



Connecticut Disability Advocacy Collaborative Bulletin

“Enhancing the effectiveness of disability activism by organizing and empowering individuals, families, groups and organizations”

Disability Rights is a Civil Rights Issue

May 2006

Need this newsletter in an alternative format?
Please let us know.

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This Bulletin is supported by a grant that the Disability Advocacy Collaborative has received from the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities. In addition, in-kind support is being provided by the UConn Center on Disabilities, and Communitas, Inc. serves as the project’s fiscal agent. To all three we extend our appreciation.

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Update on Disability Advocacy Collaborative Activities

Advocacy Training Workshops!

The Collaborative is sponsoring two Advocacy Training workshops over the coming month. One, in the southwestern corner of the state, will be held on Wednesday, May 24, 2006 from 10 am – 2:30 pm at the Norwalk Police Station – One Monroe Street in Norwalk. The other, for people living in the northeast region, will be held on Tuesday, June 6, 2006 from 5 – 9 pm at Windham High School in Willimantic (355 High Street).

Both workshops will feature interactive presentations by Betty Gallo, a lobbyist who has represented a variety of disability and other non-profit organizations at the state legislature for a number of years. Both workshops will offer an opportunity to people with disabilities and families to learn skills that will allow them to effectively represent their own interests and needs within the community in which they live and/or at the state level with the state legislature and state agencies. In addition to developing personal leadership skills, the workshops will explain how your town government works; who are the key decision-makers; and how budgets get made. For people interested in state level advocacy, the workshop will explain how our state legislature works; how to prepare and give testimony; and the best ways to contact your legislator.

Anyone from the southwestern part of the state who is interested in attending the event in Norwalk should register by Wednesday, May 17, 2006 by calling or e-mailing Carol Kana, who has assumed a leadership role for the regional advocacy network in Fairfield County (203-637-4304 or pkana@snet.net). Anyone interested in attending the workshop in Willimantic should register by Friday, June 2, 2006 by contacting Stan Kosloski at skosloski03@comcast.net. Accommodations for both workshops will be provided on request.

A web site is being developed by Matt Nylan, ably assisted by Mary Lau from the MS Society. The site should be up and running by mid-June.

Disability Convention 2006 September 16, 2006

- Exhibitor packets will be mailed out within the next week to businesses and private non-profit organizations who want to showcase their goods and services at the September 16 Disability Convention. There are a variety of options available to service providers and advocacy organizations. **If you want to make sure you get a vendor packet, e-mail Jayne Kleinman at jjk1009@hotmail.com or call 203-631-4800.**
- Greg Smith, nationally known motivational speaker who hosts the “On a Roll” radio show will join us for the day, courtesy of the Self Determination/Family

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Support Planning Committee. He will broadcast his show that day from the Connecticut Expo Center, site of the Convention.

- The Brain Injury Association has agreed to coordinate a sports/recreation venue at the Convention that will feature the many various competitive and recreational sports activities available to people with disabilities
- Candidates for Governor and U.S. Senate have already been contacted and asked to “save the date” of September 16; other candidates will be invited over the next month.
- In addition to the presence of candidates for public office, workshops of interest will be offered to those attending the Convention. Topics being considered include emergency planning, the role of spirituality, self-advocacy, and political activism.

Disability Convention Transportation Update

The State Independent Living Council and the Self Determination/Family Support Planning Committee are pitching in to help with funding for transportation to ensure that anyone who wants to get to the Disability Convention on September will be able to do so. We are still looking for someone to provide leadership and help us coordinate the plan. Might you be the one to take this task on? Please contact Jayne Kleinman, www.jjk1009@hotmail.com, or 203-631-4800 if you are interested.

