

SUMMER 2013

Volume 4, Issue 1
The Updates Issue

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**UNITE
INSPIRE
EDUCATE
and
ADVANCE
MISSISSIPPI**

A Collaborative Publication from MS CDD, DRMS, and IDS



CHANGES, TRENDS, UPDATES & MORE!

Welcome! Thank you for reading the 4th issue of FUSE, a joint publication of the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities (MS CDD), Disability Rights Mississippi (DRMS), and the Institute for Disability Studies (IDS) at The University of Southern Mississippi. All three agencies are funded by the federal Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) to ensure that people with developmental disabilities receive services as required by the DD Act. You can learn more about the agencies by researching their web-sites, listed on the agency pages of this newsletter.

“Because We Are Equal To The Task”

is the theme for theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month October 2013 , as announced by the US Labor Department’s Office of Disability Employment Policy.

For more information about the campaign and how to promote positive employment outcomes go to www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org.

MS MEDICAID RENEWED, BUT NOT EXPANDED

As time ticked down, the Mississippi legislature approved a bill to renew the state's current Medicaid program, but NOT to expand it to more people as allowed by the federal Affordable Care Act. Continuation of the existing program is a great relief to those who depend upon it. This includes those receiving Medicaid services such as basic medical care, supplies or assistive technology; children receiving preventive (EPSDT) services; and people receiving Medicaid waiver services. However, the failure to expand it denies an estimated 300,000 people, whose income is slightly above the current maximum to get benefits, from being able to enroll in the Medicaid program. Most of these people have no insurance, and will need to be insured in some other way as the country moves toward universal coverage within a few years. You can find more information on Medicaid by searching their site on line at <http://www.medicaid.ms.gov/Eligibility.aspx>.



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THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT'S HEALTH INSURANCE MARKETPLACE

On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act. The law puts in place comprehensive health insurance reforms that will roll out over four years and beyond.

The Health Insurance Marketplace is where individuals and small businesses can buy affordable and qualified health benefit plans in a new transparent and competitive insurance marketplace. The Marketplace is designed to help you find health insurance that fits your budget, with less hassle.

Every health insurance plan in the new Marketplace will offer comprehensive coverage, from doctors to medications to hospital visits. You can compare all your insurance options based on price, benefits, quality, and other features that may be important to you, in plain language that makes sense.

Starting in October, you'll be able to get information about all the plans available in your area. You'll be able to enroll yourself directly through the website www.healthcare.gov or call the toll-free phone hotline at 1-800-318-2596 or TTY: 1-855-889-4325.

If you're having difficulty finding a plan that meets your needs and budget, there'll be people available to give you personalized help with your choices. These helpers aren't associated with any particular plan, and they aren't on any type of commission, so the help they give you will be completely unbiased.

Coverage from the Marketplace starts in January 2014. It is also important to remember that open enrollment begins on October 1, 2013, and that on March 31, 2014 the initial marketplace open enrollment ends.

You need to plan ahead before starting the process of choosing a health care plan that works best for . Ask questions, look at all options, and know your individual needs.

The HEALTH INSURANCE MARKETPLACE

- a new way for
you to obtain
health
coverage.

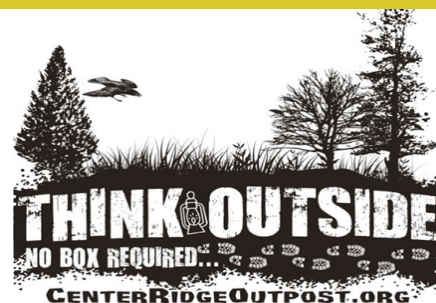
www.healthcare.gov

ADVENTURES FOR ALL: WHERE EVERYONE IS AN ADVENTURER!

