



MCDD QUICK NEWS

**Here's What's Happening in Council Offices
for the month of January 2005**

2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION STARTS

The 2005 Session of the Montana State Legislature is in full swing at the Capitol. The process is moving very fast this Session with most Hearings being held one or two weeks prior to their usual scheduled time. If you have any questions regarding the Legislature, wish to contact a legislator or leave a message for a legislator call 444-4800 between 8:00am to 5:00pm, Monday through Friday, or 8:00am to adjournment on Saturdays.

If you would like to mail anything to your legislator their address is:

Senator _____

Montana Senate

PO Box 200500

Helena, Montana 59620-0500

Representative _____

MT House of Representatives

PO Box 200400

Helena, Montana 59620-0400

If you would like to fax a letter or other information to your legislator those numbers are:

Senate Fax 444-4875

House Fax 444-4362

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES HEARING SET FOR JANUARY 14

Mark your calendars for January 14 for the Developmental Disabilities Hearing before the Joint Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee. The Hearing will be open-ended for all disability testimony. Charlie Briggs, MAIDS Systems Advocacy Lobbyist is coordinating testimony and presentations for the Hearing. If you would like to contact Charlie regarding testimony his email address is cbriggs@imt.net

COURAGE AWARDS DINNER SET FOR JANUARY 26

The Council is pleased to partner with our network sister agencies, the Montana Advocacy Program and Rural Institute on Disabilities on the 3rd Biennial Courage and Advocacy Awards and Legislative Dinner to be held on

Wednesday, January 26, 2005 at the Great Northern Hotel, 835 Great Northern Boulevard, Helena, Montana. Actor Henry Holden of Los Angeles, California will be the keynote speaker for the event. Join the celebration in honor of people who have championed the cause for Montanans with disabilities. For additional information call MAP at 406/449-2344 or 800/245-4743.

SCHULZ RECOGNITION LUNCHEON SET FOR JANUARY 27

A Recognition Luncheon will be held on January 27 at the Jade Garden Restaurant for transitioning member Othelia Schulz. Othelia has served the Council for the past twelve years. During her tenure Othelia has served as Council Vice-Chair and Chair. The luncheon will be held from noon to 1:45pm on Thursday, January 27, 2005. The Jade Garden Restaurant is located at 3128 North Montana, Helena, Montana. For additional information contact Council staff at 443-4332 or 1/866-443-4332.

COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS/REAPPOINTMENTS

Council staff have been working with Governor Schweitzer's appointment staff on Council appointments and reappointments. Thanks to all Council members who have returned their reappointment letter to Council offices. We anticipate the Governor's office will be making announcements regarding membership in February. Remember, you continue to serve on the Council until a replacement has been named by the Governor for your specific membership category. For additional information contact Council staff

MEET-THE-MEMBER

As the Council says goodbye to four members who are transitioning off the Council, we thought everyone would be interested in their thoughts and ideas for the Council, and what brought them to the Council. We recently caught up with these members and they were most cordial in sharing their thoughts with us. I'm sure we'll all learn a thing or two from their responses.

Othelia Schulz

I'm Othelia Schulz and my husband and I recently moved to Helena. We live in a lovely apartment at East Park Villas and just love it there. Being near my family again is really a plus. We lived in Anaconda for 54 years, so this was quite a change; however Bob and I started our married life in Helena back in 1949.

But I'd better get back to the business at hand. I have really enjoyed being a part of this Council for the last 12 years. I was Chairperson of the Region 4, Regional Council from the time it started. Through that I learned about the State Council and began researching it and how to become a member. An opening soon became available; I applied and became a member who finishing out the term for another person who had resigned. After that the Governor appointed me to my full term. It has been such a great learning experience,

as when our oldest son Jim was little there were no programs or services available.

Jim also lives in Helena and has been here for the past four years. Through Jim I became a family advocate. Jim presently (and I hope for always) lives in his apartment at Tara Court. He lives in a four-plex and works at the Farm in the Dell and simply loves it! This has taken a load off of our shoulders. Bill, our younger son is a medical technologist at St. Peters Hospital for nearly the past 26 years. He's married to the greatest girl, Teresa and those two have been instrumental in getting Bob and I to Helena.

Bob, my husband retired in 1980 as an accountant for the Anaconda Company, and I retired from my 20 year dressmaking business to go to work for the Anaconda Company Water Department as a bookkeeper in Butte for 10 more years and finally retired in 1989.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the Council. I served as Vice-Chair for 2 years and as Chair for 2 years. I don't know of anything I ever did that I have felt the accomplishments that I have gained here.

