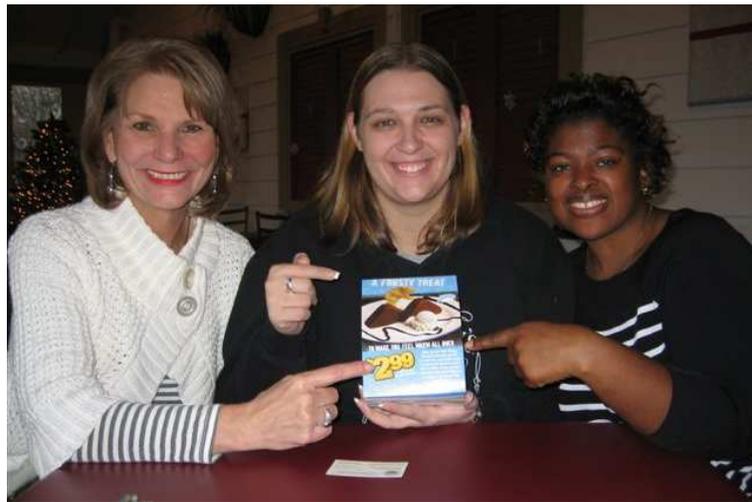
“I often hear from families that their children are lonely and no longer have an opportunity to see their friends once they have graduated from high school. They are seeking any information regarding social groups that they can join to meet others and form meaningful friendships. About six months ago I heard from a mother that was very desperate and concerned about her son. He was showing signs of depression, and she really wanted to get him involved with activities.

**I really thought about that call – as well as others like it – and thought, ‘Why couldn’t I do something about this?’**

This particular family that had contacted me lived on the far east side of Columbus. My thought was to find a place for people to gather that offered easy access to Licking, Fairfield, and Franklin counties, so we could serve more people. Then ...



**Steppin' Out at Tumbleweed** are (l. to r. clockwise) Danny, Lori, Jennifer, Joe, Justin, and Amanda.



**Steppin' Out with Peggy** (left) are Tumbleweed employees Sarah (center) and Aretha. They display their enthusiasm for one of the Steppin' Out group's favorite desserts.

... I approached the Tumbleweed restaurant on East Broad Street in Columbus, because -- among other things -- they had a porch area that was separate from the restaurant and would provide some privacy, as well as not be a disturbance to the rest of the customers if we got a little noisy.

Next, I selected a date and made a flyer with the assistance of my friend, Tom Fish, from The Ohio State University Nisonger Center. Tom named our group, "Steppin Out."

**I sent the flyer to Licking, Franklin, and Fairfield County Boards of MRDD, and to some providers and family members. I had no idea what to expect! I had asked for people to RSVP and we expected about 30 people for our first "Steppin Out" event.**

Well was I -- and the staff at Tumbleweed -- a little taken aback that first night ... *when nearly 80 people showed up*. The restaurant did not have enough staff to serve them. So, I ended up taking orders and others joined in to help. It was a chaotic mess, to be honest, but ended up being lots of fun and a great learning experience.

We planned the second event right after the Franklin County Board of MRDD passed their levy. Again, we had around 80 people, so we had the porch area and part of the restaurant, as well. To say we were quiet and unobtrusive would not be the case!

**However, I had an interesting experience with a table of four elderly people who were having dinner there. They came up to me and asked what group we were. I thought they were going to complain! When I told them 'MRDD', they informed me that they were so pleased that they voted for the levy because it was lovely to see everyone having so much fun.**

After that second gathering our ranks were growing, so I enlisted the help of the AmeriCorps' Young Adult Transition Corps (*YATC -- see box below*) through, again, my friend Tom Fish at Nisonger. With AmeriCorps came the wonderful help of Megan Strahler -- It's great having a volunteer like Megan, because she not only assists at the event, but creates our flyer, makes reminder calls, and lets Tumbleweed know in advance how many to expect.

