



MCDD QUICK NEWS

Here's What's Happening in Council Offices
for the months of May, June and July 2006

SERVICE SYSTEM STRATEGIC PLANNING ACTIVITIES SET TO BEGIN

It's been almost a decade since the last strategic planning efforts concerning the developmental disabilities service delivery system were undertaken. Those efforts called SPAM (Strategic Planning About Montana) were sponsored by the Council who coordinated those efforts with the Developmental Disabilities Program.

A great many things have changed since the last planning efforts, including but not limited to the advent of individualized services, rate redesign and issues such as housing for persons with high risk behaviors that prompt a review of the priorities of and for the service delivery system.

The Developmental Disabilities Program partnering with the Council have started a strategic planning process which will have a series of community town-hall meetings across the state facilitated by Developmental Disabilities Program staff. The information derived from each of those meetings will be presented to a core group of people, made up of over 50% of persons who are either persons with a developmental disability or a parent or family member of a person with a developmental disability.

Eleven meetings will be held across the state in the month of September in the following cities:

Miles City, Glasgow, Billings, Lewistown, Havre,
Great Falls, Helena, Bozeman, Butte, Missoula,
Kalispell

Meeting dates and times will be finalized in early August and announced through a variety of venues, including MCDD Quick News, the MAP newsletter, the PLUK newsletter, the Disability Action Alliance of Montana distribution list and the Department of Public Health & Human Services website; as well as our individual websites.

Please plan on attending and participating in a meeting near you. Your input is vital to shaping the service delivery system for the future. **A Special Edition of Quick News will be issued when the meeting dates are announced.**

COUNCIL ANNOUNCES FUNDING DECISIONS FOR FFY 07

Fulfilling the first objectives of the FFY2007-2011 5-year Plan-of-Action, Council membership committed the majority of their FFY07 funds to the following projects who responded to our Calls for Investment.

- CFI /Transition Training \$60,000 to the Rural Institute
- CFI /Self-Advocacy Org. \$60,000 to MT Citizens Advocacy Co.
- CFI /Youth Leadership Pro \$20,000 to MT Youth Leadership Forum
- CFI /Innovative Concepts \$10,000 for Same Difference Theatre Co
- CFI /Innovative Concepts \$10,000 to Rim Country Land Institute

Contracts are currently being negotiated with the prospective contractors and will be completed and signed by mid-September, with the contracts to start on October 7, 2006.

NACDD DIRECTOR/CEO VISITS MONTANA

Executive Director and CEO of the National Association of Council on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) Karen Flippo joined the Council at our June funding meeting. The Montana Council, in addition to being the only documented, nonprofit Council in the country and trust territories, is also the only Council that makes its funding decisions as a full Council. Karen observed the process and shared she was incredibly impressed with the Council and how engaged and empowered all of the members are. Another area of the Council Karen was impressed with was our cultural diversity. Member Shawn Parker addressed the Council and Karen recounting the honoring ceremony held at the Council meeting, its meaning and displayed his Pendleton blanket. Members also enjoyed the Last Chance Tour Train and dinner at Bennies where Council Chair Jan Wenaas presented Karen with a memento of her trip to Montana. We were delighted to have Karen make the long trip to Montana from Washington, DC and hope she can make a return trip soon.



Shawn shares the significance of his Pendleton blanket



Shawn Parker and Karen Flippo



Ready for the Tour Train to Start!



Chair Jan Wenaas presents Karen her gift
Keough Duffy looks on!

BIG SKY RX - HAVE YOU CALLED THEM YET?

There is a best-kept secret right now in Montana called the Big Sky RX. This program can provide premium assistance to persons enrolled in a Medicare prescription drug plan (PLAN D). Big Sky RX may be able to help pay up to \$33.11 of your monthly Medicare prescription drug premium.

Big Sky RX is a state program funded by taxes from tobacco sales set aside by the voters of Montana. To qualify for Big Sky RX you MUST:

- Be a Montana resident
- Be on Medicare, and
- Meet the generous income guidelines (Call them they'll be happy to explain!). They do not count assets like your house, savings, or checking account and many other kinds of assets.

You should apply even if you think you are over income because some income is not counted in determining eligibility for Big Sky RX.

A Big Sky RX representative is available Monday through Friday between 8:00am and 5:00pm at 1/866-369-1233 to talk with you about this important benefit. PLEASE give them a call to see if they can assist you with your monthly Medicare prescription drug premiums.

HAVA Transportation Efforts Gearing Up for The General Election

Campaign season is in full swing and the Council is working diligently to put all the pieces together to maximize transportation to the polls for the General election. This program is specifically for persons who are "transportation disadvantaged" those being persons with disabilities, senior citizens and persons of lower economic position. The Primary election saw good participation and we know ridership can well exceed for the General election. If you know of someone who needs a ride to the polls OR to get registered to vote, OR if you would like to provide a ride for someone to get to the polls or to get registered, PLEASE contact Council offices at 1/866-443-4332.

SUNSET COMMISSION ALERT

There have been some very scary activities going on in Congress as they approach their 5 week recess. Councils were alerted that two bills, the Brady Bill HR3282 and Tiahrt HR5766 which created "sunset commissions" were going to be before the House of Representatives for a vote.

Sunset commissions are proposed and unelected commissions with the power to recommend which federal programs live, die, or get realigned, with the authority to force those recommendations through Congress on a fast-track, take-it-or-leave-it basis. These commissions would bypass the regular legislative process and thus would be immune from legislative or grassroots advocacy efforts. Sunset commissions could make decisions behind closed doors, without public notice or comment or open meetings, and without allowing Congress to request documents and transcripts. Members of sunset commissions would be appointed by the White House.

MCDD has alerted our Congressional delegation of our concern over the creation of sunset commissions, and signed-on to advocacy letters from both the National Association of Developmental Disabilities Councils and OMB Watch.

I am delighted to share that the vote on sunset commissions has been postponed until September, based upon the amount of letters, emails and phone calls received primarily from the disability community. We have a little bit of time to regroup and prepare for the September session, but this battle is not over and we need to remain vigilant in our efforts. We'll keep you posted as developments occur.

Dates of Interest

Aug 16-18	MCDD Training Meeting	Helena
Aug 21	Disability Action Alliance of Montana	Missoula
Aug 22-24	MT Assoc. of Community Disability Services	Livingston

Please contact Council staff for additional information on these meetings.



Enjoy your summer!