State Legislative Activity

The State legislature wrapped up its 2006 session on Wednesday, May 3, and there was some good news for people with disabilities. There was not enough time to provide a comprehensive review for this month’s Bulletin, but here are some of the positive outcomes:

- \$1,000,000 was appropriated for a pilot program to provide a coordinated system of supports and services for adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) without mental retardation. The pilot program, which will last for two years, is slated to serve up to fifty adults with ASD, who do not have mental retardation, as defined in section 1-1g of the General Statutes. The passage of this legislation represents a critical step forward in addressing the service and support needs of adults with ASD.
- A partial solution was provided for beneficiaries whose medications are not covered under a Medicare Part D plan’s formulary. The state Department of Social Services was directed to pay for medically necessary prescription drugs that are not included in a plan’s formulary. Advocates report that insufficient funds were appropriated to cover the expected cost for the entire state fiscal year. The legislation also creates and funds a Medicare appeals and reconsideration option for consumers to contact if they are refused coverage.
- The Under-65 Medicaid PCA Waiver eligibility criteria were expanded to allow people turning 65 to continue receiving services. Currently people who reach the age of 65 have no option for continuing their PCA services except to apply for the

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state-funded services under the pilot PCA for people age 65 and over. The age change also applies to individuals receiving PCA services under the “Medicaid for the Employed Disabled” program.

- The legislature increased the number of slots in the elder PCA program noted above from 150 to 250
- The responsibility to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the state’s long term care needs was transferred from the state Office of Policy and Management to the General Assembly (state legislature). The legislature will contract out the assessment responsibilities after consulting the Connecticut Commission on Aging, the Long Term Care Advisory Council, and the Long Term Care Planning Committee. “Long term care” includes community based services as well as nursing home care. The analysis called for would 1) assess consumers’ long term care needs, desires, and preferences, and 2) plan for optimal use of public and private long term care funding. Assessment and planning for future needs should gauge present and future consumer needs and assess the financial viability, capacity, and performance of the service network. Funding was appropriated to cover the cost of the assessment.
- The MS Society reports that the proposal to address the needs of people not covered by current Medicaid waivers or state-funded programs received support from the legislature, and the Commissioner of DSS was directed apply for a Title XIX waiver. \$200,000 was appropriated to support this initiative.
- The Department of Social Services was directed to apply for a “Money Follows the Person” demonstration project, as authorized by the federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. If the application is accepted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, up to 100 participants will receive community-based services, including personal care assistance.

News from the DD Council

The Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities has hired a new Disability Policy Specialist. Her name is Angela Spino and she comes to the Council from the Capital Region Education Council (CREC). The Collaborative would like to welcome her aboard!

The Council has also developed a blog at www.ctcdd.org. On the Blog you may:

- comment on what should be the new name for the Department of Mental Retardation and why;
- vote on where the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities should spend most of its funds; and
- provide input in the development of the Council's next 5 year plan by commenting on the Council's preliminary priorities at www.ctcdd.org/survey/.

If you are interested in serving on the Council, visit the Council’s web site at <http://ct.gov/ctcdd/cwp/view.asp?a=1994&q=290726&ctcddNav>. The Council is recruiting only self-advocates who have developmental disabilities. The Council does

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not have vacancies for parents or agencies. Applicants will be interviewed on July 10, 2006. Recommendations will be sent to the Governor in August for appointments beginning October 1, 2006.

Upcoming Workshops, Conferences and Events

Conference on Serving Youth & Adults with Learning Disabilities

On May 25, 2006 the Capitol Region Education Council will be conducting a workshop to share current knowledge and strategies on reading and writing, transitional and personal areas with teachers, counselors, and parents for the: ESL and Basic skills learner, people with learning disabilities, ADD/ADHD, Autism Spectrum and people with brain injuries. The conference will be held at the Marriott Hotel in Farmington. For more information contact Brettnee Nelson at 860-524-4048, www.crec.org.

Able Lives – Second Installment

The ten part disability series “Able Lives” will continue in May with the second installment to be aired on Thursday, May 25 (10 pm) and repeated on Sunday, May 28 (12:30 pm). Veteran advocate Phyllis Zlotnick will be featured, along with photographer Richmond Jones and his fine art portraits of individuals with developmental disabilities in the 1970s. A segment examining the importance of language and words will also be included

KASA Retreat

Connecticut KASA (Kids as Self Advocates) is hosting a national retreat for youth and young adults with disabilities from May 26-29 at Camp Harkness in Waterford. The event, entitled “Building a Common Ground”, will involve both serious meetings and fun activities. Food and sleeping accommodations will be provided.

