



**NORTH DAKOTA CENTER FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

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October 2010

## Director's Message:

### The Health of Health Care for Citizens with Disabilities

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

If we are able to set aside our political and philosophical ideologies for a moment, I believe we could all agree that the recent Affordable Health Care Act has done at least one thing right. It has forced us to take a close and careful look at the health of our healthcare system. This has been particularly helpful in the examination of healthcare disparities and services for a variety of population groups, particularly persons with disabilities. For a long time, people with disabilities and their families have talked about problems of access, service quality, limitations, and healthcare insurance. No one congressional act can address or fix all of these issues, but at least we have a beginning.

By most measures, the health status of people with disabilities has lagged behind the health of people without disabilities. The health status disparities in North Dakota include factors such as greater levels of tobacco use, higher rates of diabetes and obesity, and increased mental health episodes for citizens with disabilities. Beyond some of the basic health status issues, there are also disparities in the healthcare access for people with disabilities. ND citizens with disabilities are less likely to have health insurance and less likely to have a regular physician. They were also more likely to miss appointments or access needed healthcare services due to cost. (Additional information on the health conditions of North Dakota's with disabilities is available from the North Dakota Disability Health Project at [www.ndcpd.org/health](http://www.ndcpd.org/health).) With these health status and healthcare access issues, the short and long term health outcomes for people with disabilities are discouraging.

While the discussion of the national healthcare system and services has not been predominately about people with developmental disabilities, it has given those of us in the field an opportunity to talk about these important disparities and issues. When we examine the health of healthcare for our local constituents, we realize that the system is not in the best of shape. We know that some groups are already making efforts to propose and pass legislation regarding healthcare and related services for varying populations in our state. Continued dialog and information sharing will be important in addressing these healthcare concerns for persons with disabilities in our state.

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### Recently Funded NDCPD Projects

Principle Investigator	Title	Total Year	Project Description
Mercer, Mary	Consumer Participation in the NDACP Conference FY 11	\$12,453	This project assists consumers to attend the upcoming NDACP Conference.
Peterson, Steve	Mythbusters FY 11	\$26,259	This project is a coordinated effort between the three ADD programs in ND working at changing the perceptions of North Dakotans about developmental disabilities.
Ressler, Kim	Medical Home Care Coordination FY 11	\$34,116	This project is in the process of developing curriculum to educate staff services as care coordinators in the North Dakota Integrated Services (NDIS) pilot medical home sites who serve children and youth with special health care needs.
Lee, Kathy	Right Track FY 11	\$55,080	This project identifies infant and toddlers that may be at risk for DD, provides developmental screenings, refers to other services as appropriate and provides developmental information to families.
Askvig, Brent	NDCPD Core Grant, 2010-11, IV	\$722,667	The NDCPD UCEDD at MSU is a five-year program and addresses the following areas related to people with developmental disabilities: 1) Education & Early Intervention; 2) Leadership; 3) Employment; 4) Housing; 5) Transportation; and 6) Cultural Diversity. This funding is NDCPD's core funding. A five year strategic plan is utilized in response to the needs identified by the ND disability community as prioritized by NDCPD's consumer advisory council.
Askvig, Brent	GPAST III (Great Plains Autism Spectrum Disorders Treatments Program, III)	\$792,000	In it's 3rd year of funding, GPAST will build on the expertise established thru NDCPD's autism initiative. Staff will provide training, community-based services, technical assistance, policy development, and the coordination of related activities with a range of program partners, primarily the Anne Carlsen Center in Jamestown, ND.
Alexander, Tom	Client Assistance Program (CAP)	\$25,000	This project, collaborating with KAT Communications and Okiciya Consulting, is researching public comment on the potential re-designation of the ND Client Assistance Program (CAP) using a mixed methods approach of public forums and questionnaires.
Lee, Kathy	Minot Infant Development Program (MIDP) FY 11	\$470,960	This project with the ND Dept of HS supports activities which identify infants (birth-3) who are developmentally delayed, high risk, or at risk. In addition, this contract provides for in-home programming and infant stimulation activities for eligible children.
Webster, Jolynn	SPDG Evaluator Project (FY 11)	\$26,469	This project is an independent program evaluation of ND DPI State Education Personnel Development Grant.
Scharpe, Neil	ND Data Linkage, FY 11	\$134,779	As a follow up project to NDCPD's past funded 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. Staff members will work with hospitals, special software (OZ eSP) and other organizations to track these babies and locate the parents to assure continued follow-up. In addition the project will link early hearing detection data with other data sets such as immunizations, metabolic screening and Vital Records.
Mercer, Mary	Community Staff Training Program (CSTP FY 11)	\$83,383	This project provides training services for staff members employed by agencies/facilities serving individuals with MR/DD. MSU has been providing this service since 1983.



