

# Collaborator



**NORTH DAKOTA CENTER FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Volume XV, Issue 3

July 2009

## NDCPD has MTARS Site Visit

By Brent A. Askvig, Ph.D., Executive Director

The Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services funds three programs in each state, Protection and Advocacy Projects (P & A), State Councils on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD), and University Centers of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD). ADD is required to do periodic evaluations of these programs to assure compliance with federal regulations and ensure progress in program activity. This evaluation is called the Monitoring and Technical Assistance Review System or MTARS.

The MTARS process requires that separate three-member teams visit each ADD program in a state. In May 2009, MTARS teams visited the North Dakota (ND) P & A, the ND SCDD, and the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD). The MTARS team for NDCPD included Ms. Kathy Willis, Project Officer from ADD, Dr. Anthony Antosh, Rhode Island UCEDD director, and Ms. Jamie Wolfe, self advocate and staff member of the Delaware UCEDD. During their week-long visit, they met with NDCPD staff, the Consumer Advisory Council (CAC), university administration, and NDCPD's partners and constituents.



Dr. Fuller, MSU President, greets MTARS Team.

The NDCPD MTARS visit focused primarily on the technical assistance area. An earlier paper review of NDCPD found us in compliance with all federal regulations related to UCEDDs. As well, our policies and practices were in excellent shape. Thus the MTARS team members met with us (continued on page 2)

## CAC Members Visit NDCPD

By Dawn Olson, NDCPD Consumer Liaison

The North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities' (NDCPD) Consumer Advisory Council or CAC is a committee that consists of 13 members. The majority of the members of this council have a disability or have a family member with a disability which is required by law. The CAC meetings are held four times a year and most meetings are held on Saturdays.

The purpose of the CAC is threefold. First, this committee assists the Executive Director in making and reviewing NDCPD's annual and five year plan. Second, NDCPD needs input from the very people they hope will benefit from the teaching, research and services they provide. Finally, The Developmental Disabilities Act or the DD Act requires that each Center has a CAC.

NDCPD staff continually strives to inform the CAC of the activities at NDCPD to help members meet the goals stated above. However, we feel we can do better. To that end, NDCPD and (continued on page 3)

### Inside this issue:

New Resource: AskNDCPD	2
New Resource: Family Portal	3
Transportation Institute	4
Upcoming Trainings	5
Sertoma supports NDCPD scholarship	5
Medicare Fraud Alert	6
ADA: An Overview	7

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Available in alternative format upon request.

## The Collaborator

The Collaborator is the quarterly newsletter for the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD). NDCPD is a University of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities in Education, Research, and Services at Minot State University. It is part of a network of similar programs at universities throughout the United States.

### Our mission...

To provide leadership and innovation that advances the state-of-the-art and empower people with disabilities to challenge expectations, achieve personal goals and be included in all aspects of community life.

### Vision Statement...

We believe that people with disabilities have the same rights as all citizens. We believe that people with disabilities who receive publicly funded services have the right to expect that those services appropriately promote their independence, productivity, integration and inclusion. Furthermore, we believe that the public expects that these services will be provided in an effective manner.

Preparation of this newsletter was supported by a grant (#90DD0604-02) to the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities. The opinions expressed here are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or opinions of the Administration on Developmental Disabilities.





MTARS Public Forum

### NDCPD has MTARS Site Visit (Continued from page 1)

to review three technical assistance areas for NDCPD: improvements to our interdisciplinary pre-service training area; increasing involvement with our staff, projects and CAC members; and improving methods for workflow and flexibility with the Minot State University grants management areas.

The preliminary results presented at the MTARS exit meeting suggested that NDCPD was making good progress on the three technical assistance areas. Strategies were shared with NDCPD staff for continuing improvement. A final written report is expected from ADD in the coming months, and the results and the report will be available to the public once received at NDCPD.

We are very thankful for the participation of all NDCPD staff, the CAC members, our community partners, and constituents. The MTARS team commented frequently on the high quality of our staff, and our excellent relations with the university, the community partners, and the other ADD state programs (P & A and SCDD). We look forward to the final report and recommendations as we continue to move forward at NDCPD.