As the KASA statement of purpose explains “youth with disabilities are in a unique situation where they are part of a family but have different situations to deal with This leaves them without appropriate role models and with a need for feeling they **do** belong, that they **can** make informed decisions about their **own** lives, and that what they become does matter”.

Any person interested in volunteering for this unique event should contact Heather Northrop at coordinator@ctkasa.org.

Latino Money Management Conference

The Connecticut General Assembly’s Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission and the Office of the State Treasurer, with funding support from Bank of America, will host

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Connecticut's first comprehensive Money Management Conference for Latinos on Friday, June 2, 2006 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Cromwell. This initiative will include a variety of useful workshops on budgeting, debt management, investing, college planning and much more. For more information on registering for this event, call Moraima Guitierre (860)240-0187 or Sherle McMillan (860)952-6387.

The Untold Story of Connecticut's Children with Disabilities and Complex Medical Conditions: A Call to Action

The Child Advocate and friends invite you to join us as we launch a series of events designed to provoke new ways of thinking about how to better support children with disabilities and complex medical conditions. The series will kick off with honored guest Harriet McBryde Johnson Esq speaking on "Embracing the Possibilities and the Impossibilities" on Monday, June 12, 2006 beginning at 10:30 a.m. Lunch will be provided. Space is limited! For reservations and to request accommodations, contact the Office of the Child Advocate by June 1, 2006 at 800-994-0939.

Second Annual Spirit of the ADA Celebration

The Connecticut Developmental Disabilities Network will host its second annual Spirit of the ADA Celebration on July 26, 2006. The Network is calling for nominations to honor organizations that have gone above and beyond to promote the inclusion of people in recovery from mental illness. For more information contact Jessica Jagger at jjagger@uchc.edu or send your nominations by June 1 to: ADA Celebration Nominations, UConn Center on Disabilities, 263 Farmington Ave., MC 6222, Farmington, CT 06030-6222.

Remembering the Forgotten

The 8th Annual Memorial Ceremony remembering of Connecticut Valley Hospital (CVH) patients who died and were buried without any public acknowledgment will be held at the CVH patient cemetery on Thursday, May 11, 2006 (rain date – May 12, 2006). The ceremony will begin at 1 pm on Silvermine Road (connecting Silver Street and Bow Lane) in Middletown.

It is quite a moving and powerful ceremony, and involves the reading aloud of the names of 100 more of the individuals who were buried at the cemetery (without names, only numbers on their headstones). This is the eighth year of a seventeen-year ceremony (there are 1,700+ persons buried in the cemetery) to both publicly acknowledge these individuals by reading aloud their names, and also memorializing them. This is a ceremony that has been organized by clergy from Middletown and CVH.

Want to be a Trainer?

The Connecticut Voices for Children is offering a "Train the Trainers" workshop on

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Tuesday, May 23, 2006 from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm in the Community Room - One Hamden Center - 2319 Whitney Avenue, Suite 2B - Hamden, CT

The state and federal budgets affect every resident and community in Connecticut. This "train the trainers" presentation will give you the tools you need to educate people in your community about the impact of state and federal budget proposals and changes. This will be an interactive session with ample time for discussion and questions. All attendees will receive a copy of the PowerPoint, along with advice and training enabling you to effectively share this information with your network.

Space is limited - Reserve your seat today! Contact Taly Bialostocki - taly@ctkidslink.org or (203) 498-4240 x199. "Train the Trainers" is sponsored by the Graustein Memorial Fund.

Training on the Nitty Gritty of the Health Care System

State and local advocates have been working on a plan to get local communities more involved with efforts to address our state's health care crisis. "Fair Care" is the result of that planning process, and the title of a four-part training curriculum that will be held on Mondays in Norwich and Willimantic beginning this June. The training will get into the nitty-gritty of the health care system, covering:

- how we find ourselves in the midst of a statewide health care crisis
- how the health care system has gotten away with charging a lot to deliver very little – and what the average consumer can do about it
- how we can override the largest barriers to health care access and build stronger, healthier communities in the process
- and much more!