## Upcoming Training

**Workshop: The Art of Creating Opportunity for People with Employment Barriers**

**Presenter:** Denise Bissonnette

**Sites & Dates:**

December 7, Kelly Inn, Bismarck

December 8, Comfort Inn, Minot

December 10, Development Homes, Grand Forks

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**Registration Fee:** \$40.00 (\$35 APSE Members)

**Workshop: Supporting a Person with Difficult Behaviors/Supporting the People Who Care**

**Presenter:** David Pitonyak

**Sites & Dates:**

January 24, Comfort Inn, Bismarck

January 25, Grand International, Minot

January 26, Development Homes, Grand Forks

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**Registration Fee:** \$75.00

**Webinar: High-Impact Health Information**

**By:** Carl Tyer, MD

**Date:** December 15, 2010

**Time:** 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

**Fee:** \$30.00 per site

**Webinar: Self-Determination for All**

**By:** Kathie Show

**Date:** January 12, 2011

**Time:** 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

**Fee:** \$30.00 per site



## GPIC Clinic

The Great Plains Interdisciplinary Autism Diagnostic Clinic (GPIC) is funded through North Dakota Department of Health Children's Special Health Services Division. We will be holding our next GPIC clinic in Minot on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010. We welcome professional, educational or parent referrals to be a part of this clinic. GPIC clinics use an interdisciplinary, arena style approach for the assessment. We are able to see two children per clinic. The grant supports four clinics per year, two will be held at the Anne Carlsen Center in Jamestown and two at NDCPD in Minot. For more information please contact Connie Irey at 858-3286 or 1-800-233-1737 ext.3286.

## 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:

**May 2010**      **Kathy Lee, Infant Development Program Director**  
**June 2010**      **Erin Holt, Early Interventionist**  
**August 2010**   **Koletta Ficek, Infant Development**



Ram Good Job Award



## Fraud Relating to the Affordable Care Act

**By: Linda Madsen, SMP Project Director**

The Affordable Care Act provides opportunities and benefits for America's seniors. Unfortunately, new opportunities for beneficiaries also bring new opportunities for scam artists to try and defraud seniors. Beneficiaries are receiving calls and letters falsely claiming they need new Medicare cards, asking Medicare enrollees for confirmation of their Medicare numbers and even going as far as telling seniors that the new legislation requires them to change their health care benefits. All of this is false and seniors must be vigilant in guarding against such scams.

Below are some recent examples of scam reports to Health and Human Services through the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Program:

**SCAM:** In Utah, there were reports of phone calls to seniors regarding "new Medicare cards," and seniors were told they need the new card as a result of the new Affordable Care Act.

**FACT:** Seniors are NOT required to do anything to receive any of the benefits of the Affordable Care Act. Seniors won't be issued new Medicare cards and they do not need to register with anyone to receive the \$250 rebate check. The check will be mailed directly to each senior at their home after they hit the prescription drug coverage gap known as the "donut hole."

**SCAM:** In Wyoming, there was a report of a fraudulent caller claiming to be from Medicare and wanted to confirm a senior's Medicare number.

