



News from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities

John R. Kasich, Governor

John L. Martin, Director

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Pipeline PostScripts: Nearly a dozen updates for your calendar.

1. Conversation Continues on Health Care Coverage Issues

"We are going to get this done. I don't care what it takes. We are going to get this done."

-Governor John Kasich on the subject of Medicaid expansion

A health care rally on July 9, 2013, at the Ohio Statehouse underscored the Kasich Administration's belief that "Now is the Time" to extend Medicaid coverage in Ohio. Governor John Kasich spoke to several hundred concerned citizens gathered at the forum, representing areas of interest such as mental health, developmental disabilities, veterans, law enforcement, business, public safety, and other advocates to build momentum for work on the issue now, during the legislature's summer break. Governor Kasich enthusiastically stated,

"Now, all options are on the table. If the legislature doesn't do it, then we're going to look at everything we can possibly do to bring it forward."

Many stakeholders speaking from the podium shared their perspectives on the importance of providing extended health care coverage – noting, among other statistics, that roughly 26,000 Ohio veterans currently do not have Medicaid coverage. "This is not an automatic thing like some people think – they think all veterans have this coverage. Many don't. We need it now!"

More Support

DODD Director John Martin, and Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) President Mark Davis previously have noted other statistics in testimony to legislators, stating that Medicaid expansion could save OPRA member employers millions of dollars in Affordable Care Act-related penalties or new health insurance costs. Davis noted, "OPRA members employ 13,000

people statewide, with 11,245 of them working as Direct Service Professionals earning an average hourly salary of \$9.73.” With this data in mind, these employees would be qualified for coverage under a Medicaid extension to lower-wage workers.



Photo courtesy, The Columbus Dispatch, online

Governor John Kasich received support for his leadership on the subject of Medicaid expansion and the overall issue of health care coverage at the July 9 Ohio Statehouse rally. He confirmed,

“We have to respect the processes of the legislature, but we are determined to get this done. Determined!”



When Governor Kasich vetoed proposed budget language late last month, prohibiting the extension of Medicaid to low wage workers, it opened the door for the state legislature to reconsider the subject as viable outside the budget itself. The Legislature has since committed to working on Medicaid reform over the next several weeks under the broader umbrella of health care reform.



Front & Center!
The Arc of Ohio Executive Director Gary Tonks (center, white shirt) and co-worker David Lewis (left) are front and center in terms of rally participation and support. Says Tonks,

“Ohio’s DD system advocates have a strong voice ... and we’re going to use it!”





DODD Director John Martin listens to participants at the Statehouse rally. With regard to the overall state budget process, Director Martin often has noted,

“We’re doing a lot of listening. That’s especially important right now.”



HHS Funding Announced

On the subject of health care from a federal perspective, it was announced last week that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will supply 36 Ohio health centers with a total of \$3.9 million to support enrollment in the state's federally-run health insurance exchange, as outlined in the [Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act](#). The federal funding will benefit 183 health center locations, and is expected to pay for hiring additional employees to assist more than 84,400 Ohioans enrolling in health insurance plans through the exchange. HHS funding will complement and align with other efforts such as the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services-funded ‘Navigator’ program to assist the roll-out in local communities.

Overall, the preparation for health care system changes in Ohio is currently on-target for the January 2014 effective timeframe for new health insurance coverage options.

More information at <http://JobsBudget.Ohio.Gov> and [Top Ten Health Transformation Initiatives in the Budget](#)

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2. ‘A Good Life’ – Celebration in Northwest Ohio

It was fitting that this ‘A Good Life’ celebration was on July 16, the 26th anniversary of the ADA. It’s all about facilitating a good life.

‘A Good Life’ training is an outgrowth of the [Positive Culture Initiative \(PCI\)](#) -- a way of intentionally supporting *all people* within our communities that focuses on creating healthy relationships, and acknowledging the unique gifts that each brings to those relationships. It is about making the shift in thinking *away* from power, control and coercion in language and actions, and *toward* affirmation, unconditional acceptance, and encouragement.

And now there are 31 more developmental disabilities system professionals who have graduated from the training, as of yesterday in Bowling Green (Wood County). The new Northwest Ohio group of ‘facilitators’ represent County Boards of DD in Fulton, Henry, Paulding, Van Wert, and Wood counties, as well as service providers Champaign Residential Services Inc. (CRSI), Nowac, and Wood Lane Residential Services.



Photo courtesy, Adam Herman, OACB

Recognition Well-Deserved.
Willie Jones (left) and Pete Moore prepare to acknowledge several Northwest Ohio 'A Good Life' participants ... in the positive and fun-loving way they have perfected over the course of the training. There's no telling what could be under the drape, or behind it!