All materials and meals are provided. There is no cost. The classes are held every two weeks and arranged so that a missed session can be attended at the alternate site. The skills taught are highly transferable and can be applied in any setting where advocacy is needed. Certificates of completion will be awarded at the end of the course.

The course is open to any person with an interest in advocacy skills training and health care issues. It starts with a full-day retreat that provides the big picture of advocacy and the health care crisis and will be followed by three half-day sessions. Interested persons should contact: Lisa Reynolds, Planner - Senior Resources-Agency on Aging - 4 Broadway - 3rd Floor - Norwich, CT 06360 - Tel.: (860) 887-3561 ext. 23.

People First Board to Meet

There will be a meeting of the Board of Directors of People First on Thursday, May 11, from 6:00 - 8:00 pm. All chapters are entitled to send representatives. At 4:00 pm the

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same day a meeting will be held to discuss jobs in what is called a focus group. For those of you that can come early please do. Both meetings will be held at the Arc of Southington.

Any questions? Call Jean Bowen at 203-788-3156, advozealot@aol.com.

SRV Event on Frailty in Old Age

The Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Social Role Valorization (SRV) Implementation Project, Worcester, Massachusetts, is pleased to announce the last in a series of SRV events. "Frailty In Old Age: Understanding Vulnerability And Supporting Elders In Valued Roles" will be offered Wednesday, May 31, 2006 from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm at the Institute of Technical and Business Development, Central Connecticut State University, 185 Main Street, New Britain.

This workshop examines the common life experiences of elders in today's culture, with a particular emphasis on the harm that gets done to people who are older who are segregated and congregated and obstacles people who are older face in acquiring or maintaining a typical life. This workshop is for anyone caring for people who are older.

Tuition is free, and the registration deadline is May 17, 2006. Registration will not be accepted at the door. Materials, parking, refreshments and lunch will be provided. To register, send your name, agency affiliation (if any), address, telephone and e-mail (if any) to: CT Council on Developmental Disabilities - 460 Capitol Avenue - Hartford, CT 06106-1308 ATTN: SRV . With your registration, please let us know if you will need sign language interpreters, taped materials, dietary foods or other accommodations.

For further information contact Ed Preneta at 860-418-6157 or ed.preneta@po.state.ct.us

UConn Center on Disabilities Offers Special Ed Course.

"Discipline and Special Education" is the title of a three session course that is being organized by the UConn Center on Disabilities and taught by Andrew A. Feinstein, J.D. Participants may choose to attend the entire three-session course or may select one or two sessions. Each session will include a general overview and one of the topics listed below:

- * General discipline issues in public schools for all children, including expulsion and suspension (1st session – May 5)
- * Discipline for students receiving special education (2nd session – May 19)
- * The legal process of determining if a child's behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability (3rd session – May 26)

All sessions will be held at the Farmington Marriott and will run from 8:30 am – 12:00 pm. The cost is \$110 per session. Contact Melissa Van Buren at vanburen@uchc.edu or 860-679-1586 to learn more.

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FAVOR Has Immediate Openings for Advocates and Information Specialists

Per Diem advocates: These parent advocates must have experience with the children's mental health system and be able to demonstrate skill in advocating on behalf of other parents. These consultant positions involve advocating for families who have children with mental health needs as they access services through the schools, courts, DCF and other agencies and community programs. Training and supervision will be provided. Pay rate; \$14.66/hour plus mileage reimbursement - Minimum hours are not guaranteed.