TEAAM (Together Enhancing Autism Awareness in Mississippi), through a partnership with the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities, is piloting a new adventure-based, weekend retreat program call "Adventures for All." The slogan for this program is "Think Outside....No Box Required." The retreats are theme driven weekends that offer a fun, socially rich opportunity for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities as well as autism spectrum disorders. The adventures are conducted at the Center Ridge Outpost, TEAAM's Adventure Base Camp. The retreats are quickly gaining popularity

with campers and families. The innovative concept is the creation of a talented team of disability specialist led by Dr. Mark H. Yeager, FAAIDD, TEAAM's Executive Director.

The "Adventures for All" program has proven to not only provide for the needs of the individual, but also benefits families with well deserved respite time, an opportunity not always easily available. In addition, the programs offer each participant occasions to grow in self-determination, autonomy, and confidence and places them in a position to make new friends. What an adventure!



For more information on this program and other innovative opportunities offered by TEAAM at the Center Ridge Outpost visit www.CenterRidgeOutpost.org and come join the fun!



DISABILITY RIGHTS MISSISSIPPI

Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Disabilities

EMPLOYMENT FIRST FOR MISSISSIPPI

“Employment First” is a philosophy/policy which requires all entities which provide services to individuals with disabilities of working age to insure that **competitive employment in integrated settings is always the first and priority option considered** in providing services. A number of states have adopted or are considering Employment First initiatives.

MS Partnerships in Employment (MSPE), a federally funded project managed by the DD Council, IDS, and DRMS, has made achieving state level commitment to Employment First its primary priority. The MSPE Consortium includes members from the Department of Mental Health Bureau of Intellectual and Development Disabilities (DMH ID/DD), the Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS), the Department of Employment Security (MDES), the Department of Education (MDE), the Division of Medicaid, self advocates, and other disability advocacy agencies. It is also supported by national and state Association of People in Support of Employment First (APSE), and the DMH Advisory Committee.

Most individuals with disabilities want to, and are capable of, working in the community in integrated settings at competitive wages. Employment First will help build the state’s workforce, improve the economy, and, over the long run, reduce reliance on custodial or “special” programs for most people with disabilities.

The National Association of Governors has embraced Employment of People with Disabilities as its national initiative. Mississippi’s enactment of a comprehensive Employment First policy would advance the goals of that initiative.

MSPE and APSE are seeking support from state leaders for a comprehensive Employment First initiative. Legislative efforts fell short during the 2013 session, but the groups and their state agency allies will ask the Governor to issue an Executive Order on this issue, and will resume legislative efforts next year.

ON-LINE RESOURCE DIRECTORY COMING SOON!

In October of 2012, DRMS was thrilled to receive a grant from MSCDD to oversee the creation of a comprehensive, searchable and easy-to-use database of community resources. During the past three years at the joint public hearings held throughout Mississippi, DRMS, IDS and MSCDD have heard time and again from citizens that our state needed one place for information. These organizations have partnered together to develop a tool that will assist intake specialists, case managers, and individuals to access accurate information about community supports.

MSCDD is providing most of the funding for the project. DRMS is managing the project and IDS is providing valuable technology assistance for the system design. An advisory group has provided ideas and resources in the development of the database. The advisory group is comprised of front line staff at various statewide disability organizations. DRMS has contracted with a data specialist to collect, organize and input data. This is well underway and this phase of the project is almost completed.

We plan for the completed project to be field tested by Americorps volunteers in August 2013 before it is introduced to the public. This will allow us to foresee any problems and to unveil a reliable and valid resource manual.

The database will be shared with the public and other agencies in September of 2013. It will result in improved knowledge and coordination of community services for individuals with disabilities statewide. Stay tuned to DRMS's Facebook page for the date we go LIVE with this database. It's been a long time coming, Mississippi!



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**Disability
Rights
Mississippi is
the Protection
and Advocacy
agency for the
state of
Mississippi.
The mission of
DRMS is to
promote,
protect and
advocate for
the legal and
human rights
of all people
with
disabilities, and
to assist them
with full
inclusion in
home,
community,
education and
employment.**

Institute for Disability Studies



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THE HEALTH STATUS OF MISSISSIPPIANS WITH DISABILITIES

How do Mississippians with disabilities feel about their health? Many worry about their health and limit their activities. They visit the dentist less often and have problems sleeping. Is access to health services a problem? Affordability?

