



Institute Research Director Testifies on DD Act

Charlie Lakin, the Institute's Research Director, traveled to Washington, D.C. on March 30 to testify before the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, Subcommittee on Disability Policy, on the reauthorization of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act. This is one of the most significant pieces of federal legislation for persons with disabilities, and also the legislation that authorizes funding for university affiliated programs and other projects of national significance. The importance of reauthorization of the Act is perhaps best summed up in an excerpt from Charlie's testimony:

"It's easy for people here in Washington to underestimate the importance of the DD Act, after all the total federal expenditures for DD Act programs in 1988 were only about 2% of federal expenditures for persons with developmental disabilities under Title XIX of Medicaid alone...But the power in the DD Act has not been in its budget. The power is in its ideals, and the people sharing them, who are brought together in common purpose through the Act. The Act is by far the most visible and most widely noted statement of the goals that the nation holds for its citizens with developmental disabilities. In the Act's statement of purpose, those of us in the field find our own individual and collective purpose, that is to assist people with developmental disabilities to achieve their maximum potential through increased independence, increased productivity, and increased integration into the communities of this nation."

Though the outcome of the hearings and legislative action won't be known until summer at the earliest, the impact of Charlie's testimony has been felt and has been reflected back to the Institute via a number of calls from colleagues around the country affirming the importance of his input on behalf of the bill.

The National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act

The National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act is a no-fault program through which the children and their parents are able to be compensated for the costs of providing equipment, educational and therapy services, and aide or attendant care services throughout the life span of the child. If the child was administered a vaccine and developed specific reactions within certain time periods, he or she may be entitled to recover for costs of care.

This act was only recently funded, and there have been relatively few claims filed to date. There is, however, a deadline of November 15, 1990 for the filing of claims for those children who were given injections on or before October 1, 1988. This was extended legislatively from a previous deadline of September 30, 1990. For those children who have had severe reactions and permanent injuries from vaccines received after the October 1, 1988 date, there is a three-year limitation for filing such claims.

If you would like further information, contact Helen M. Woodard, Ph.D., Director, Governor's Planning Council on DD, 300 Capitol Square Building, 658 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55101.

Case Management

A Thursday afternoon series of videotape/teleconference programs to discuss issues related to case management for persons with disabilities will be offered during April. This series is co-sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Institute. Sessions will be held each Thursday from 2-4pm at the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Human Services Building, 444 Lafayette Road, St. Paul.

•April 19-Family Centered Care. Look at a family-centered approach to caring for children with complex medical needs. Room 2A.

•April 26-Family Centered, Community-Based Care Coordination. Focus on improving coordination of care with the family at the center receiving community-based services. Room 2A.

All sessions are free, but please make reservations for the session(s) you want to attend by calling Ruth Berman at the Institute at 624-4848.

Dates to Remember ...

- April 17: Project Staff Mtg (UAP), 9:30-11:30am, Rm 118 Pattee.
- April 19: Civil Service Staff Mtg, 8:30-9:00am, Rm 6A Pattee.

New Publications

•The latest Institute publication is the long-awaited Educational Services to Minnesota Students with Disabilities: Status Report on Urban and Rural Services. This report compares service, expenditure, and staffing patterns in urban, small rural, and large rural school districts in Minnesota. It is available in the publications office.

•Institute notecards, suitable for personal notes of thanks and acknowledgement, are now available in the publications office.

Do You Communicate Well? ...Test Yourself

Here are some questions to ask yourself to determine how well you communicate. They are based on an article by Ken Matejka of the School of Business Administration, Duquesne University.

- Do you create an atmosphere that encourages people to ask questions when they are unsure of something?
- Do you make an effort to become aware of "hidden agendas" that get in the way of open communication? If you fail to uncover and consider unresolved issues, you won't understand what a person meant by what he or she said.
- When speaking, do you take into account the total impression you are creating? Do you consider inflection, tone, facial expression, gestures, etc.? Or do you focus only on the words?
- Are you aware that people usually will not change their minds when told or threatened to do so - that you must make them see the situation in a different way?
- Do you often prepare a rebuttal while a person is speaking - before trying to really understand what was said?
- Do you really understand yourself - and how your attributes affect your communication attempts? For example, are you a "big-picture person" or a "detail person"? Are you rational or judgmental?

Answers:

The answers to these questions should be obvious. But even one wrong answer can impair your ability to communicate well. If you fall short in certain areas, you should work on them - or you won't be really effective as a communicator.

-reprinted from communication briefings, Volume 8, Number 5.

Odds and Ends

•Quarter 3 Reports Due

Quarter 3 Reports are due April 15, 1990. Please hand in your reports to Joan Saari as soon as possible. Quarter 4 reports are on their way, so let's not get behind!

•Congratulations...

To Jeff and Terri Vandercook on the birth of their first child, Allison Sue, on Tuesday morning. Allison weighed in at 6lb, 11oz and has a head of black hair. Terri is overwhelmingly delighted and amazed with Allison!

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•Welcome

Welcome to Karen Scheltema, a new research assistant here at the Institute. She will be assisting Joan Saari with the Woodcock-Johnson testing at various Minneapolis schools, and also with conference evaluations.

•Want Attention?

If you have to address a noisy gathering, try playing music as the crowd gathers before the speech begins. When music stops abruptly, groups usually stop talking and turn to see what happened.

-from "Tips of the Month", communication briefings, Volume 8, Number 5.

Celebrations!

BIRTHDAYS

April 18 - Marijo McBride
April 18 - Cheryl Morgan
April 24 - Joan Saari
April 27 - Sheryl Evelo
April 29 - Teri Wallace
May 10 - Ron Erickson