Family-to-Family Health Information Specialists: These consultants should be parents of children with special health care needs, which may include children with mental health needs, who have knowledge of resources in their region and in the state. They should have experience in providing advocacy and support on behalf of other parents. Pay rate: \$100 per month for a case load of 3 families per month

For more information call FAVOR at 1-866-630-6055 (toll free) or e-mail: mcole@favor-ct.org. FAVOR, Inc. is located at 2138 Silas Deane Highway, Suite 100 Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

P&A Seeks Input

The Office of Protection and Advocacy recently conducted several public forums to get input on the priorities individuals with disabilities have that receive special attention during the year. If you want more information or missed the forums and would like a survey sent to you please call OPA at 1-800-842-7303, ext. 4344 (toll-free-voice/TTY), 860-297-4344(V) or 860-297-4380 (TTY) The survey may also be completed online at their website: www.ct.gov/opapd. The deadline for submitting the surveys is June 30, 2006.

Financially Self-Sustaining Regional Transportation Systems

The Department of Social Services (DSS) is requesting applications from municipalities or nonprofit organizations in the State of Connecticut that could, if funding were made available, develop a plan for a financially self-sustaining community-based regional transportation system in their community for the elderly. Completed applications must be received at the Department no later than 3:00 pm on **May 22, 2006**. Applications received after that date and time may be accepted by the Department but will not be opened and evaluated. All applications must be in sealed envelopes clearly marked "Community-Based Regional Transportation System for the Elderly." To download the Request for Applications, access the State's Procurement/Contracting Portal at the Department of Administrative Services Home Page at: www.das.state.ct.us/busopp.asp or contact: Frank A. Intino, State of Connecticut, Department of Social Services, 25 Sigourney Street, Hartford, CT 06106, (860) 424-5486 (phone), (860) 424-5800 (fax) frank.intino@po.state.ct.us.

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Rewardingwork.org Celebrates its 1-year Anniversary and Breaks 1,000!!

Rewarding Work.org, the web site designed to facilitate the connection between potential employees and employers that direct their own supports celebrated a one-year anniversary by receiving its 100th PCA application in April! For those of you who may have looked at the site last year and could not find the employees you were looking for, please feel free to look again as it has improved since last year. The site is located at www.rewardingwork.org

There is a 24 hour free trial of the site that allows users to see the name and town of individuals on rewardingwork.org. After the trial period, a small fee of \$30 for three months, \$60 for six months or \$90 a year is charged for access to the site. Full access includes contact information and the ability to sort among various fields such as languages spoken, distance willing to travel, and special qualifications a personal assistant may have such as CPR and First Aid certification.

Sometimes when trying something new, it is easier to talk to a person when questions arise. Please call Andrew Bate at (860) 679-1564 with any questions or input you may have about this new service.

How Are We Doing?

How well are we moving towards the goal of ending, as the Supreme Court stated in Olmstead, unnecessary institutionalization in the disability communities? Steve Gold reports that Dr. David Braddock's 2005 State of the States in Developmental Disabilities report provides an opportunity to measure where we are. In Connecticut, 2,057 (28%) out of 7,222 individuals in "out of home residential placements" are still in institutions. The average financial costs of these different settings are dramatically different and quite expensive.

1. For the larger State operated institutions, the average cost is \$146,000 per person per year and private ICF/MR placements cost \$68,000 per person per year.
2. For the smaller placements (15 or less), the private ICF/MR institutions cost \$75,000 and the public (same size) ICF/MR institutions cost \$86,000 per year.

In comparison with those settings of 6 or fewer persons, the supportive living/personal assistance cost only \$21,000 and Medicaid Home and Community Based Waivers average \$38,000 per year per person.

To reach Dr. Braddock e-mail david.braddock@cu.edu .

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Money and Debt Management Handbook Available for Providers

The Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS) has published a new handbook, "Your Client's Money: Practical Tools to Promote Family Economic Success." The 60 page handbook is geared to community-based providers who help people attain economic self-sufficiency. It focuses on budget, debt management, credit, loans, asset building, and personal financial security, and includes contact information for financial management programs and services offered across the state. You can access the guide at the CAHS website homepage, www.cahs.org or call Tracy Helin, Outreach Director, at 860-951-2212, ext. 236.