**FACT:** No senior should ever give their Medicare number to any caller. All seniors should treat their Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security numbers like a credit card number, and should never give these out to a stranger. If someone claims to be with Medicare and asks for your information, ask for their name and report it to 1-800-MEDICARE.



**SCAM:** In Kansas, a creative insurance salesman mailed a release form to his policy holders that authorized him to make medical decisions for them.

**FACT:** Seniors should never sign a form without understanding its contents or knowing its source. Always read and keep a copy of any document or agreement that asks for a signature. Contact a trusted source or the ND SHIC Program (1-888-575-6611) to help verify the validity of these offers.

**SCAM:** In Michigan, there were reports of seniors being approached by insurance agents claiming that the recent legislation requires seniors to make changes to their health care benefits, including Part D plans.

**FACT:** The Affordable Care Act gives seniors more control over their health care choices. No senior is required to make any changes to their Medicare plan. Seniors can make changes to their plans during the Open Enrollment period which takes place every year from November to the end of December. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services offers seniors various tools through its [www.Medicare.gov](http://www.Medicare.gov) website to compare health plans and drug costs under those and other plans. Seniors should be leery of anyone approaching them and encouraging them to switch plans.

### Continued from page 4

Beneficiaries who have revealed their Social Security numbers, Medicare numbers and other personal data in recent scams are urged to act now and take the following steps:

1. Contact ND's SMP program at 1-800-233-1737.
2. Contact your doctor's office and ask them not to approve requests for prescriptions for durable medical equipment
3. File complaints with Attorney General's office and FTC.

In order to be safe and protect your identity, do not give out your personal information. You can visit <http://www.stopmedicarefraud.gov> to learn more about efforts to fight scams like these.

### New Staff

Hilory Liccini is a curriculum coordinator for the Great Plains Autism Spectrum Disorders Treatment Program at NDCPD. She recently moved to Minot from Florida with her husband, Joe, who is in the United States Air Force. In Florida, she worked for the Santa Rosa County School District in Milton. Liccini completed a bachelor's degree in communication science disorders from the Nazareth College of Rochester, N.Y., and a master's degree in elementary education from the University of West Florida, Pensacola. She enjoys cooking and playing with her Chesapeake Bay Retriever.

**Hilory Liccini**



Sarah Carr is a research professional for the Great Plains Autism Spectrum Disorders Treatment Program at NDCPD. Sarah recently moved to Minot from Kentucky where she was employed at the University of Kentucky, Sanders-Brown Center on Aging, where she worked on Alzheimer's Disease research. She has a bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in child development and family science from NDSU and a master's degree in clinical psychology with a focus on childhood disorders, including developmental disabilities and autism from Eastern Kentucky University. She is married with three children and enjoys writing and painting. She is also interested in art history, Russian language and culture, and running.

**Sarah Carr**



Julie Wetzel is a follow-up coordinator for the ND Early Hearing Detection and Intervention project at NDCPD. Julie previously worked with the Title I Reading and Math programs at Jim Hill Middle School in Minot. She graduated from Valley City State University with a bachelor's degree in elementary education and early childhood education. Julie and her husband, Kelly, have two sons, Taylor, 12, and Jayden, 10. Their family is actively involved in basketball, football, and baseball and also enjoy vacationing and camping together. She enjoys sunny weather, reading, shopping, movies, and working out.

**Julie Wetzel**



For additional copies of the Collaborator contact Linda Madsen at 1-800-233-1737.

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## Talent has no boundaries: Workforce diversity includes people with disabilities!

**By: Amy Armstrong, ND APSE Chapter President**

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month ([NDEAM](#)). This year's theme carries the message, [Talent has no boundaries: Workforce diversity includes people with disabilities](#). The NDEAM is a way to bring awareness to the general public about employment for people with disabilities. We celebrate this month to increase understanding of laws created to encourage and protect employment of people with disabilities, to appreciate the contributions people with disabilities make to the diverse workforce, and to help improve the attitudes and eliminate barriers to employment of people with disabilities. These are important messages for everyone including employers, co-workers, teachers, families, and children.