In fact, more than half of Mississippians with disabilities, 56.6%, consider the status of their health to be fair or even poor, while only 11.3% of Mississippians considered their health to be in the same condition. This information is found in the Institute for Disability Studies' 2012 report, "Health Status of Mississippians with and without Disabilities: a Comparison."

Limited activities can indicate physical or mental health problems. More than 1 in 3 Mississippians, 34.7%, indicated they limited their activities for more than seven days within 30 days of the time they were surveyed because of their personal physical or mental health. Only 3.1% of individuals without disabilities had limited their activities during the same time period.

In Mississippi, of those surveyed

- 54.3% of people with disabilities reported that they had not had their teeth cleaned in the previous year compared to 39.1% of people without disabilities
- 44.3% of people with disabilities had insufficient sleep for 14 or more days in the past month compared to 23.3% of people without disabilities
- 18.7% of people with disabilities reported having no health insurance coverage compared to 22.7% of people without disabilities
- 21.9% of Mississippians lived below the Federal Poverty Level in 2009

-The data for this report was provided by the Mississippi State Department of Health and was derived from the state data collected for the 2011 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).

Hiring People with Disabilities—It's Good Business

When the Blueprint Mississippi report was released in 2013 by the Mississippi Economic Council, the research project results outlined a number of goals that would help Mississippi better position itself for economic progress. Two goals particularly resonate for the increased inclusion of people with disabilities in the state's workforce: cultivate diversity and cultivate a more robust workforce.

The Mississippi Partnerships for Employment (MSPE) project continues to promote employment for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities as "good business" for Mississippi. Through awareness sessions, presentations and meetings with business leaders, MSPE staff support the benefits of the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workplace.

"Hiring people with disabilities is an excellent way to expand and enhance a business," said Royal Walker, director of the Institute for Disability Studies. "Beyond the tax credits that can help cover the cost of any accommodations for employees with disabilities, if needed, there are benefits for individuals who want to work and be a viable part of their community. The community as a whole becomes a better place for everyone to live."

IN THE SPOTLIGHT!! DISABILITY PARTNERS COLLABORATE TO OFFER THE 2013 Mississippi disAbility MegaConference

June 20, 2013 marked the cumulative efforts of 12 different non-profit disability partnering agencies, and the support of approximately 30 vendors and sponsors, with the kick off to the 2013 MS disAbility MegaConference. With over 500 attendees from around the state, this innovative event brought nationally sought out speakers, such as Christine Ha, the first contestant who is blind and the season 3 winner of the competitive amateur cooking show, "MasterChef" USA, on FOX with Gordon Ramsay, Graham Elliot, and Joe Bastianich. Also, Serena Lowe, Senior Policy Advisor, from the Office of Disability Employment, U.S. Department of Labor delivered a direct message on how Mississippians could and should be doing better regarding employment for individuals with disabilities. For a list of partnering agencies and sponsors go to the web-site listed in this article.



Each day of the conference included productive and educational breakout sessions which, according to feedback, were thought-provoking and highly useful. Topics covered ranged from Chronic Disease Management to Updates on the ID/DD Waiver Programs, as well as a track specifically related to Early Intervention.

Probably one of the most talked about components to the MegaConference was the fun and festive gala held the night of the 20th that included the ever fun loving DJ Ice Dog, and the entertaining talents of the fantastic Little Dance Crew! The night was alive with the excitement in the air and the joy of everyone, friends both old and new, joining together for good times and to just celebrate each other!

Stay tuned and on the look out for upcoming news and plans for the 2014 Mississippi disAbility Megaconference, by keeping in touch through the Facebook page, which can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/mississippi.megaconference> or checking out the web-site at: <http://msmegaconference.org/home>. You don't have to have a Facebook account in order to see the latest updates or postings on the page. If you do not have computer access, feel free to call any of the partnering agencies to ask questions. And we still have some of the awesome t-shirts left if you missed out on yours! Proceeds go toward the conference plans for next year! Just call 601-968-0600 or message us on Facebook to order your t-shirt soon.