National News

May 1-7: Cover the Uninsured Week

Justice for All reports that nearly 46 million Americans, including more than 8 million children, are living without health insurance and are forced to gamble every day that they won't get sick or injured. That's a risk no one should have to take. Uninsured Americans live sicker and die younger than those with health insurance. Just one serious illness or injury can wipe out an uninsured family's bank account, and the problem is getting worse.

That's why the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and some of the most influential organizations in the country are again organizing Cover the Uninsured Week. This year's effort will mobilize thousands of individuals and organizations from many sectors of society to plan activities to tell Congress that health care coverage must be their top priority.

What can you do? Go to www.CoverTheUninsured.org to:

1. Tell Congress that health coverage must be their top priority. Let's get America covered.
2. Spread the word by sending a Cover the Uninsured Week e-mail to your friends and asking them to help get America covered.
3. Get involved in Cover the Uninsured Week activities and show your support. The Web site lists dozens of ways you can help your community organize activities and events.

For more health news issues, go to: www.aapd.com/News/health/indexhealth.php.

Many Unaware of Deadline for Medicare Drug Plan

Less than three weeks remains for most Medicare beneficiaries to sign up for prescription-drug coverage without penalty: nearly half the programs participants apparently don't know it. Despite a nationwide campaign by government and private

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organizations, only 55% of seniors realize the deadline is May 15, according to a poll by the Kaiser Family Foundation, an independent health care research group. Only 53% know enrolling after the deadline will cost 1% more per month.

The findings could provide impetus to the push to allow more time for seniors and those with disabilities to pick a prescription-drug plan without paying higher premiums. The Bush administration and Republican congressional leaders have thus far refused to consider an extension.

Access Board Publishes Comparison Document

The U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board has published a document that provides a comparison between the updated ADA Accessibility Guidelines, the original ADA Standards, and the International Building Code. The comparison is ordered according to the format and sequence of the new ADA Accessibility Guidelines, which the Board published in the *Federal Register* on July 23, 2004. Corresponding provisions in the U.S. Department of Justice's Standards for Accessible Design, which are based on the original ADA Accessibility Guidelines and the International Building Code, are reordered for side-by-side comparison. The full report is also available in PDF and can be downloaded as a zipped Word file.

The document can be found at www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/comparison/index.htm .

Your Comments Needed on the ADA!

The national network of ADA & IT Technical Assistance Centers, also known as DBTACs, is seeking public comment on experiences with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Your feedback on experiences in employment, building access, or access to public services will help the Centers identify training gaps and issues needing increased technical assistance. Share what has worked for you, what barriers you still encounter and how the ADA has made a difference in your life. The form is short and simple. Comment only on topics of interest or concern to you. Comment as often as you like on any of the several categories. There is no identification necessary or asked other than the state in which you live to help assure the network that they are reaching all parts of the country.

Interested persons should go to www.ADATA.org to fill out the brief survey.

Cantos to Serve as White House Associate Director on Disabilities

The American Association of Persons with Disabilities (AAPD) has informed the Collaborative that Ollie Cantos, former General Counsel to AAPD, is the new Associate Director on Disabilities of the White House Domestic Policy Council. He will serve as the White House point person on disability-related policy coordination: which means he

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will brief the President on disability issues. AAPD joins other disability organizations in congratulating Mr. Cantos on this recent appointment. Most recently, Mr. Cantos served as Special Assistant to the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, and then as Special Counsel at the US Department of Justice.

Special Education Teacher's Loan Forgiveness Incentive

President Bush recently signed legislation that will hopefully make a big difference in addressing our nation's critical shortage of qualified special education teachers. On February 8, 2006, a new provision was enacted ensuring the availability of loan forgiveness of up to \$17,500 for individuals who are now or who are seeking to become highly qualified special education teachers.

Acknowledging our nation's many accomplishments on behalf of students with special educational needs, we must also recognize we have not met our obligation to ensure that each student is taught by a teacher who is fully qualified. The shortage of special education teachers has surpassed the shortage of math and science teachers. Principals and school administrators struggle every year to fill classrooms with qualified special education teachers. Students and families routinely experience the impact of an unqualified teacher in terms of undeveloped skills and lost opportunities.

