

Empowering People: Providers Shaping Policies

ABCD NEWS

Transition News and issues

Not only does New Jersey have a new Governor, but also new leadership in both the Senate and Assembly, as well as on key committees. We look forward to working with all of the new leaders to ensure that quality services are provided to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

ABCD sent a congratulatory letter to Governor Christie pledging to work with his Administration to develop and implement sound public policy options that will be fiscally responsible and efficient. The letter also laid out some of the issues that our community faces and explained that we are looking forward to working with him to ensure that people with developmental disabilities receive the necessary supports and services to live as independently as possible in the community.

During the transition between the election and the inauguration, ABCD was invited to provide a paper to the transition team on Medicaid issues. The paper explained that New Jersey has a long-standing history of supporting preventative health care and ensuring that individuals, particularly the most vulnerable, receive quality health care services. New Jersey must be commended for providing a comprehensive and expansive benefits package to individuals with significant disabilities.

The transition paper also expressed concern that in an effort to balance the budget, some of the so called optional services and optional populations, minimally required by the federal government under Medicaid, will be cut. Services such as...

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ABCD is a statewide organization that provides policy analysis and education related to people with developmental disabilities. ABCD represents member agencies that provide a broad array of community-based services to approximately 10,000 people with complex physical and neurological developmental disabilities and their families statewide.

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ABCD Hold First Interagency Training Conference

On November 12, 2009 ABCD held its first Interagency Training Conference! This day-long event marked the first time staff from ABCD's member agencies have come together to share information and learn with each other. The conference attendees included direct support professionals, teachers, therapists from many disciplines, and program managers. Participants started their day with a continental breakfast and the sounds of live music performed by gifted, local musicians. Dr. Dan Baker, of the Boggs Center, gave an entertaining keynote address educating conference attendees on the importance of teaching functional skills and the value of self-direction. The keynote address was followed by a group activity, called the World Café®, which was facilitated by Michael Steinbruck with... **(Cont'd on pg. 6)**

ABCD is 15 Years Old this Year; Website Gets a Facelift!

It's 2010 and ABCD is starting the year off with some fresh ideas and a new look! Just in time for this year's 15th anniversary, we have updated our website, logo, slogan, and mission statement. We encourage everyone to take the time to peruse the new version of www.abcdnj.org. We hope that you find the website not only more visually pleasing but also easier to maneuver. Some new additions include a section for early intervention information and the EIPA, along with our updated member's list showing agency logos and headquarters. Another addition to the website is Voter's Voice; a web-based advocacy tool. Voter's Voice allows individuals to use our Action Alerts to send their concerns about developmental disabilities issues directly to the people in charge. Voter's Voice especially came in handy during the recent round of mid-year budget cuts where families, consumers and others let the Governor and Legislature know that there should be no cuts to services. Also on the website is our redesigned logo including ABCD's recently developed slogan: "Empowering People: Providers Shaping Policies" - a concise reflection of our agency's newly revamped philosophy.

ABCD convened a strategic planning retreat last Spring to develop our plans for the future. At the retreat a decision was made, in addition to future plans, to make changes to reflect ABCD's guiding philosophy. Together the Board and staff created a new vision statement - *"Our vision is for people with complex developmental disabilities to have significant relationships, access to full participation, and inclusive options in their communities, with quality supports."* ABCD's mission statement was also renovated to better express ABCD's goals and the diversity of the population its member agencies serve. Our new mission statement is as follows - *"The mission of ABCD is to: 1) influence the development and implementation of public policy; and 2) supports its members, in improving the lives of people with complex physical and neurological developmental disabilities so they achieve the highest level of purpose and dignity."* In our values statement, we propose to achieve these goals through a combination of education, information, advocacy, interagency collaboration, and the supports provided to our member agencies. Our core values include person-centered thinking, inclusion, and choice for the individuals **(Cont'd on pg. 3)**

ABCD Submits Transition Paper on Services to People with Developmental Disabilities

ABCD sent the Human Services Transition team a second transition paper related to services to people with developmental disabilities. The paper explained that more is needed to maximize federal revenues for services. New Jersey ranks in the lowest quartile in the nation for funding provided to individuals living at home with their family. The Division is now considering a new Home and Community-based Services Waiver. Currently, approximately \$49 million in State-only funds are used Family Support. New Jersey is one of only a dozen states which receive NO federal family support dollars. We are supportive of DDD's idea of maximizing federal revenues by applying for a Federal Home and Community-Based Services Waiver (HCBS) for family and individual supports.