Megan has this to say about her work with the group, "I personally help with service learning, facilitate a Next Chapter Book Club, attend Friendship Connection and Steppin' Out events, and direct Best Buddies at Ohio State. I became a YATC liaison because I wanted to continue my involvement in the disability community. As a Speech and Hearing major and Disability Studies minor at OSU, I hope to graduate in the summer and attend graduate school next fall." Megan adds,

**"I have a brother who has autism, and always have been interested in helping people with disabilities and their families. YATC allows me to do this every day, and it truly has been a rewarding experience."**

Peggy continues, "And, let me tell you, at Steppin' Out we don't just have dinner. We mix and socialize -- everyone meets someone new -- and learns a little about that person. This month we enjoyed some Christmas games, Tom Fish sang, and then we did a name-exchange so that everyone knew who they were sitting with. We even had prizes!"

While this ends Peggy's saga about 'Steppin' Out', *Pipeline* also met with the staff at the East Broad Street Tumbleweed restaurant. According to one of the group's regular servers, Aretha, and the store manager, Sarah, "We're getting into a groove now, we've worked out some of the kinks, and it's working well. They've been coming here for about eight months, and we've all learned a lot in the process."

Aretha notes, "The individuals who come here are not only having a good time, but they're responsible for paying their check when the bill comes, so they think through the money transaction, and we confirm with them the amount of change they should have coming back. Some attend with their service providers and they work together on things like that." Aretha smiles,

“When I’m taking dinner orders, I’ll explain things like that a chimichanga is fried, – but a burrito is not – so they can get exactly what they want to eat. Plus, some of the individuals have a dietary restriction, and they need to make good choices. Sometimes the picture on the menu just isn’t enough information! I’m seeing a lot of progress on how they relate to other people here.”

*If you want to be a part of “Steppin Out,” or start your own version of it, call Peggy Martin at 614-466-8706, or email her at [peggy.martin@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:peggy.martin@dmr.state.oh.us)*

Young Adult Transition Corps (YATC) is a branch of AmeriCorps that is dedicated to helping young adults with developmental disabilities transition from school to the workplace. YATC is operated through the Nisonger Center at The Ohio State University by Jillian Ober, program manager. There are eight YATC liaisons who create, facilitate, and assist in YATC related programs. Along with Steppin' Out, YATC is involved in service learning at local schools and workshops and with activities such as Next Chapter Book Club; Aspirations; Friendship Connection; Best Buddies, and more.



- 5.

## **Pipeline Special Feature** **2008 – The Year in Review**

**This *Year in Review* illustrates the progress around ODMRDD goals and key issues, including the MRDD Futures work and various budget concerns, and allows us to take a look at the successes and challenges that have marked 2008. Here are some brief excerpts from articles each month:**

### **January ...**

**[Pipeline EXTRA, Thursday, January 31, 2008](#)**

## **ODMRDD Budget Challenges 2008-09, A Summary**

The ODMRDD leadership is mindful of and sensitive to the impact that required budget changes will have on our systems’ team, statewide. When any of us is confronted with major changes, having reliable information helps us to deal with what will happen and what must be done. We are absolutely committed to sharing information in an open and inclusive fashion during these difficult times. In fact, today, ODMRDD Director John Martin is meeting personally with key stakeholders to address these issues and provide a forum for discussion.

### **General Overview**

ODMRDD is required to reduce General Revenue Fund spending by \$17,261,709 during the biennium.

**The same issue introduced a ‘Rumor Buster’....**

### **Next Steps**

To help ensure a flow of reliable communication, please use the following avenues to access information:

As you have questions and need answers, please don't consult the rumor mill. Consult us. The ODMRDD has set up an email feedback system [budget-rumors@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:budget-rumors@odmrdd.state.oh.us) Email your specific concerns, or information you wish to have verified, and someone will respond to you directly.



## February ...

[Pipeline, Wednesday, February 20, 2008](#)

## Family Advisory Council – The Movers and Shakers



**A recent Family Advisory Council meeting** at the Columbus Developmental Center training room hosted more individuals, families and professional staff, than there were chairs. Word is that ODMRDD Director John Martin is the big draw with his 'Director's Chats' at each meeting.

The February 5th Family Advisory Council (FAC) meeting at the Columbus Developmental Center gathered 66 individuals, representing counties from across the state. These individuals and families attend FAC meetings to learn and collect information about services, and take this information back to others who need to know about it.

