



**NCCDD Executive Director
Chris Egan**

A Message from the Executive Director

Twenty-nine years ago, when President Ronald Reagan declared March as National Developmental Disability Awareness Month, we experienced

renewed movement towards deinstitutionalization of those with disabilities. As more people with disabilities began living within the general community in larger numbers, programs to provide career planning, job coaching and employment started. The idea that individuals with developmental disabilities could become productive members of the workforce and in their community was new to many people. Inclusion brought its challenges, but also solutions, to the forefront.

We celebrated one of those solutions at Fort Macon State Park in Atlantic Beach, NC. The park received four new beach wheelchairs from ACCESS North Carolina, and the community came out to try out the new chairs. Lois Blanchard, Brendon Hildreth and NCCDD Council Members Kelly Woodall and Wendy Boyd joined us and enjoyed for a perfect great day at the beach. These wheelchairs provide access for families like the Blanchards and Hildreths to enjoy and be a part of the community. NCCDD was proud to support Superintendent Randy Newman and Fort Macon State Park for this great effort towards access and promoting greater inclusion and opportunities to raise awareness.

Celebrating new accessibility towards more inclusion in our communities or advocating and voicing your opinions on issues in your local community and with policymakers are ways we can continue to be aware of, and advocate for, responsive services and systems for people with I/DD.

In September 2015, North Carolina passed a law to change the way Medicaid services are delivered in our State. Efforts are underway to make services and supports more effective for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

continued on page 4

Public Policy Update

In September 2015, North Carolina passed a law to change the way Medicaid services are delivered in our state. This law directed the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to create a “Medicaid Reform” plan for how doctors and other health care professionals provide services to Medicaid recipients. Because there are federal rules involved in making changes to a Medicaid plan under the Social Security Act, Medicaid Reform is sometimes called a “waiver application” or a “Section 1115 Demonstration.”

A draft of the Medicaid Reform plan [EH1] (1115 Waiver) was presented to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on March 1, 2016.

The goals of the plan are to improve the experience of care for individuals, improve the health of the population, contain the cost of healthcare, and improve coordination with medical providers. The plan suggests creating six Prepaid Health Plan (PHP) regions in NC that are responsible for achieving positive health outcomes and savings. Each region will include two Provider Led Entities (PLEs) and up to three Commercial Plan (CPs) to administer payments to health care providers. PLEs are NC provider owned entities and Commercial Plans are larger managed care companies. Individuals will be able to choose a health plan; if someone does not choose, he or she will be assigned to a plan.

POSITIVES

- The plan includes options for NC-based entities to be involved in administration and delivery of healthcare – so it is not administered only by large, out-of-state commercial plans.
- The plan includes an Innovations Center to promote best practices and provide technical assistance.
- The plan calls for the development of “medical homes” called Person Centered Health Communities (PCHCs). While I/DD health homes are not specified, it is an aspect of the plan where there is potential to influence the development of I/DD health homes.

continued on page 4

Taking Initiative: Upward to Financial Stability

NCCDD's Upward to Financial Stability initiative with the National Disability Institute (NDI) encourages and supports the partnership of the public and private sectors in spreading financial awareness to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. It is designed to create opportunities for people with I/DD to learn how to build financial assets to enjoy a better, more secure future. One of the products of this initiative is the North Carolina Asset-Building Resource Guide. Download the guide at http://nccdd.org/images/blog/Upward_To_Financial_Stability_Resource_Guide.pdf.

Upward to Financial Stability is hosting four two-day train-the-trainer sessions across the state in late March and early April to provide practitioners, service professionals and self-advocates an understanding of how individuals with disabilities can become more self-sufficient and less dependent on benefits while building a better financial future that promotes choice and

greater community participation.

The sessions will occur in Raleigh, Greenville, Asheville, and Charlotte. The initiative also offers a number of free webinars examining topics such as financial capability indicators, housing options benefits management.

Upward to Financial Stability now falls under Goal 1 of NCCDD's new Five Year Plan for increasing financial security through asset development for individuals with I/DD.



For more information, contact Systems Change Manager Philip Woodward at philip.c.woodward@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-518-9525 (VideoPhone).



Council Member Jim Swain

Council Member Spotlight: Jim Swain discusses the ABLE Act

Jim Swain is a program director for North Carolina for Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) and a Council member of NCCDD. VR provides counseling, training, education, transportation, job placement, assistive technology and other support services to individuals with disabilities. This

division within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will play an integral part in many of the changes coming to our State including ABLE Accounts and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA). Specifically, the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act aims to offer new opportunities for qualifying individuals with disabilities wanting to protect benefits while earning and saving.

Council Member Jim Swain notes that, "we are already developing many partnerships to ensure that the ABLE Act is widely known and easily implemented among people with disabilities and their families. "In fact, VR is a central player among these efforts. The department is already working to empower its rehab counselor with the tools and knowledge

to forward information to consumers once the regulations are finalized," Swain points out.

Collaboration efforts include partnerships with the National Disability Institute in which the Department of VR is an active member of its advisory council. This is a key exchange in NDI's support in helping North Carolina plan for promoting financial literacy for individuals and families. Additionally, a process is in development by which VR counselors can provide financial literacy assessment to individuals, and when appropriate providing resources through a partnership with the North Carolina Asset Building Collaborative.