The paper also explained that the developmental disabilities community infrastructure is in need of significant repair. Emergency residential placements are averaging 300 individuals a year in the community, at a cost in this Fiscal Year of more than \$12 million. Prior to 2009, on average for 10 years, more individuals were admitted into Developmental Centers from the community than people moving out of the Developmental Centers. The higher cost of serving these individuals in institutions rather than in the community is causing the State to provide services to less people with developmental disabilities. The primary reason for these emergencies is that there is a lack of adequate community supports for individuals with developmental disabilities. People with developmental disabilities who live in the community need medical, behavioral, and psychiatric supports along with barrier-free housing.

The transition paper also discussed that New Jersey continues to serve more people with developmental disabilities in state institutions than almost every other state in the country. According to studies, proportionate to its population, New Jersey serves more individuals with developmental disabilities in large, state institutions than all but three states. ABCD fully supports the concept to close most of the Developmental Centers over a relatively short...

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...prescription drugs, dental benefits, durable medical equipment, prosthetics and orthotics, and therapies, are not optional for people with complex physical and neurological developmental disabilities. These services are critical to the health care needs of individuals with significant disabilities and others and cannot be cut.

ABCD continued its advocacy to ensure that Medicaid co-pays are not included in the budget. For the past seven years, the health and human services community has successfully joined together to fight proposals to have Medicaid co-pays. The Coalition for a Moral Budget has documented that dozens of national health services research studies show that co-pays would force our neediest citizens to make a choice between paying for health care and other necessities. Medicaid co-pays would result in individuals with significant disabilities and those living in poverty not seeking care, exacerbating their illnesses, and costing the State even more in hospitalizations and Emergency Room visits. During this time of economic crisis, it is important that the poor, including people with developmental disabilities, not have the additional imposition of Medicaid co-pays which are clearly a barrier to needed health services.

ABCD also continued its support of Medicaid Managed Care for the Aged, Blind, Disabled (ABD) population which includes a number of protections including assisting people with care coordination and access to providers. The current two-tiered Medicaid system of fee-for-service and managed care for acute health care should be reviewed. Gaps in provider availability and continuity of care weaken the effectiveness of primary and preventive care. In addition, providers for services that have always been fee-for-service, such as occupation, speech and physical therapies, should have higher reimbursement rates. The rates, which are as low as \$7 per visit, for these services have not been increased in more than ten years and presents a barrier to community agencies serving the most vulnerable populations.

ABCD also provided some potential revenue generators including consolidation of multiple state programs in prescription drug costs as well as other medical costs such as medical supplies and durable medical equipment and negotiate for the best price based upon the State's purchasing power and maximization of Medicaid revenues and dedicating their utilizations to services.

ABCD clearly recognizes the fiscal crisis faced by the State and looks forward to working with the new Administration and the Legislature to ensure that quality services are maintained for people served by Medicaid and other important programs serving people with developmental disabilities.

ABCD is 15 Years Old... (Cont'd from pg. 2)



our member agencies serve. We believe that by promoting these core values persons with complex developmental disabilities will continue to develop personal competencies, be present and able to fully participate in community life, and express their preferences and choices in everyday life. We are pleased to unveil our new vision, mission, and values statement because it gives us a means by which to evaluate our own performance on behalf of the agencies and people we serve.

All of this is happening just in time for preparations for ABCD's 15th year anniversary celebration. We are excited to celebrate 15 years of excellence in policy and advocacy and a preparing a celebratory luncheon in October of this year. Further details will be provided at a later date as arrangements are made.

ABCD Submits Transition Paper on DD Services, Cont'd from pg. 2

period of time. The new Administration and Legislature must work with the developmental disabilities community to adequately fund a plan to close/consolidate the Developmental Centers, build the necessary community infrastructure, and fully utilize all federal funds to ensure that people are able to move into the community.

Current contracts to providers do not furnish enough funds for the actual costs of services. In addition, agencies received no increase in the past two fiscal years (FY'09 and FY'10) and a 1.5% increase in FY'08, despite the fact that gas and other energy costs continue to increase as do health insurance and workers compensation. In fact, in the past 12 years, providers have received a cumulative 14.5% increase despite the fact that the Consumer Price Index has increased by 30.5%.