ODMRDD Family Advocate, Peggy Martin, who organizes and oversees the Family Advisory Council, welcomed attendees, and encouraged professionals in attendance to bring a family member or participant in MRDD services with them to future meetings. "I want to stress how important it is to bring the people who are receiving services into the forum here, so that we have their input and feedback," Peggy explained.

Topics at the FAC meetings vary, based on what families request information about. According to Peggy, "This council is not just for families to get information, but for policy makers to hear from families so that they know what issues people are concerned about regarding MRDD services in Ohio."

**The same issue contained....**

## Governor's Executive Order **“Common Sense Business Regulation”**

Governor Ted Strickland has signed an executive order providing clear direction to create a more efficient and effective regulatory environment in Ohio. Following a philosophy of “Common Sense Business Regulation,” the executive order requires agencies to:

- Review existing rules and processes;
- Treat those affected by their rules and regulatory processes as customers, and to treat them consistently across regions, offices, and departments; and to,
- Consolidate regulatory rules and processes.

Additionally, the executive order directs certain cabinet agencies to designate an existing staff member as an agency regulatory ombudsman who will act as a liaison between the agency and those affected by the regulatory rules and processes. In line with this direction, ODMRDD's Division of Constituent Services has long provided such information about rules and processes with staff support, and through the regularly-updated Rules & Laws section of our website at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/rules/rules.htm> . Director, John Martin, notes,

**“We also will be looking at our rules and processes as an important element in carrying out the recommendations of the Futures Committee.”**



## **March ...**

**Pipeline EXTRA, Thursday, March 20, 2008**

## **Governor Strickland Commends Futures Committee Efforts**

There is no better way to start off an important meeting than with remarks from the Governor. In person is especially nice. The ODMRDD Futures Committee was honored and delighted to see Governor Ted Strickland walk into the Futures Committee meeting this morning at the Riffe Center in Columbus, and offer comments commending the group for their months of collaboration, and reminding all that he is looking forward to positive results for the nearly 80,000 Ohioans receiving MRDD services. He began,

**“Not only do I commend you for your work and commitment, but I also appreciate that you didn't always agree with each other on what needs to be done. That shows me that the right mix of people were put together. Every point of view deserves the right to be heard and respected, and that is what I see has happened here.”**

The Governor went on to note that the Futures Committee membership was selected to be inclusive of stakeholder groups, and illustrates a broad base of different perspectives from which to develop recommendations. He added,

**“Including the people who will be affected by the decisions arrived at in this process is clearly in line with the way we plan to Turnaround Ohio.”**

In the Final Report, distributed to the group in final draft form today, the Futures Committee's 31 recommendations have been distilled into action items designed to *improve the accessibility of services and supports* to Ohioans with disabilities, statewide.



Looking to the Future



**April ...**

**Pipeline EXTRA, Friday, April 4, 2008**

## **Request for Proposal (RFP), National Core Indicators**

The Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) is pleased to announce that it will adopt the National Core Indicators as a basis for measuring the performance of and improving Ohio's MRDD service delivery system. ODMRDD, legislatively charged to "examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the current system of separate and concurrent accreditation, licensure, certification, quality assurance and quality improvement activities", was tasked to review and propose changes to improve that system.



In that process, the ODMRDD Futures Committee has made the adoption and implementation of the National Core Indicators for Ohio's MRDD system a key priority, as one of the 31 recommendations in their Final Report. The Report was delivered to Governor Strickland and the General Assembly on March 28, 2008. While the Department is developing an overall implementation plan for the Futures Committee recommendations, moving forward with the National Core Indicators can begin now.

### **What Are Core Indicators?**

Core Indicators are a set of performance measures that emphasize the outcomes that people with disabilities within the service system desire to attain, and the performance of a state in delivering those outcomes.



May ...

[Pipeline, Wednesday, May 28, 2008](#)

## **Futures Implementation Team, Progress Report**

As reported in *Pipeline*, May 14, 2008, [Pipeline Volume 2 Issue 10](#), the implementation plan for moving forward with Futures Committee recommendations has been organized for project-oriented success. Implementation teams have been formed around six themes:

- Strategic Implementation (policy and strategy)
- Decision Support (data, fiscal, and legal analysis)
- Empowering People (choice, control, and family support)
- Access and Care Management (waiting lists, individual service planning, and service and support administration functions)
- Services Management (covered services and service ‘packages’)
- Delivery Systems Management (quality, planning capacity, and developing capacity).