The first national effort to bring awareness to these issues began in 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week of October as the "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." Then in 1962, the word "physical" was removed to include all types of disabilities in order to bring awareness to the fact that all people with disabilities should be included in employment opportunities. In 1988, congress expanded this week to include the entire month of October and called it "National Disability Employment Awareness Month."

Some attitudes have changed regarding inclusion of people with disabilities in the work place. However, work still needs to be done. In 2008, the employment rate of working-age people (ages 21-64) *without* disabilities in North Dakota (ND) was 87% compared to 60% for those *with* disabilities - a difference of nearly 30 percentage points. People with disabilities are a great resource for employers facing NDs growing aging workforce in ND's increasing job market. Only half of ND's 45,097 individuals with disabilities in ND are employed and an additional 8.3% are actively looking for work. Median earnings of people with disabilities, who worked full-time/full-year, trailed earnings of individuals without disabilities by approximately \$5,600. In 2007, the poverty rate of working age people with disabilities in ND was 21.9 percent as compared to the poverty rate of 8.6 percent of working age people in ND without disabilities.

For people with disabilities as well as for people without disabilities, employment is not only about a paycheck and working towards financial independence, but also about inclusion and participation in community life. As this year's NDEAM theme reminds us, [Talent has no boundaries: Workforce diversity includes people with disabilities](#). When a person has a job; the benefits not only include wages but also the opportunity to participate and contribute to the community.

In order for employment to be successful for people with disabilities, potential barriers need to be addressed including access to healthcare and home and community based services; affordable, accessible housing; transportation; employment training and supports, and positive employer attitudes. Currently there are national, state, and local initiatives taking place to help remove some of the barriers and encourage employment opportunities for people with disabilities. These efforts support the meaning behind NDEAM 2010 theme. Some resources in place to support employment include: Social Security Work Incentives, Work Incentives Planning and Assistance programs, the Ticket to Work Program, the *Think Beyond the Label* campaign, and the ND Workers with Disabilities Medicaid Coverage.

## Continued from page 6

Other groups that focus on employment for people with disabilities include: APSE - The Network on Employment, ND Medicaid Infrastructure Grant located at NDCPD, ND Vocational Rehabilitation, ND Community Rehabilitation Providers, Centers for Independent Living, and local Mayors' Committees on Employment of People with Disabilities.

Help bring awareness to employment for people with disabilities by organizing or participating in state or local NDEAM activities. To get involved, visit the Office of Disability Employment Policy website at <http://www.dol.gov/odep/> for NDEAM ideas and download or order free 2010 NDEAM posters to display. Help make the month of October stand out to employers, co-workers, teachers, families, and children as National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

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U.S. Department of Labor-Office of Disability Employment Policy, Washington D.C., [www.dol.gov/odep](http://www.dol.gov/odep), August 23, 2006.

Erickson, W., Lee, C., & von Schrader, S. (2010). *Disability Statistics from the 2008 American Community Survey*. Ithaca, N: Cornell University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Demographics and Statistics.

Erickson, W., & Lee, C. (2008). *2007 Disability Status Report: North Dakota*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Demographics and Statistics.

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## NDCPD Recognized by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities



In 2009 NDCPD underwent a review of their practices and procedures by federal officials. As a result of this visit, NDCPD has been recognized for its "Promising Practice" by the administration on Developmental Disabilities.

A practice must be noticeably superior to what is regarded as common practice among others to qualify as innovative or best. The support provided to each member of the Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) in understanding and fulfilling their roles was identified as promising. NDCPD engages in several activities to support its CAC members, including conducting a well-defined orientation; providing a CAC member handbook; training CAC members on the purpose, logistics, and function of boards, committees, and advisory councils; and training CAC members on identifying and obtaining the necessary support to participate in a board, committee, or advisory council. Two additional activities engaged in by NDCPD to support their CAC members include job shadowing, and opportunities to provide feedback on NDCPD funding opportunities.

NDCPD is honored to receive this recognition from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities.

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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.





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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.

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