Agencies are experiencing difficulties in meeting the rising costs of providing care to the most vulnerable of New Jersey's citizens as a result of the national economic crisis. A majority of agencies have had deficits caused by insufficient state contract funds that cover multiple programs. These agencies are also seeing their ability to receive funds from philanthropy and other fundraising measures reduced. In the past, philanthropic donations and fundraising has been critical in bridging the gap between actual costs and contracts. The reduction and loss of these donations threatens to have a serious impact on Providers' future sustainability.

ABCD also included information on the Early Intervention system in the Transition Paper. ABCD established the Early Intervention Providers Association (EIPA), to represent ABCD members which provide early intervention and other providers. EIPA member agencies provide services to more than one-half of all children and families served by the Early Intervention system.

Research has repeatedly shown that early detection, diagnosis and therapeutic intervention for children born with developmental delays is crucial in remediating the potential impact of these delays later in life. Early Intervention (EI) services may reduce a child's need for developmental disabilities programs thus decreasing costs to the state in the future.

The State has detailed a number of programs designed to support the EI system - including Medicaid and NJ FamilyCare - but additional funding is necessary. More than five years ago, ABCD informed the Department that it was not maximizing its Federal Medicaid funds for EI. At that time, New Jersey was only receiving approximately \$5 million in Federal Medicaid revenue. It has only been in the last two years that New Jersey has begun to truly maximize its Medicaid funding for EI services. This year, the Department estimates approximately \$20 million in Medicaid revenue. We support the Department of Health and Senior Services' efforts to generate additional Medicaid funds for the Early Intervention System. These additional funds will assist the system in expanding the prophylactic services children with developmental delays need most.

While we are encouraged by this effort we further recommend that, in exploring additional revenues for Early Intervention, the State mandate private health insurance coverage for Early Intervention as proposed in legislation from prior years and that the State make better use of the Medicaid provisions of Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT). Properly administering the EPSDT for Medicaid eligible children would lead to an additional payment source for EI services and support for families most likely to struggle with the family cost share. Following through on these recommendations will increase the EI's sustainability by further diversifying its funding stream.

ABCD will continue to work with the new Administration, the Legislature, and other advocates on these and other issues which impact people with developmental disabilities, their families, and agencies which provide services to them.

AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS...

LADACIN NETWORK PREPARES FOR EXPANSION

LADACIN Network (an acronym for Lifetime Assistance for Developmental and Challenging Individual Needs) is a non-profit agency whose mission is to provide education, therapeutic, social, and residential and support services for people with cerebral palsy or other physical disabilities. Formerly known as Cerebral Palsy of Monmouth and Ocean Counties, LADACIN Network has been providing services since 1952 and now provides lifetime assistance to over 2800 families in 11 facilities. These services include **Early Intervention, child care, school programs, adult day programs and supported employment, residential options for adults and respite services.**

In response to a more than 400% increase in enrollment over 10 years, LADACIN initiated a capital expansion effort. A corporate headquarters is being built on the property owned by the agency adjacent to the Schroth Center in Wanamassa. The new building will increase our capacity to serve by increasing the amount of program area at the existing Schroth Center. It will also consolidate the agency's administrative offices, pare down our annual expenses by almost \$100,000 and provide much needed storage space. Construction of this new building marks the beginning of an Agency-wide expansion that will encompass renovations to the Schroth Center, the expansion of the Lehmann Center and the development of **two new group homes in Millstone Township.**

For more information about LADACIN Network and the services they offer in Ocean and Monmouth counties, please visit their website at www.ladacin.org. You may also reach them by telephone at 732-493-5900.

BANCROFT REBRANDS AGENCY

Building on a rich history of serving people with neurological challenges for more than 125 years, Bancroft embarked on a process last year to help define the organization and the essence of what makes Bancroft unique.

Bancroft brought in a local marketing firm to help hone and strengthen Bancroft's brand identity and messaging to engage more people in support of its important mission. Through numerous interviews with persons served, family members, direct care staff and other professionals the team identified Bancroft's overarching mission: The belief that "every individual should have opportunities to live a more participatory and fulfilling life."

With the hope that Bancroft's mission would inspire a movement to change the world's perceptions of people with neurological challenges, the brand theme of "It's our world, too" was conceived to serve as Bancroft's internal rallying cry- a message the organization firmly believes in.