Each team, comprised of a team leader and several staff members, has been assigned specific Futures Committee recommendations. The teams will engage content experts—individuals, families, and professionals—in many ways throughout the process, to assist progress.

Implementation team efforts are designed in line with specific Futures Committee recommendations, and are detailed at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/>.

**The same issue contained ...**

[The benefits are significant ...](#)

## **Medicaid Buy-In for Workers with Disabilities**

Ohio’s Medicaid Buy-In for Workers with Disabilities (MBIWD) began April 1, 2008. MBIWD allows individuals with disabilities who are working to qualify for Medicaid with higher income and resource limits, and buy into Medicaid by paying a premium based on income.

As of May 7<sup>th</sup>, 163 people have been enrolled in the MBIWD program, about 25% of whom are paying a premium. Another 101 cases are pending a decision on their eligibility. Thirty-two people have been denied eligibility because they are over the age limit, not employed, or in a few instances, have too many resources.

As an example of the program’s benefit, the first person enrolled in MBIWD had been paying a \$469 spend-down and now pays a \$20 a month premium. People with disabilities can qualify for MBIWD with resources up to \$10,000 and incomes that, under some circumstances, exceed \$60,000 a year.



June ...

Pipeline, Wednesday, June 11, 2008

## Developing Affordable Avenues to Accessible Housing Programs Build Homes and Foster Social Understanding

*While researching ways that the ODMRDD could provide funds for people with disabilities to live in affordable, accessible residential settings, it became clear that statutory limitations for this purpose were unnecessarily restrictive and did not allow state funding for nonprofit organizations to construct single-family homes for people with MRDD. The ODMRDD has worked to add language to the Capital Bill, HB562, to allow state dollars to support these efforts. Through collaborative arrangements such as the example below, scarce capital dollars can be stretched nearly twice as far to achieve results -- which equates to, roughly, two accessible homes for the price of one. Aside from the obvious boost to the budget, there are other benefits:*

Once students from the Delaware Area Career Center (DACC) got to know Josh Wagner, they were working on a whole different level as they built the accessible home he would be living in. "Most of these kids would probably not have the opportunity to spend time talking to someone like Josh, but he's such a social guy, such a likable guy, that they got more fired up about the building project just knowing who was going to be living there," says Mike Corbett, Director, Delaware Creative Housing (DCH). HB 562 is all about people like Josh.



Pipeline, Wednesday, June 25, 2008

## Governor Strickland Signs Capital Appropriations and Corrections Bill, HB 562; Issues Line Item Vetoes

**" As we deal with the current economic situation, my Administration remains committed to living within our means, while investing in the things that are truly important to Ohioans."**

**– Governor Ted Strickland**

Governor Ted Strickland has signed into law H.B. 562, the Capital Appropriations and Corrections Bill. Governor Strickland and the General Assembly worked together closely to achieve bipartisan agreement on nearly everything in the final bill, which passed the General Assembly. The measure, signed Tuesday, June 24:

- Makes policy and appropriation changes to the current SFY 2008-2009 Biennial Budget (H.B. 119) to address a projected biennium budget imbalance of more than \$730 million;
- Appropriates about \$1.3 billion for state facility construction and improvements, and local 'community projects' during fiscal years 2009 and 2010.

The Governor said that the shortfall in the current operating budget was being caused by "...a weakening national economy, a spike in oil prices, the housing crisis and slowing retail sales." By upgrading our infrastructure and improving our communities through capital improvements, H.B. 562 "...reflects our continuing efforts to make Ohio an attractive place for increased economic development and job-creating opportunities."

**The same issue contained ...**

## **What's in a Name? Weighing in on the 'MR' in MRDD**

*Many interesting discussions are underway across Ohio regarding the choice of the words 'Mental Retardation' within the name referencing Ohio's 88 County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. The ODMRDD is aware of and interested in the variety of approaches advocating for or against the removal of "Mental Retardation" from the name. While we have no set position on the subject at this time, we recognize the issue's importance as a part of doing business in a changing system, and offer here the viewpoints of stakeholders as a springboard to further discussion.*

### **In Ohio**

In July 1967, as a result of Senate Bill 169, Ohio established County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MRDD), then known as "169 Boards". Every county in Ohio formed an entity carrying that name, charged with providing services to people with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities, who resided in their county.