I currently serve on the Human Rights Committee at the Montana Developmental Center, and have since it was started. I continue to serve on the states Residential Facility Screening Team.

The most important role for the Council, I believe, is to keep focused and stay up on all the latest programs and services that involve people like our son Jim to continue to make a better life for them all as time goes on. The goal is to stay involved in every way possible, throughout the state and the nation.

We are fortunate to live in the state capital and can take part in all the issues during legislature. We have had excellent lobbyist that have kept us well informed on all the happenings. I look forward to being very much a part of that.

Representative Bob Lawson

My name is Bob Lawson and I'm from Whitefish, Montana, and I have served in the Montana House of Representatives since 1997, and have just finished my final term in the House.

I was introduced to the Developmental Disabilities Planning and Advisory Council (as it was called then) by Tom Price of Eureka and State Representative Roger Sommerville of Kalispell, both of whom were serving on "DDPAC" at the time (1996). I was appointed by then Governor Marc Racicot in 1997 to fulfill the requirement of a member of the House of Representatives on the Council.

In 1995 I retired from Montana public education after working for 28 years as a teacher, guidance Counselor and Assistant Principal. I had always really

appreciated the opportunity of working with folks who wanted to live a more successful, meaningful live.

I have always felt the role or purpose of the Council should be to educate and advocate for innovative systems change in programs and policies pertaining to persons with developmental disabilities. Of all the areas the Council works in, I am especially interested in the focus with the areas of employment and transportation.

As far as goals for the Council, I believe as stated in the MCDD By-Laws, the purpose of the Council, among other things, is to engage in advocacy, capacity building and systemic change activities that are consistent with the purpose of Public Law 106-402, the Developmental Disabilities Act.

Senator Bea McCarthy

Hi, I'm Bea McCarthy and I'm from Anaconda. I was appointed to the Council by the Governor in 1996, and have been subsequently reappointed throughout my term. My good friend and neighbor Othelia Schulz, also from Anaconda at that time, first brought the Council to my attention.

I have thoroughly enjoyed serving on the Council, and feel that each meeting was a learning experience. During my legislative tenure co-sponsored several bills (along with Rep. Lawson) on behalf of the Council. I will miss the interaction with the group, and wish each of you the best of luck.

I'm looking forward in retirement to quilting, knitting and enjoying being home with my husband Ed and the grandchildren.

Wally Melcher

Hello, I'm Wally Melcher I live here in Helena and I serve on the Council as a parent-advocate.

It's hard to answer how I first found out about the Council, but I have known about the Council for nearly 25 years, and have had various involvements with the Council during that time which includes being a Council grantee, speaker, member and serving as Chair of the Council for two years.

In 1992 Greg Olson asked if I would be interested in joining the Council as a parent advocate. I have rarely got to serve in that role despite the fact that my wife and I have been foster parents for a young man with multiple disabilities for nearly 25 years.

It's hard to say what is the most important role for the Council as I think the Council has several important roles, but if I have to pick one as most important, I have to say it's role as a forum for planning that includes all of the system's stakeholders.

As far a topics or issues I'd like to see the Council address, I'd like to see the Council stay informed and, where appropriate provide input to the

Developmental Disabilities Program regarding the recent mandates from CMS (Medicaid). Specifically, I think the Council should closely monitor the service rate redesign project that the State is conducting. This project has the potential to bring about dramatic changes for persons with disabilities, some positive and some negative. The State needs to hear from all of the stakeholders in the system regarding the project so that it doesn't assume that people are in agreement with everything by their silence.

My goals for the Council would be for it to continue to gather input for all interested parties in the developmental disabilities system, and to continue to refine methods for effectively reaching and hearing everybody in the system.

My wife Afton and I have been married for 32 years and have six children and a foster son with disabilities. Only one of our children is still at home and is a graduating Senior this year. The rest of our children except for one are living in Utah where they have careers or are going to school. Our one son not in Utah is on a mission for our Church in Italy. Our only pet is Snoop, the fat, black dog. She is a good family protector as anytime someone comes down our lane; Snoop attacks the neighbor's horses in the pasture next to our house. An odd security tactic, but it works!

DATES OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS

Here's an overview of meeting dates and events that may be of interest:

January 14	DD Hearing/State Capitol	Helena
January 26	Courage Awards/Best Western Great Northern Hotel	Helena
January 27	Recognition Luncheon-Jade Garden	Helena
January 26-28	MCDD Meeting	Helena

Contact Council staff for more information on any of these meetings.

ETC. . . .

We hope this brief and informal newsletter is helpful for Council members. If you have a question on any item presented or would like to see additional items in future newsletter please contact Council staff at 866-443-4332.