Only if prospective special education teachers know about this loan forgiveness incentive will it have the desired effect of attracting college students to major in special education and attracting new special education teachers to work in the schools with children who have the greatest needs.

For more information, see the letter from the Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, at www.ed.gov/policy/highered/guid/secletter/060301a.html

Home and Community-Based Services as a State Plan Option

There will be a "Focused Open Door Forum" (conference call only) on Monday, May 8, 2006 from 1:30-3:00 pm focusing on Section 6086 of the federal Deficit Reduction Act (DRA).

Section 6086, Expanded Access to Home and Community-Based Services for the Elderly and Disabled, offers states the opportunity to provide a comprehensive program of home and community-based services under the Medicaid State Plan as an optional service. Prior to the enactment of the DRA, such a program of home and community-based services could only be provided through section 1915 (c) waivers. The DRA allows states to provide the statutory HCBS services to qualified individuals without applying for a waiver. Unlike the waiver, there is no cost-neutrality test, and the HCBS program may serve persons who do not require an institutional level of care. The Open Door Forum will provide an overview of the provisions of Section 6086 and invite participants to share their thoughts on the implementation of the optional benefit.

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To participate in the Open Door Forum call 1-800-837-1935 and give Reference Conference ID: 8722262. TTY Communications Relay Services are available for the Hearing Impaired. For TTY services dial 7-1-1 or 1-800-855-2880 and for Internet Relay services click here www.consumer.att.com/relay/which/index.html. A Relay Communications Assistant will help.

UHCAN Health-e-Action: Survey Deadline Extended to May 15

Justice for All (JFA) reports that for the first time the federal government is asking citizens what we think is important for health care to be available to everyone in the U.S. Congress established the Citizens' Health Care Working Group (www.citizenshealthcare.gov) to direct this dialogue, which is now underway through community meetings, virtual town hall meetings, and internet polls, blogs and forums. Later this year the Working Group will issue recommendations that will be the subject of congressional hearings in 2007.

Clearly, U.S. healthcare is failing too many of us, but there still are not enough of us saying that to the Working Group, according to JFA. The few thousand online responses to date simply do not display the depth of our concern about those who are living sicker and dying younger because they do not have access to affordable healthcare. There is a glaring absence of responses from ethnic minority populations - those most negatively impacted by the injustices in U.S. healthcare. We cannot let this opportunity pass without making our voices heard. We cannot give Congress the impression that we don't care! The deadline was extended but time is running out! Online and print responses must be received by May 15. Please act today!

Please relay this Bulletin to your membership including those who do not have e-mail access. Suggest your membership without e-mail go to the library and go onto www.kleinmanconsulting.com to view or print a copy. If you would like to see previous issues of the Bulletin, read about the background of the Collaborative or if you would like to be added to the mailing list, you may also go to www.kleinmanconsulting.com.

If you want something to appear in the next edition please send it to us – jjk1009@hotmail.com or skoslosk03@comcast.net — or Jayne Kleinman, 55 Corrigan Ave., Meriden, CT 06451, 203-631-4800.

ADDRESS CORRECTIONS AND REMOVALS: If you are not interested in receiving this Bulletin, or you would like this information sent to a different e-mail address, please e-mail Jayne Kleinman at jjk1009@hotmail.com with your request.

How can you find your federal Representatives and Senators? Go to www.congress.org and find the box under the heading “Write Elected Officials.” Type in your Zip code and press the “Enter” key. Then, when the names of your elected officials come on the screen, click on the word “Info” under the name of the

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elected official you want to contact. The telephone number will be listed on the page that comes up next. You may also call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at 1-888-818-6641. The best way to contact your Member of Congress is via phone (or ideally in person). The best time to call either in CT or in Washington, D.C. is early in the morning.

For State Legislators, Committee Members and local government officials go to www.ct.gov and click on Government. If you need more assistance please contact jjk1009@hotmail.com or call 211 – Infoline.

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