Now, some 40 years later, the terminology is being revisited for several reasons – among them:

- By definition, mental retardation is one type of developmental disability, and thus could be considered redundant when used with the term developmental disability;
- The perception that modern usage of the slang variant, 'retard', has a demeaning connotation and negates the legitimate use of the word 'retardation'. In short, some people find the words 'mental retardation' offensive.
- A desire to shorten the name in general, without greatly changing the nature of it.

People who are inclined to support the idea of dropping 'mental retardation' from the name point to the reasons above, as well as to a general feeling that ... "it's been a long time since we've looked at why we are called what we are." According to discussions involving members of the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD (OACBMRDD), Executive Director, Dan Ohler, notes that some people with disabilities and their families are finding the term to be offensive.

**"Many believe it to be a generational issue. To some extent, perhaps it is. But regardless, the great history of our nation suggests that as times change, so too does the sensitivity of the human beings that call this country, and this state, their home.**



## July ...

Pipeline, Wednesday, July 23, 2008

Twenty Old Rules Leave the Books ...

### Rescission of “Purchase of Service” (POS) Rules, and More



*In February 2008, Governor Strickland issued an Executive Order, "Implementing Common Sense Business Regulation," that was intended to provide a blueprint for reform. It detailed various steps needed to ensure that while Ohioans' interests are protected, businesses do not suffer from needless paperwork and expenses to comply with state regulation. Legislators followed up by passing a bill to that effect, later signed into law.*

Governor Strickland's Executive Order hit another issue squarely on the head: "Proposed rules should focus on achieving outcomes rather than the process used to achieve compliance," the Governor wrote in that order. "The process" is precisely why many rules exist, and why some stay on the books beyond their useful life.

**The good news is that the ODMRDD has made excellent progress this month in rescinding 20 administrative rules for the former Purchase of Service (POS) program.**

The POS program served as a mechanism to fund residential services necessary for individuals to live in the community prior to development of the Residential Facility Waiver in the late 1990s. The rules will be rescinded effective July 31, 2008.



## August ...

Pipeline, Wednesday, August 6, 2008

### Director Martin Reports Futures Phase One Progress, Policy Leadership Roundtable Reviews Products

*Visit <http://mrdd.ohio.gov/futures/FuturesImplementationInformation.htm> for updated information regarding progress made on Futures recommendations.*



Today, at the third meeting of the Policy Leadership Roundtable, participants reviewed the first group of ‘deliverables’ (products) related to the 31 recommendations of the MRDD Futures Committee. We took those recommendations, identified who would support that work internally, and defined the sequence in which it would be performed. Today we share the work we have completed to-date in Phase One, which includes 17 deliverables.

These deliverables are being presented as drafts for the field to review and provide feedback. We hope you will find the process to be an efficient way of moving forward. We continue to manage all of the Futures efforts as transparently and inclusively as possible, and take fresh approaches to achieve positive outcomes. This includes sharing drafts and works-in-progress.

**I invite the entire MRDD community to review this work, along with members of the Policy Leadership Roundtable. As you review this work, we hope you will note a number of things:**

- First, we have remained true to the recommendations given us by the Futures Committee. Our work, most definitely, will lead to the implementation of those recommendations.
- Second, these recommendations allow us to progress in accordance with the themes and values we stated as important at the outset:
  1. Less complex service delivery, with fair and logical payment systems;
  2. Good stewardship of limited resources;
  3. Quality outcomes, through a combination of people and processes;
  4. Service delivery models designed in response to choices made by the people served, in alliance with community supports;
  5. A system-wide vision developed with stakeholders.
- Third, we hope you will note some creativity in this work – ideas or concepts that one might not immediately connect to the Futures recommendations, but that are imbedded in the intent of those recommendations.