Photo courtesy, Adam Herman, OACB

Graduates Gather.
The 'A Good Life' graduates gather among some of their artistic creations depicting many positive scenarios possible through their new mindset and approach to work.



Under the auspices of the Ohio Association of County Boards (OACB), and with the support of the Clearwater Council of Government ([Clearwater COG](#)) Pete Moore and Willie Jones are the 'A Good Life' training gurus. They've described it as, "...founded on the general beliefs of the [Positive Culture Initiative](#) led by DODD, with some new layers added to the foundation." The training encourages confidence, respect, and self-esteem for both the giver and the receiver in any work relationship. It's about staying in a 'Stretch Zone' -- to always be on the lookout for the many possibilities in any person, and any situation.

Nancy Richards, Clearwater COG Executive Director spoke to the graduates yesterday, and expressed several observations, including,

"The Good Life network is nothing short of a culture change - it is not 'the next thing to try out' or some kind of fad. It is the future of our service system. Over the last year I have seen many great things happen both for staff and the people we support. People who never spoke as they unloaded a bus now carry on chatty conversations with people as they walk down the hall. Each person is greeted by name. And, some self advocates are running their own ISP meetings."

Acknowledging that the training is a lot of work and a lot of fun, Richards, the graduates and their supporters renewed their collective enthusiasm for helping *everyone* they work with make

the most of their opportunities each day, and in their own way. DODD congratulates the new ‘A Good Life’ graduates, and appreciates their efforts to support a Positive Culture within Ohio’s statewide developmental disabilities community.

*Special thanks to Adam Herman at OACB for information contained in this article. A Good Life is now on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/goodlifenetw> and featured in *Pipeline*, October 24, 2012*

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3. Self Advocates Speak Up, Ask Questions

The Self Advocate Advisory Council of the Franklin County Board of DD had a full agenda last week, and wasted no time in getting down to business with Council member and self advocate Christine Brown helping to guide the action. Meeting at the FCBDD offices in Columbus were 50 or more individuals who were ready to learn, speak up, and ask questions.

Before the meat of the meeting was addressed, there was a brisk exchange of information on the subject of, “How did *you* speak up for yourself since last meeting?”... which met with many answers including, “I talked to my SSA about wanting a SELF waiver,” and, “I talked to people about getting an outside job.” Perhaps most exciting was,

**“I talked to a legislator about accessible parking and got quoted in the *Columbus Dispatch!*”
And indeed, Marci Straughter was quoted as saying about the current parking signage,
“With ‘handicap,’ that sounds like they’re making fun of us.”**

See <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2013/07/05/push-is-on-to-remove-handicap-from-signs.html>

Straughter and others were quick to advance the main agenda on the subject of accessible parking in the Columbus area, agreeing, “It’s time for a change, and we want to make this happen.” The advocates want the currently-used description replaced with the word ‘accessible,’ and the universal wheelchair symbol or, perhaps adopting an updated icon recently introduced in New York City (see below).



An effort to revamp the icon that’s long symbolized accessibility on everything from parking lot signs to bathrooms is gaining traction. New York City is adopting the new look, and it is catching on elsewhere around the country.

Will Ohio be next?

More at: www.accessibleicon.org and at *Pipeline*, June 5 2013

Learning more about the Office of Health Transformation (OHT, in which DODD is a partner), was also on the agenda, and Monica Juenger, OHT Director of Stakeholder Relations, was ready with an information-packed presentation answering several questions from Council members along the way. Not shy about asking the tough questions, attendees wanted to know more about Medicaid Buy-In, Medicaid expansion, benefits such as SNAP ([Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#)) and general questions about how OHT operates. Definitely up to the task at-hand, Juenger explained,



“The point of OHT is to have state agencies work together ... so there are fewer places for you to have to go to get the services you need and want. That’s why we were organized in the first place, and that’s why OHT is continuing to work for all Ohio citizens. One of our top priorities is to see to it that you have opportunities to live and work in your community.

That’s a big deal for us. We feel it’s important.”

-Monica Juenger, OHT

Wrapping up the agenda, FCBDD Superintendent Jed Morison stopped in and took a ‘straw poll’ of the meeting participants, asking for their input on exactly what they would like to see for public signage indicating accessibility. The majority indicated they favored the new wheelchair icon, used along with the word ‘Accessible.’ Conversations on the way out the meeting room door got back to self advocacy, and how people had spoken up for themselves recently. There were still more of answers ... and that’s why the Self Advocate Advisory Council of the Franklin County Board of DD is gaining ground and making things happen.