### NDCPD Introduces AskNDCPD

By Cynthia Salazar, NDCPD Dissemination Core Coordinator

In March 2009, the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities unveiled AskNDCPD. It is a new avenue for requesting information on disability-related issues.

AskNDCPD is an online resource that allows people to submit questions or request information regarding disability issues via an online form. To access AskNDCPD, individuals may visit [www.ndcpd.org](http://www.ndcpd.org), click on AskNDCPD and complete the online form. Clicking on the submit button will process the individual's question via e-mail to Dawn Olson, NDCPD's consumer liaison. She will receive the inquiries and respond within 36 hours.

**"This new online resource will make it easier for people to access NDCPD's expertise."**

AskNDCPD is not intended to replace any of the existing information systems in the state. Rather, it is intended to be an additional resource. NDCPD, as part of its mission, has always provided information and referrals on disability issues to North Dakota residents as a University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities. This new online resource will make it easier for people to access NDCPD's expertise in education, research and services, as well as its partnerships with many organizations across the nation and state.

"At the center, we are really excited about AskNDCPD and hope it will be a great asset to the citizens of this state," Olson said.

For more information about AskNDCPD, contact Dawn Olson at 1-800-233-1737 or (701) 858-4472 or visit [www.ndcpd.org](http://www.ndcpd.org).



The North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities is a member of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD). AUCD is a national network of interdisciplinary centers advancing policy and practice through research, education and services for and with individuals with developmental and other disabilities, their families, and communities.



### The Americans with Disabilities Act: An Overview

The 19<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act is fast approaching. It is good to remind ourselves of what this act included and of a few of the ways, it positively affects the lives of people with disabilities. On July 26, 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)—the world's first comprehensive civil rights law for people with disabilities. In addition, the ADA was amended and reauthorized in 2008, with changes that became effective on January 1, 2009. The Act prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment (Title I), public services (Title II), public accommodations (Title III) and telecommunications (Title IV). The ADA has been described as the Emancipation Proclamation for the disability community.

#### What is the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990?

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is a civil rights law that protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination in employment, education, and other public settings. The ADA is an unfunded mandate (i.e., there is no funding provided for services or accommodations).

#### Who is eligible under the ADA?

The ADA definition of disability is the same as the Rehabilitation Act definition. Under the ADA, an individual is considered to have a disability if s/he:

- has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities,
- has a record of such an impairment, or
- is regarded as having such an impairment.

#### ADA and the workplace

The ADA prohibits discrimination against "qualified individuals with disabilities" who can perform the "essential functions" of a job with or without "reasonable accommodations." The ADA covers all employment practices, including recruitment, application, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation and training. A "qualified individual with a disability" is an applicant or employee who meets all required skills, experiences, education and other requirements of a position.

An employer may not ask about a disability, with one exception. If an employer has affirmative action requirements as part of a federal contract, an applicant may be asked to "self-identify." However, the employer must keep all information regarding disabilities in a confidential file separate from general personnel files.

If an employee requires accommodations in order to perform a job, he or she must disclose information about their disability and the need for specific accommodations to the employer. Even after disclosure, an employer is not required to make an accommodation that would prove an "undue hardship."

The safeguards regarding discrimination against individuals with disabilities are under the same procedures applicable to race, color, sex, national origin and religious discrimination under the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1991. Complaints against employers who violate the ADA should be filed with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or the designated state human rights agencies.

#### ADA and school

The ADA mandates that reasonable accommodations be provided to eligible students. In other words, a school is required to provide a student with a disability with those accommodations that help him or her learn most effectively. The requirements of the ADA for schools, is similar to the expectations set in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Unlike Section 504 and IDEA, ADA does not make schools responsible for the free and appropriate education of all children. However, the protections that are guaranteed by the ADA apply to public and private schools equally. These protections do not extend to organizations controlled by religious groups.