**The same issue contained ...**

## **Medicaid Buy In ... A New Scenario Empowering People**



Ben Hollinger, Superintendent of the Hocking County Board of MRDD, is more than a little enthusiastic about the potential presented by the new availability of Medicaid Buy-In for Workers with Disabilities (MBIWD, or MBI). He notes,

**“The potential for improving peoples’ financial situations and allowing them to work without worrying about losing their healthcare coverage – this is huge. In fact, it has already helped one person we serve to obtain about \$500 in additional income per month.”**

Ben continues, “What people need to think about in terms of accessing the capability of Medicaid Buy-In, is to target the individuals who have a certain level of liability right now – what would be termed a large ‘patient liability’ or ‘spend-down’. They may have income above the usual Medicaid guidelines, they may receive residential assistance, such as through the Individual Options (IO) waiver, and they are employed in the community. MBI also can help people who have a trust fund or other source of additional income that would have previously made them ineligible to access Medicaid funds.”



**September ...**

Pipeline, Wednesday, September 3, 2008

## **Interagency Work Group on Autism Assesses Priorities**

*The ODMRDD coordinates and facilitates the Interagency Work Group on Autism, and has been named the lead agency to coordinate state agency work focusing on autism.*



Autism Ribbon

Jody Fisher, Project Manager for the Interagency Work Group on Autism gets right to the heart of the matter when asked how the group's work is proceeding. She comments, "The level of expertise, commitment, and interest shown by state agency representatives on the Work Group is absolutely energizing! As a team, all of the members are working diligently to identify opportunities that will further coordinate interagency efforts supporting people across the autism spectrum, statewide. I also am impressed by the continued commitment of our state partners in the face of difficult budget cuts." She adds,

**"The Work Group has developed a list of six priorities to assure that Ohio's efforts to serve individuals with autism are effective, broad-based, and an integral part of the State's plan for serving all individuals with developmental disabilities – this is our over-riding purpose."**

The six priorities are:

1. **Develop a statewide system of early identification of autism and other developmental disabilities;**
2. **Support evidence-based, high-quality, cost-effective models for intervention services for children with autism and other developmental disabilities;**
3. **Build the number of qualified professionals serving individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities;**
4. **Increase support for caregivers and service providers through information exchange about Autism Spectrum Disorders and the service delivery system;**
5. **Promote the development of regional hubs that are affiliated with the university and medical communities, and serve as the foundation of effective service and support delivery for individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities.**
6. **Promote successful models for transitioning throughout the lifespan of an individual.**

During the past few months, ODMRDD has visited with many families, advocacy groups, and autism-specific Ohio programs to gather information on the subject of treatment interventions, business models, and provider networks across the state. This information, paired with the extensive foundational work of the 2003 Ohio Autism Task Force is guiding the Work Group, and creating a coordinated work plan.



Pipeline EXTRA, Wednesday, September 10, 2008

## State Budget, as Impacts ODMRDD

### Governor Takes Action to Preserve Balanced Budget

Governor Ted Strickland today ordered \$540 million in budget adjustments in order to assure Ohio's budget remains in balance. As the national economic slowdown continues to deprive Ohio of expected revenues pertaining to state budget issues, it presents a challenging environment for the state.

**The cuts take the form of a 4.75% across-the-board reduction for all agencies, while holding harmless homestead tax cuts, some education line-items, a children's health care expansion and tuition freezes for state colleges and universities.**

ODMRDD and other agencies will continue to work with the Governor's Office to ensure that Ohio maintains a balanced budget, in a way that strives to reduce harm to the state's ability to serve the people of Ohio. ODMRDD Director John Martin stated,

**"These are tough economic times and we will be making tough decisions, but we will be doing that in a way that is guided by our focus on our essential mission - services for individuals and families."**



## October ...

Pipeline, Wednesday, October 15, 2008

## National Disability Employment Awareness Month in Ohio



All across Ohio, newspapers, billboards, broadcast media, and special events are recognizing National Disability Employment Awareness Month and the 2008 theme, "America's People, America's Talent ... America's Strength!" For example, the above billboard in Richland County was created by the Richland County Board of MRDD and features employees of Richland Newhope Industries, Inc.. The local *Mansfield News-Journal* reported, "Employees with disabilities make significant contributions to their community through local employment," said Amanda South, Richland Newhope's director of adult services. She added,

"We are dedicated to developing the skills and abilities of this virtually untapped workforce to meet the needs of community employers, and employees with disabilities."

The same issue contained ...