For more information: www.fcbdd.org

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4. Employment First: Local Leaders Sites Selected

Six local teams, representing partners from multiple agencies, have been selected for *Employment First Local Leaders* implementation sites. The Employment First Taskforce and Advisory Committee selected the six from a total of 17 applications, representing 29 Ohio counties from across the state. These teams will enable DODD and the Taskforce to learn more about the current community employment capacity in the state for people with developmental disabilities, and enable a collaborative approach to identifying and promoting best practices in local communities.

According to the planned structure, each team will receive help in identifying needs related to implementing the Employment First initiative in their local community, establishing a Professional Development Action Plan, and guidance in creating an interagency agreement that outlines the roles and responsibilities of each member agency. The results of these activities will benefit the entire state, as the information gained will help DODD to build a statewide training plan tied to specific positive employment outcomes.

The selected six teams represent the following counties and county partnerships: Lucas, Clark, Stark, Montgomery/Greene/Warren, Pickaway/Fayette, Coshocton/Knox/Tuscarawas.



According to the Taskforce and Advisory Committee members, choosing from among the 17 original applications was a difficult task, and the work of all those who assembled a team and responded to the questions from a multi-agency perspective was most appreciated. One additional team in Fairfield County also will be part of this learning process, per a recommendation from the Taskforce and selection committee. According to Kristen Helling, DODD lead-person for the Employment First initiative, Fairfield County has an established and active interagency team model that the Taskforce would like to study in greater detail.

More at www.ohioemploymentfirst.org

[Health & Welfare](#)

5. Improved Online Complaint/Incident Reporting System

The Major Unusual Incident (MUI) unit, a part of the DODD Division of Legal and Oversight, recently launched a new On-Line Complaint Reporting System to augment the reporting of issues concerning the health and safety of individuals served in the statewide DD system. It allows for more timely and improved documentation and tracking of issues and the individuals affected. [The online system](#) is under the ‘Health and Safety’ tab at www.dodd.ohio.gov.

Assistant Deputy Director for the MUI unit, Scott Phillips, noted, “Our work process has improved dramatically! I can’t say enough about how well IT staff here worked with us to have this be an easy-to-use reporting system.” He added,

“What’s great is that we can search on it easily, and track data. The hotlines are so important, and now we have this new tool – it’s really dynamic when people send attachments with the initial information, and it helps us to get the bigger picture of a given incident straight from the field, and often much more quickly.”

Phillips explained that of 191 entries into the system since its inception a couple of months ago, 21 were reported using the new online system. “We are pretty excited about the possibilities as we gather more information in this more systematic way.” All 88 County Boards of DD are using or are ready to use the system, and MUI unit staff report good results in following up on the complaints and incident situations with the value-added online system.

Contact: scott.phillips@dodd.ohio.gov

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PostScripts

Public Hearing Announcement

A public hearing opportunity to provide input to Ohio's State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) will be held Wednesday, August 14, from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, 150 E. Campus View Blvd., in Columbus. The Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council and the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission are making changes to the 2014-2016 SPIL that will incorporate the Community Centers for the Deaf and the Personal Care Assistance Programs and they encourage your participation and input. Teleconference: 866-321-0015 or, in Franklin County dial (614) 785-5087. For viewing locations around the state; Call (614) 892-0390 or 800-566-7788.

Nominations Now Open, Advocacy and Service Awards

The Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) has established the *Ben Bonanno Disability Advocate Award* to honor outstanding advocacy accomplishments by non-employees of RSC. Ben Bonanno was a former RSC Commissioner who advocated to improve employment possibilities for persons with disabilities. The *Award* recognizes a person whose advocacy efforts have significantly improved the employment possibilities of Ohioans with disabilities in a manner consistent with RSC's mission. *Deadline for submitting nominations is August 16, 2013.* RSC also has established the *Denise Joanne Weisenborn Service Award* to honor non-employees of RSC who provide outstanding services to Ohioans with disabilities to make their participation in society more meaningful. This award has been established in memory of Denise Weisenborn, who served as an RSC Commissioner from 1997 to 2006. For both awards, Contact Shirley Marchi, phone (614) 438.1477 or e-mail shirley.marchi@rsc.ohio.gov.

Governor's Council on People with Disabilities, Awards Nominations **All nominations are due by July 31.**

The *Governor's Council on People with Disabilities* is now accepting applications for Annual Awards. These include: Employer of the Year; Public/Non-Profit Best Practices; Advocacy Award; Karla Lortz \$1000 Scholarship; Maureen Fitzgerald Leadership Award; Accessible Parking Award; and, a new Accessible Medical Services Award. *All nominations are due by July 31*, and the Awards ceremony will be held in October, as part of RSC's DisAbility Jobs Summit. Applications are on the GCPD website at www.gcpd.ohio.gov – Go to the menu on the left, and the nomination form is under "AWARDS."

Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council Seeks New Members

The Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council), a planning and advocacy council committed to community inclusion for people with developmental disabilities, is currently seeking applicants for new membership. To apply, visit their website at www.ddc.ohio.gov or contact Carla Cox at (614) 644-5538, or email carla.cox@dodd.ohio.gov.

Family Advisory Council Meeting, August 20

The DODD Family Advisory Council (FAC) will host its next meeting on August 20 at the Columbus Developmental Center training room, from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.. FAC meetings are open to anyone with an interest in Ohio's DD community, and DODD especially appreciates the attendance of individuals and family members served throughout the statewide system. For more information, contact Peggy Martin at Peggy.Martin@dodd.ohio.gov or call (614) 466-8706.

Training, August 26-27: Building Understanding, Resiliency, and Hope

A training opportunity named, "Building Understanding, Resilience and Hope," is geared toward developmental disabilities professionals as well as mental health professionals -- including case managers, SSAs, and other County Board of DD staff, program managers of day service and residential support agencies, and mental health clinicians. New approaches for understanding and supporting people with complex neurobehavioral conditions and histories of trauma and toxic stress will be discussed at the two-day training, August 26 – 27 at the Xenos Center, 1340 Community Park Dr., Columbus, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. each day. [Click here for registration information.](#)

SAVE THE DATE! Direct Support Professionals Event, September 11

The Ohio Alliance of Direct Support Professionals (OADSP) annual DSP Recognition Event will be at the Xenos complex in Columbus, on September 11. Rachel Simon, a writer, and sibling to a sister with DD, will be the keynote speaker. The energetic Scott Osterfeld will MC the event. DODD Director John Martin will speak, and several additional presenters and surprises are planned. More than 400 DSPs attended last year. The event theme is *Direct Support Professionals Help Create Life Stories*, and DSP's will have an opportunity to share stories of the great work they do -- see [Directions for sharing videos](#). To register go to www.dspath.org. Contact: Amy Gerowitz, (513) 484-2772 agerowitz@me.com or event coordinator Lisa Barnes, (866) 862-2322 LisaB4DSPs@yahoo.com.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! PAR/OSDA 'Synergy' Conference, October 2-4

Two non-profit organizations, PAR and OSDA, are hosting a statewide conference October 2-4 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Dublin. Both organizations have held annual conferences for many years and have provided training, professional development, and advocacy in the DD field. This year's combined 'Synergy' conference will bring together a cross-section of all stakeholders including people with developmental disabilities, their family members, and DD professionals.

[The Annual ESDY Awards will be presented at this conference. To nominate someone ...](#)

Eligibility: Individuals or entities that have promoted the principles of self-determination which affected their own lives or the lives of others. Details on the OSDA website at www.ohiosda.org, coming soon. Completed nominations are due by 5 p.m. on August 31, 2013. Contact stravis@eriecbdd.org. All nominations are confidential. Please do not tell anyone about being nominated!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! DisAbility Jobs Summit, October 8-9

The Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency (formerly RSC - the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission) has announced the dates for this year's *DisAbility Jobs Summit* – October 8 and 9, at the Columbus Convention Center. This event will include program tracks that will offer educational experiences for all attendees. Details will be forthcoming as the dates draw nearer. Until then, mark your calendars for the 2013 *DisAbility Jobs Summit*.

WALK NOW FOR AUTISM SPEAKS – October 13

Join 'Autism Speaks' on Sunday, October 13, at Huntington Park in Columbus, and walk to change the future for people with autism. *Walk Now for Autism Speaks* is a family-friendly event and helps to fund research that will lead to answers surrounding the many questions posed by Autism Spectrum Disorder. Previous years' participants say, "Whether you strive to join the new "Grand Club" (walkers that raise \$1,000 or more), sell lemonade, or create your own unique event, you can become a part of the solution!" Contact Columbus@autismspeaks.org or call (216) 524-2842.

SAVE THE DATE! Ohio SIBS Conference, November 8-9

The 13th annual Ohio Adult Sibling (SIBS) Conference is set for November 8-9 at the Columbus Airport Marriott Hotel. It's an opportunity to meet and partner with other adult siblings and disability professionals for a uniquely informative experience. Learn useful information, strengthen advocacy skills, expand community inclusion, and connect with other siblings from around the state. Ohio SIBS serves as a unified voice and partner for Ohio adult siblings of people with developmental disabilities and their families. As the date draws nearer, go to www.ohiosibs.com for more information on the conference.

DODD Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)

To report abuse/neglect and other MUI's call toll-free **1-866-313-6733**. Note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of DD, 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 the hotline number is there to be used for reporting.

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