For additional information about the ADA please go to: <http://www.eeoc.gov/ada/adatext.html>

Adapted from:

National Center for Learning Disabilities also found at <http://www.apse.org/policy/ada.cfm>



Photo by Marshall Hill



Photo by Marshall Hill



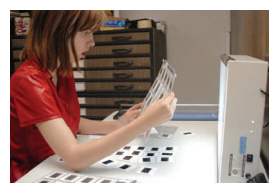


Photo by Marshall Hill  
NDCPD volunteer sorting negatives.

## Volunteer Opportunities at NDCPD

Whether it is important to you to contribute to the community, advance a worthy cause or to develop as a person, volunteering offers many benefits in appreciation for the gift of your time and expertise. The North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities is seeking volunteers of all ages. Potential activities include: clerical assistance, graphic layout and design, or research assistance. Contact Amy Lopez at 701-858-4349 to discuss your personal volunteer interests.

## Medicare Fraud Affects Everyone

### North Dakota Senior Medicare Patrol (ND SMP)

There was a topic mentioned in President Obama's speech to the nation and Congress on February 24 that is exactly what the ND SMP program is working on! "In this budget . . . We will root out the waste, fraud and abuse in our Medicare program that doesn't make our seniors any healthier . . ." Those three words – waste, fraud and abuse – are part of SMP's motto: working to protect the Medicare trust funds and to protect Medicare beneficiaries from the negative effects of money lost due to fraud and errors in Medicare payments.

This is not a Democratic or Republican issue. Medicare provides health insurance to 95 percent of America's population aged 65 and over. Medicare spent over \$430 billion in 2007 and health care spending is projected to grow by 5 to 6 percent each year for several years into the future. If you are a Medicare beneficiary, or a caregiver to someone who is, or if you are now working or worked in the past and paid Social Security/Medicare taxes, you are affected by Medicare fraud and payment errors! Doesn't one of those descriptions fit almost every person?

This is not a problem just for Congress and the president to solve. You can take a bite out of crime! You can find Medicare payment mistakes or report suspicious charges. By talking to your medical provider, you can ask questions and report problems regarding payments made on your behalf by Medicare. What if you have difficulty doing that? You are not alone. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (which investigates Medicare and Medicaid fraud) plans to study how well people understand the Medicare Summary Notice (MSN); even the government itself recognizes how hard it is to interpret the information on the notices!

It's no news that life is challenging but that doesn't have to stop us. You can be Medicare "detectives." This means you shouldn't throw away those Medicare Summary Notices when they arrive in the mail every 3 months. Take a look to see if the dates of medical visits match up with your calendar, look at the description of the medical service to see if that's what you had done, look at the amount to see if it's about what you expected. If it's difficult to understand your notice, ask a family member or your caregiver to look at it with you, or take it with you the next time you go to the medical office that submitted the charges on that Medicare Summary Notice. If you believe Medicare has made an incorrect payment or you think Medicare paid for charges that weren't yours but you can't get it resolved with the medical provider, call 1-800-233-1737 for assistance. You can help save Medicare funds and reduce the possibility that benefits will be reduced in the future or that premiums skyrocket. There are 43 million Americans on Medicare; if every person found just one \$10 mistake, we could save \$430 million! That wouldn't be "government" saving some money, that would be YOU saving Medicare!

*This article was reprinted with permission from the National Consumer Protection Technical Resource Center*

## Free Hearing Screenings Held by ND EHDI

Staff from the North Dakota Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (ND EHDI) program hosted a free hearing screening clinic for area infants in need of continued care. Project partners performing the screenings were Thomas Froelich (MSU Communications Disorders department) and Holly Pedersen (MSU Special Education department). A special thanks goes out to Tom and Holly for offering their services!



Thomas Froelich screens infant during hearing clinic.

**"If you are now working or worked in the past and paid Social Security/Medicare taxes, you are affected by Medicare fraud and payment errors!"**

## Family Support Organizations Launch Portal

By Cathy Haarstad, Project Director, ND FamNet

Rural North Dakota (ND) families that have children with special health care needs or disabilities and providers are invited to access a new informational portal created by members of ND FamNet. The portal may be found at <http://www.ndcpd.org/ndfamnet>.