COMING TO YOUR REGION!

FUSE PARTNERS WILL AGAIN HOST STATEWIDE COMMUNITY FORUMS—Public Input Opportunity

August 20 - Brandon, MS
Region 8 Mental Health Center - Main conference room.

August 22 - Gulfport, MS
The Knight Non-profit Center - Banquet Room

August 28 - Oxford, MS
The Oxford Conference Center - Auditorium

Events are free to the public, town hall type meetings, with light refreshments offered, they provide an opportunity for parents, individuals, or service providers to have their voices heard regarding needs, gaps in service, and concerns. It's a chance for the public to help guide the work these agencies do, as well as connect with important resources available.

For info, call 601-968-0600 and ask for Shirley. **All events are from 2 to 4pm. Please Join us!!**

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER!

September 26, 2013 - 6th Annual APSE-Arc Golf Tournament. Country club of Canton. Canton, MS. Questions should be directed to Nancy Cline at 601-664-6182.
<http://www.apse.org/chapters/details.cfm?id=36>

September 28-29, 2013 - The annual Gala and Golf Classic for the MS Brain Injury Association. The Country Club of Jackson. For more info call Lee Jenkins at 601-981-1021.

October 4, 2013 - Mayor's Disability Awareness Health Fair. Biloxi, MS from 10am to 2pm at the Edgewater Mall. Contact 228.604.4020 for information.

November 1, 2013 - Northeast Regional Parent Conference For parents and family members of children with disabilities. Longview Heights Baptist Church; 4501 Goodman Rd.; Olive Branch, MS. <http://www.mspti.org/>

January 14, 2014 - Employment First Awareness Day at the MS State Capitol. From noon until 5pm. Jackson, MS. For more information, please contact Dr. Jerry R. Alliston at 601-266-5979.

If you are in need of a support group, call any of our 3 agencies and someone can connect you with the appropriate resource.

FUSE: News You Can Use

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WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MAKE YOUR COMMUNITY STRONGER, HEALTHIER, AND MORE ADVANCED?

REGISTER TO VOTE, GET TO KNOW YOUR CANDIDATES AND ELECTION DATES, THEN REMEMBER TO CAST YOUR VOTE! If you have a question about voter ID call your local circuit clerk to see if the measure has been approved by the DOJ yet. If not, you will not have to provide a photo ID.



FUSE is a collaborative effort of the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities, Disability Rights Mississippi, and the Institute for Disability Studies and can be made available in alternative formats if requested.

Links and Helpful Resources

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/aidd - The Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) is the U.S. Government organization responsible for implementation of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, known as the DD Act. ADD, its staff and programs, are part of the Administration for Children and Families, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

www.yourtickettowork.com - Employment program for people with disabilities who are interested in going to work.

www.ajb.dni.us/ - America's job bank. CareerOneStop is sponsored by the U. S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

www.arcms.org/index.php - The Arc of Mississippi works to include all children and adults with cognitive, intellectual, and developmental disabilities in every community. They focus on Abilities, respect, choice for all and encourage active citizenship and inclusion in every community.

www.mentalhealth.gov/ - New one-stop, easy to use, resource for comprehensive mental health information, as well as myths, facts, and guides for spotting problems, and includes tips for treatment.

NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE AND REMEMBRANCE: SEPTEMBER 11, 2013 -

9/11 Day is the international non-profit movement to observe September 11 every year as a day of charitable service and doing good deeds.

To find out about more opportunities for volunteerism on this day as well as other programs throughout the year, please contact

Volunteer Mississippi at

<http://volunteermississippi.org/>

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." ~ Margaret Mead

We want to hear from you!

If you found FUSE to be helpful and informative, but would rather receive it via email, then please call and make sure we have your email address (1-800-772-4057).

If you have suggestions for future FUSE topics, please let us know! Call or email us.