## Governor's Efficiency and Continuous Improvement Initiative Continues to Yield Progress on Suggestions

Since its inception in early 2008, Governor Strickland's Efficiency and Continuous Improvement Initiative has yielded hundreds of suggestions for participating agencies, statewide. Visitors to the website at [www.ohio.gov/efficiency](http://www.ohio.gov/efficiency) easily can review the status of suggestions ... submit one <http://efficiency.ohio.gov/Default.aspx> ... or simply learn more about the initiative. The ODMRDD has received 28 suggestions to-date, and the agency's Efficiency Team has met each quarter to review progress on each of them, as well as to review any new suggestions for consideration and action.

The October meeting was a 'first' for the group, as it was a 'webinar' – defined as, "A presentation that uses a person's computer/ internet as the conduit for people to see and hear information in an interactive way."

Patrick Stephan, Deputy Director, Medicaid Development and Administration, and lead person for the ODMRDD Efficiency Team, explains,



"Our group is scattered across the state, with members representing various parts of the Department – and we don't have the resources to ask people to drive to four meetings each year. So, we had a teleconference last time, and this time we met via 'webinar'. It was a new way for the Efficiency Team to meet ... and it was efficient!"

Patrick adds, "With the team we have assembled the participation has been great, and I really feel that we are moving along productively on several of the suggestions. Many of them are being worked on as parts of the ODMRDD Futures recommendations, and some are being considered as part of larger efforts or 'big-picture' initiatives that will ultimately save money and time."



**November ...**

[Pipeline, Wednesday, November 26, 2008](#)

**Ohio's First Lady, Featured Speaker at Collaborative Symposium Focusing on DD Issues**

Ohio's First Lady, Frances Strickland, was the featured speaker at a 2008 Collaboration Symposium Tuesday, Nov. 18 at the Dublin (Ohio) Embassy Suites Hotel. This is the first event sponsored by the combined efforts of the *Ohio Association of Superintendents of County Boards of MRDD (OASCBMRDD)*, the *Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA)*, and the *Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD (OACBMRDD)*.

"I really appreciate the spirit behind what you're doing here," First Lady Strickland told the crowd at the symposium.

Nearly 200 providers, superintendents and County Board of MRDD staff were registered for the all-day event, ready to hear presentations about successful collaborations, and learn how to reach out effectively to the new General Assembly in preparation for the upcoming biennial budget process.

**"Our top priority is better relationships," First Lady Strickland said. "In the economic times we're in, we need to focus on our relationships."**

"We need to be resourceful, and we have to ask ourselves, 'How can we share what we have to help these families in need?'" she said. "Instead of thinking of individual agencies, we're thinking about the whole community."

OPRA Executive Director, Mark Davis, welcomed symposium participants, stating, "I'm really excited to be here today, and I'm glad all of you are here too."

OPRA and the OASCBMRDD ("Superintendents' Association") convened the symposium to discuss collaboration opportunities between County Boards of MRDD and private providers. The symposium is one of the many things the Collaboration Steering Committee has developed to strengthen relationships at the county level.

Davis said that when the groups were talking about what they should do to improve working relationships, the symposium concept was one of the first ideas they had. Both Davis and Hamilton County Board of MRDD Superintendent, Cheryl Phipps, emphasized that the need to get all interested parties together was clear.

**"When we all work together, it's better for people with disabilities," Phipps said.  
"This is just the beginning."**

**The same issue contained ...**

**Special Feature**  
**Giving Thanks – Thoughts from Across the State**



**Thankful for My Son**

## What Terry Has Taught Me

*by Leona Crogan, parent advocate and ODMRDD Family Advisory Council member*

At 41 years of age, twenty years ago, I gave birth to a beautiful baby boy with Down syndrome, named Terry Sean. I was told immediately that the necessary bloodwork would be done, but they were just about 100% certain they were correct.

Now, 20 years later, those moments are still so clear in my head. First, I thought someone had punched me in the stomach. Second, I wondered what my 13 year old son would think. And then, all I could think of was that I had to talk to someone else who had a child with Down syndrome.