ND FamNet is a rural health network with targeted outcomes in collaboration, training, system navigation, leadership and sustainability to strengthen its capacity to help rural families.

Participating agencies include:

- Designer Genes of ND
- Family Voices of ND
- Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
- ND Childcare Resource & Referral
- ND Center for Persons with Disabilities
- ND Center for Rural Health
- ND Children's Special Health Services
- ND Protection & Advocacy Project
- PATH ND Inc.
- Pathfinder Parent Center
- North Dakota Disability Advocacy Consortium

The portal makes it easier for families and providers to find participating family support agencies and to access new resources created by members of the Network. The portal includes information on how to navigate the system, a speaker's bureau, success stories that showcase effective models that really work for families, a new training library and much more.

The network's mission is: *to do together what may not be done alone to enhance the well-being of ND families of children, youth and adults with special health care needs or disabilities.*

Please use the portal to find information you need and learn more about these agencies that offer support to your family or the people you support.

## CAC Members Visit NDCPD (continued from page 1)

the CAC are trying something new. Each month at least one member of the CAC visits NDCPD for one working day. This not only gives members an opportunity to see the workings of NDCPD first hand, but it also provides CAC members an opportunity to visit with project staff. In preparation for the visit, the visiting CAC member is asked to select one or more projects he or she would like to know more about. During the "shadow" visit the CAC member meet with the desired project staff to gain a better understanding of the project.

Thus far two members of the CAC have visited NDCPD. Connie Springsted has been with the council since 2005 and Mary Stip has been with the council since 2003.

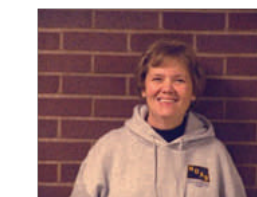
The project that interested Connie was the ND Data Linkage Project. As a follow up project to NDCPD's ND EHDI Hear Now project, ND Data Linkage continues to build the infrastructure to track babies that did not pass their initial hearing test and have left the hospital.

Mary Stip was interested in visiting with Jolynn Webster. Jolynn is a member of NDCPD staff and she is the instructor for the Disability Studies class offered at Minot State University (MSU). The Disability Studies class is intended to increase students understanding of disabilities in order to enhance their knowledge and skills as professionals and as citizens.

Connie and Mary shared a few comments with NDCPD Staff regarding their visit. Connie said she was not aware that NDCPD served all disabilities and she also made several suggestions regarding the accessibility of MSU campus especially for those individuals affected by low vision. Mary indicated she enjoyed seeing what NDCPD staff do every day. Both were surprised at the number of staff involved at NDCPD and what staff strive to do each day for people with disabilities across the state. Both members indicated that the visit was beneficial and would highly recommend it to all CAC members.



Connie Springsted, CAC Member



Mary Stip, CAC Scholarship Committee Member



## Easter Seals Chooses Four for Transportation Institute

By Lisa Johnson, Strategic Planning Coordinator, Medicaid Infrastructure Grant

Easter Seals Project ACTION selected a four-member team from Minot, North Dakota, to participate in the 2009 Mobility Planning Services Accessible Community Transportation Institute, which will be from July 12 to 15, in Washington, D.C. Minot team members include Dawn Olson and Lisa Johnson from the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities, Darrell Francis, executive director of Souris Basin Transportation, and Marlin Newman, transportation supervisor for the city of Minot.

"I'm excited," Olson said. "I use public transportation on a daily basis and continue to seek ways to improve access in my community."

Funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, Easter Seals Project ACTION promotes cooperation between the transportation industry and the disability community to increase mobility for people with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act and beyond. Easter Seals Project ACTION offers numerous resources, as well as training and technical assistance, in an effort to make the ADA work for everyone.

In preparation for the competitive application process, the team reviewed prior regional transportation studies, assessed current needs and discussed future trends in public transportation to identify priorities for discussion at the institute. The team proposed organizing a Transportation Awareness Day, not only in Minot but throughout the Souris Basin Transportation region.

"We hope to raise public awareness about the availability, flexibility and affordability of public transit," Francis said.