While Swain is not directly involved in consumer financial matters, he is in close proximity to the rehab counselors and through continued dialogue, and is committed to serving as an information conduit between VR and the Council. With the legislation garnering significant attention from the community, there is much anticipation around the impact the ABLE Act will bring to North Carolinians with disabilities and their families.

Swain comments, "While we don't really know what the impact will be until it has had some time to be in place, it will

Fort Macon State Park and NCCDD Partner to Showcase New Beach Wheelchairs at Atlantic Beach, NC



Fort Macon State Park and NCCDD Guests

New beach wheelchairs that provide beach access to individuals with mobility disabilities were showcased at A Day at The Beach: Sun, Sand and Fun for All at Fort Macon State Park at Atlantic Beach, NC on March 19, 2016. The beach wheelchairs are a great step forward in inclusion for people with disabilities to enjoy the beaches of North Carolina as over 645,000 North Carolinians have a form of mobility disability.

Fort Macon State Park received four new beach wheelchairs from ACCESS North Carolina, a program that also offers an online travel guide in coordination with Visit North Carolina for people with disabilities, people who are aging and parents with child and infant strollers.

“As the 2015 State Park of the Year, our park only got better with four new beach wheelchairs that arrived last November, and



New Bern resident Brendon Hildreth also tried out the new beach wheelchairs.

we are grateful to ACCESS North Carolina for presenting these to the park,” said Randy Newman, superintendent of Fort Macon State Park. “It is important to us that the park is accessible to all people, regardless of ability, and that everyone can enjoy the outdoors of North Carolina.”

The weekend event, supported by the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD), welcomed families with and without disabilities to participate and also to celebrate March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

NCCDD supported the event as a part of its mission to promote integrated and inclusive communities through its Five Year Plan and initiatives across the State of North Carolina.

“This accessibility is important in North Carolina, and it is important that we continue to work to make all parts of this State accessible to give people with disabilities opportunities for full participation in their communities,” said NCCDD Executive Director Chris Egan.

Guests from Raleigh, New Bern and Swansboro attended the event to show support for this access.

New Bern resident Lois Blanchard, who uses a wheelchair, was thrilled with this new accessibility. “I haven’t been to the beach in 10 years because I couldn’t get down to it,” she said. “This is a liberating experience and I am so glad that these chairs will be available so everyone can enjoy the beach.”

Public Policy Update *(continued from front page)*

QUESTIONS RELATED TO INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY (I/DD)

- The primary focus is on integration of physical and mental health services. *How will the plan increase the number of individuals with I/DD being seen in primary care settings? How will integration of supports and services for people with I/DD be accomplished and measured?*
- The report suggests that the current LME/MCO system will remain in place for a minimum of four years. *How will quality services and supports be maintained and monitored during transition? How will the new entity's capacity to serve this population be vetted? What happens to the assets of the current LME/MCO system?*
- The report also states that, "LME/MCOs will take on more responsibility for physical healthcare for individuals with I/DD." *What does that mean, and how will it be measured?*
- Most people with I/DD are not currently served through the LME/MCO system. *How will expertise in I/DD be developed and included in health plans?*
- *Who is eligible for the I/DD Health Homes referenced in the report?*

NEXT STEPS

Listening sessions are scheduled for around the state, and public comments will be accepted through April 18, 2016. A final 1115 waiver application will be submitted to CMS on June 1, 2016. There are still many unanswered questions and details to be worked out. The I/DD community needs to stay engaged and provide continued dialogue to ensure that Medicaid reform adequately addresses the critical health care needs of people with I/DD in our state. The Council will develop an official response to the plan.

To attend a Medicaid Reform Public Hearing:

<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/nc-medicaid-reform/public-hearings>

To submit public comments on NC Medicaid Reform:

<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/nc-medicaid-reform/share-comments>

A Message from the Executive Director *(continued from front page)*

As part of this effort, the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) released a draft Medicaid Reform Plan and is hosting public hearings, and actively seeking public comment. Read more in the Public Policy section of this newsletter to discover how this affects the intellectual and developmental disabilities community (I/DD).

We are honored to have celebrated Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month this March, but let us continue our efforts to be DD aware all year around.

Council Member Spotlight: Jim Swain discusses the ABLE Act

(continued from page 2)

be another safe avenue for one to save for things such as education, housing, transportation, and assistive technology without negatively impacting a person's benefits."

For more information about the ABLE Act visit:

<https://www.nctreasurer.com/able/Pages/default.aspx>

Learn about the NC Asset Building Collaborative here:

<http://www.ncidacollaborative.org/aboutus.htm>

Learn about the National Disability Institute here:

<http://www.realeconomicimpact.org/>

Learn more about WIOA here:

<http://www.thearc.org/document.doc?id=5183>

North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities

3125 Poplarwood Court • Suite 200 • Raleigh, NC 27604

919-850-2901 (TTY) • Fax 919-850-2915

Toll Free 800-357-6916 (TTY)

www.nccdd.org



/NCCouncilonDD



@NCCDD