**I knew I would need support from not just my husband, but from other parents as well. There was nothing short of a small "family reunion" outside the door just waiting to see if it was a boy or a girl. I am sure the thought of a disability never entered their minds.**

With his usual calm demeanor and sense of responsibility, my husband, and our 13 year old son went out first to tell 'the cheerleaders' that we had a beautiful baby boy who was healthy and who also happened to have Down syndrome. It must have been so difficult for them, but I know they wanted to protect me from having to face the first reactions of my dear friends and family.

As they wheeled me out of the delivery room, I could only draw from my usual sense of humor, as I didn't want any pity for me or my baby. Although the task of raising him seemed daunting, I knew we were going to be okay. I told my friends and family, he would be one of the best-dressed kids at school, and he wasn't perfect - just like his mother. It turned tears into laughter as they all breathed a sigh of relief that I was okay with this somewhat awkward situation.

My first look at our beautiful little boy in the neo-natal intensive care unit was of a naked screaming little baby who had lots of dark hair – and I thought, "Was he going to be ready to come out of this 'safe place' where he was protected from any stigma of labeling, bullying, unkind looks and words?" It just didn't seem fair that in a nano-second our lives had changed forever.

**At that point I had no idea what the changes would involve, and questioned whether my maternal instincts would be enough to raise him to be the nice young man his brother was.**



## December ...

[Pipeline EXTRA, Monday, December 1, 2008](#)

## National Financial Crisis' Impact on Ohio's Revenues

*The following information was released to all ODMRDD staff this afternoon by ODMRDD Director, John Martin.*

At noon today, Governor Ted Strickland held a press conference to announce what the national financial crisis could mean for Ohio's revenues in fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011. Without

some major economic recovery or federal assistance, it means that in the next two years, Ohio will confront a serious erosion in the state's revenues.

I encourage you to review the complete text of the Governor's press release and the related PowerPoint presentation, will be posted later today on the [www.ohio.gov](http://www.ohio.gov) website, on the Governor's page, and on the ODMRDD homepage at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov).



**Pipeline, Thursday, December 11 2008**

## **Input to Drive Planning for Prospective Budget Requirements**



Governor Ted Strickland has released information today regarding possible scenarios in the event that state agencies need to operate at 70-75% of the originally proposed biennial budget. *Pipeline* follows with ODMRDD's efforts to plan for how we will operate in the current budget environment.

**It is important to note that no decisions regarding operational or spending plans for the coming year have been made.**

In addition, sharing this information helps the Governor to make his case to the federal government that, without federal assistance to mitigate some of Ohio's budget shortfall, serious impacts to MRDD programs, and the people MRDD programs serve, will be felt.

*It is important to note that no decisions regarding operational or spending plans for the coming budget years have been made, and that the information represents some examples of what might happen if those reduced funding levels become necessary, in terms of looking ahead to the continued difficult economic environment.*

ODMRDD Director John Martin, will host 'budget conversations' in five locations\* throughout the state, during the first two weeks in January 2009. Co-sponsors of the meetings include the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD (OACBMRDD); the Ohio Association of Superintendents of County Boards of MRDD (OASCBMRDD), the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA); The Arc of Ohio, and The League (formerly OLMR).

*\*Meeting information at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/mrddlibrary/pipeline/docs/Vol2Iss25.pdf>. These meetings will provide opportunities to work together to weather difficult budget challenges while pursuing the system-wide vision articulated by the work of the MRDD Futures Committee.*

## **END 2008 – The *Pipeline* Year in Review**

**Coming in 2009:**

- **More news about the implementation of Futures recommendations ...**
- **The Obama Administration's implementation of a broad but specific disability platform ...**
- **Continuing news and features suggested by you, our *Pipeline* readers. Thank you.**



### Toll-Free Hotline

#### **ODMRDD Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)**

The ODMRDD toll-free hotline number for reporting abuse/neglect and other MUIs is **1-866-313-MRDD (6733)**. Please note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of MRDD, however, it is understood that there may be times an individual, staff member, or family member may feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember that the hotline number exists, and is to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.



**1-866-313-MRDD (6733)**

### ***Pipeline feedback ... direct from you to the state ...***

*Questions? Comments?* *Pipeline* is an electronic publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD), distributed approximately twice monthly to update and inform readers of time-sensitive, relevant information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us about *Pipeline* at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us), or contact Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us), phone (614) 644-0262.

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