For additional information about Easter Seals Project ACTION or the 2009 Mobility Planning Services Accessible Community Transportation Institute, contact Lisa Johnson at (701)858-3494 or [lisa.johnson@minotstateu.edu](mailto:lisa.johnson@minotstateu.edu) or Dawn Olson at (701)858-4472 or [dawn.d.olson@minotstateu.edu](mailto:dawn.d.olson@minotstateu.edu).

## 2008-2009 Graduates

Congratulations to the following NDCPD staff who completed degree programs during the 2008-2009 academic year:

- Chad DeCoteau**, ND FamNet , Masters- Business Administration, Gonzaga University
- Jerusha Olthoff**, ND EHDl Project, Masters- Management, Minot State University

## Ram Good Job Award

The Ram Good Job Award is given to a staff member each month to recognize them for doing such a "ram good job". This award is given by the preceding month's award recipient, and honors the staff member's work to enhance the lives of people with disabilities and further the center mission. Winners over the past months include:

- February 2009** Cheryl Rystedt, Administrative Secretary
- March 2009** Donna Weishaar, Administrative Secretary
- April 2009** Darren Seifert, System Administrator
- May 2009** Sue Routledge, Project Assistant
- June 2009** Wendy Thomas, Community Services Core Coordinator



Ram Good Job Award

### August 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24/31	25	26	27	28	29

### September 2009

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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

### October 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## Upcoming Conferences & Training Events

**Dates:** September 17, 2009 **Site:** Doublewood Inn, Bismarck, ND  
**Times:** Morning Session (9 a.m. to 12 p.m.) **Afternoon Session** (1 p.m. to 4 p.m.)

### Morning Session: *Changing Lives with Cognitive Support Technology.*

Dan Davies, founder and president of AbleLink Technologies will share examples of "Smart Technologies" to support independent living and employment outcomes for individuals with DD.

### Afternoon Session: *Emerging Technologies in Community Residential Services for People with DD.*

This event features two leading U.S. service providers in the specialized field of providing community residential technology support for people with DD (Rest Assured, Inc. and Night Owl Systems, Inc.). The session will be moderated by Dr. David Braddock, executive director of the Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities at the University of Colorado.

**Cosponsored by:** North Dakota Association of Community Facilities  
 North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities

**For more information contact:** Barbara Murry at [barbndacf@btinet.net](mailto:barbndacf@btinet.net)

## Minot Sertoma Club supports NDCPD Scholarship

The NDCPD received a donation of \$3,900 from the Minot Sertoma Club. The funds will be used to support NDCPD's Access Scholarship program. This scholarship is provided to qualified Minot State University students who have disabilities. NDCPD's Consumer Advisory Council reviews the applications and recommends recipients to the Executive Director. Selected students are notified during the summer for the following Fall award. NDCPD appreciates the Minot Sertoma Club's ongoing sponsorship of this scholarship award.

For more information on the NDCPD Access Scholarship, contact Susie Mack, NDCPD Office Manager, at 1-800-233-1737 or 701-858-3009. Information on this scholarship can also be found at [www.ndcpd.org/disinfo/access.shtml](http://www.ndcpd.org/disinfo/access.shtml).

## We Care Winners

- March, Donna Weishaar (Minot)**
- April, Kathy Lee (Minot)**
- May, Jana Kremer (Minot)**



Prizes included certificates to the Bagel Stop and Pita Pit. Thanks to all who contribute to NDCPD fundraising efforts by bringing in **MarketPlace receipts**. For every receipt turned in with the "WE CARE" stamp, MarketPlace Foods will give 1% of the total back to NDCPD for the NDCPD Endowment/Access Scholarship fund. Continue to bring your receipts to NDCPD and be sure to include your name and phone number on the back of the receipt to be eligible for the drawing.

For additional copies of the Collaborator contact Cynthia Salazar at 1-800-233-1737.

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COLLABORATOR  
 July 09 Quarterly  
 NDCPD @ MSU  
 500 University Ave. W.,  
 Minot, ND  
 1-99