With a new brand mission and theme defined, it was time to bring the brand to life. The organization transitioned their name from "Bancroft NeuroHealth" to simply "Bancroft." A new logo was created that was paired with a new tagline: "One world. For everyone." A brand video of persons served, family members, and employees speaking the Bancroft "brand mantra" was filmed, and added to the organization's new website. In addition, the organization's public relations campaign kicked off to help communicate the brand to internal and external audiences. Bancroft also confirmed its philosophy of support through this process, which is anchored by five core beliefs: supports are person-centered and outcomes-based; families and others in the circle of support must be involved; treatment approaches are scientifically proven to be effective; relationships and experiences are encouraged; and the organization constantly strives for opportunities for lifelong learning and fulfillment for those served.

Through their programs, Bancroft supports those with intellectual and developmental challenges and acquired brain injuries in achieving their life goals as valued and respected members of our world. Serving more than 1300 children and adults annually, Bancroft's offerings include early childhood, education, vocational and supported employment, structured day, rehabilitation, community living, behavioral treatment, as well as in-home and outpatient services.

Through its rebranding efforts, Bancroft shifted its message from one centered around the organization to one that instead, is centered around the people it serves. The organization has been galvanized by this rallying cry, summarized in their mantra: "Everyone deserves a chance—Bancroft vows to make that chance a reality."

ABCD Interagency Conference

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the help of Colleen McLaughlin; both of whom are also from the Boggs Center. Michael Steinbruck guided the large group through the World Café ©exercise in a manner that started a free-flowing, multi-disciplinary conversation on utilizing a consumer's personality, likes, and dislikes to teach functional skills. Colleen McLaughlin, a talented graphic practitioner, created a collage of the ideas from the World Café ©participants. We are grateful to Dan, Michael, and Colleen for sharing their expertise with us. After lunch the conference attendees headed to the workshop of their choice for the afternoon session. The workshop offerings included Ernie Brattstrom of Learning Tree Consultants leading his workshop "How to Motivate Adults with Disabilities to Learn Functional Skills", Jeremy Stevens of Spectrum For Living leading a workshop on "Using Music Therapy to Teach Functional Skills", and Karen Gutshall and Linda Seidman from Raritan Valley Community College co-facilitating a workshop on "Supported Decision-Making: Who's in the Driver's Seat." Quality Assurance and Training staff from different ABCD agencies including Eileen Berg and Kerianne Neu of CFSNY, Joy Gross and Lindsay Schweighardt of CPNJ, and Dale Sakurai of Spectrum for Living headed breakout sessions for physical therapists, occupational therapist, teachers, and program supervisors. We were also fortunate to have Assistant Commissioner Kenneth Ritchey from the Department of Human Services end the day with a closing speech that discussed the core principles, values, and direction of the Division and commended the attendees for the valuable work they do. ABCD would also like to offer our thanks to Esther Weinstein and Carolann Garafola for hosting the conference at CPNJ's Horizon School. We are proud of the success of our first conference will keep the community updated as we plan for the next one!



NEWS & EVENTS

Bancroft holds Free Developmental Disability Workshop: Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Bancroft will be holding its next workshop in its free Developmental Disabilities (DD) Workshop Series on *Wednesday, February 17, 2010 from 6:30PM-8:30PM.*

This workshop, designed for families and professionals, will focus on describing the characteristics of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, the criteria for medical diagnosis, prevalence among the population, known etiology, the domain areas of affected impairment, prevention and associated learning disabilities.

The workshop will be held in the Farrington Building, located on **Bancroft's Campus in Haddonfield**, New Jersey. For further information or to register, please contact **Pat Reid at (856) 524-7453 or email preid@bnh.org.**

These workshops are available to the public at no charge. Support generously provided by the TD Charitable Foundation.

February 5th is "Give a Kid a Smile" Day

The 2010 GKAS day is Friday, February 5th. Each year on the first Friday in February, thousands of the nation's dentists and their dental team members provide free oral health care services to children from low-income families across the country.

The ADA's Give Kids A Smile® program enhances the oral health of large numbers of needy children. Give Kids A Smile (GKAS) activities also highlight for policy makers the ongoing challenges that disadvantaged families face in finding dental care.

To find a participating clinic in your area, please visit the GKAS website at <http://givekidsasmile.ada.org/findGKAS.asp>

To find dentists in your state who participate in State Children's Health Insurance Programs (SCHIP) and Medicaid, visit the Insure Kids Now Web site at <http://www.insurekidsnow.gov/> or call the Insure Kids Now hotline at 1-877-KIDS NOW.