

# COMMUNICABILITY



A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR OUR DISABILITY COMMUNITY

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*"No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit."*

— Helen Keller

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**New Horizons Un-Limited Inc. (NHU)** is a non-profit organization based in Milwaukee with a mission to make information and life experiences more accessible to people with lifelong disabilities, their families and caregivers. To learn more about our mission and activities, please visit the NHU website at [www.new-horizons.org](http://www.new-horizons.org).

*If you do not have access to the Internet and cannot visit the websites listed in this newsletter, please contact New Horizons Un-Limited directly at (414) 299-0124 and we would be happy to mail you the information available online.*

## National Interest

### ***President Obama addresses abilities of people with disabilities***

On March 19<sup>th</sup>, at a Los Angeles Town Hall Meeting, President Obama responds to a question about the disconnect between the ability of people with disabilities and the current charity model.

Following is a transcript of this encouraging exchange:

**The Question:** Sir, my question regards the true renaissance that's happening with people with disabilities. They are an emerging population - millions of people with more potential in capacity, more mobile, more educated, more healthy, more empowered technology, but still trapped in very, very old social models that see them in terms of tragedy and charity and need and care. And the modern population of people with disabilities simply does not fit that model.

And as your plan succeeds and you generate these jobs, and as baby boomers retire, we're going to need every single person of capacity to work that we can. And that must include many, many, many thousands, if not millions, of people with disabilities. Can you talk about how your disability agenda will release this emerging potential that's currently wasted and untapped?

**The President:** Well, you are exactly right, that we need everybody. And every program that we have has to be thinking on the front end, how do we make sure that it is inclusive, and building into it our ability to draw on the capacities of persons with disabilities.

That's true on the education front, where our recovery package increases funding for children with disabilities. It is true in terms of how Hilda Solis, our Secretary of Labor, will be thinking about our training programs, to make sure that we are not excluding from training for high-tech jobs, the new jobs of the future, persons with disability.

It means enforcing the ADA and fighting back on some court opinions that have tried to narrow in ways that I think are inappropriate the original intent of that legislation.

So one of the things that I think is important is to make sure, as you pointed out, that we don't see this as an afterthought, a segregated program, but we are infusing every department, every agency, every act that we take with a mindfulness about the importance of persons with disabilities, their skills, their talents, their capacity.

That I think is the approach that my administration is going to take, and we hope that by taking that approach that attitude will infuse state and local governments that are also receiving federal money.

## **Community Choice Act ensures our freedom to choose**

On March 24, 2009, the Community Choice Act of 2009 was introduced in Congress.

The Community Choice Act (CCA) empowers you to choose long term care services in the community rather than a nursing home. The bulk of Medicaid funds only provide long term care in an institutional setting, forcing many out of their homes and stripping away their freedom. Every state that receives Medicaid MUST provide nursing home services, but community based services are optional. The CCA will redirect these funds towards community care and therefore eliminate the need to enter a nursing home.

This bill reaches far beyond the disability community, with millions of families having to make that tough decision to move their aging loved-ones into a nursing home for lack of a better option.

Let us take a stand now to end the institutional bias!

Contact your representatives, share your stories, and encourage them to support this act. To locate your elected officials, visit The Center for Disability Rights Online Directory of Elected Officials at <http://capwiz.com/rochestercdr/dbq/officials/>.

To learn more about the CCA, visit the Library of Congress online at <http://thomas.loc.gov> and search for S.683 or Community Choice Act of 2009.

## **Reports highlight cost-effectiveness of community-based care**

Two recent reports document the ways in which Medicaid's Community-Based Long Term Care Services are more cost-effective than institutional nursing home care. Check out what these reports have to say and share the results with others in your CCA advocacy and education efforts.

*"Do Non-Institutional Long-Term Care Services Reduce Medicaid Spending?"*

By H.S. Kaye, M. LaPlante, and C. Harrington

Health Affairs, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Jan/Feb 2009)  
<http://content.healthaffairs.org>

The full text of the report is available via the Alliance for Health Reform website:

[www.allhealth.org/SCANforum/Mar9Docs/NoninstitutionalLongTermCareServices.pdf](http://www.allhealth.org/SCANforum/Mar9Docs/NoninstitutionalLongTermCareServices.pdf)

*"Taking the Long View: Investing in Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services Is Cost-Effective"*

By R. Mollica, E. Kasser, L. Walker, and A. Houser

INSIGHT on the Issues, Vol. i26 (March 2009)  
A publication of the AARP Public Policy Institute  
[www.aarp.org/ppi](http://www.aarp.org/ppi)

The full text of this report is available via the AARP Public Policy Institute website:

[http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/i26\\_hcbs.pdf](http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/i26_hcbs.pdf)



*On the Web*

### **DisabilityInfo.gov**

If you are looking for disability-related programs or services, DisabilityInfo.gov should be your first stop.

This government-sponsored website provides quick and easy access to comprehensive information about disability programs, services, laws and benefits.

You can search by need, such as employment, housing, benefits, education or you can look for programs available in your state.

Visit [www.disabilityinfo.gov](http://www.disabilityinfo.gov).

### **Disabled Veteran Support**

We here at New Horizons Un-Limited are working diligently to gather important information and links to resources for our community members with disabilities.

We have recently developed a webpage dedicated to Veterans with Disabilities. This page features links to national organizations that can help Vets with employment, homeownership, general wellness, and more.

Check out our Disabled Veteran Support page online at [www.new-horizons.org/cmtvet.html](http://www.new-horizons.org/cmtvet.html).

## Wisconsin Interest

### **Action Alert! Family Care Waiting Lists**

The state legislature is considering Governor Doyle's proposed budget for our state, which includes plans for expanding Family Care (Wisconsin's flexible long-term care service system).

The plan proposed in the budget will not enroll people on the Milwaukee County waiting lists in Family Care during the first year. No one on the waiting list will be served until November 1, 2010. Other counties will be able to serve people on their waiting list during their first year – only Milwaukee County has to delay serving people on the wait list for a year.

### **Contact Your State Legislators with the Following Message:**

*I am contacting you to ask for your help to end waiting lists for people with disabilities when Milwaukee County begins Family Care. The Governor's budget allows other counties to serve people on their waiting list during their first year – only Milwaukee County has to delay serving people on the wait list for 12 months.*

*Please support a change to the budget so people on the Milwaukee County waiting list can be served when Family Care begins in November, like other counties. Some people have been waiting for over 15 years and are just barely hanging on. I hope we can count on your support because people can't wait.*

To find out who your legislators are, call the Legislative Hotline at 1-800-362-9472.

### **Attend the 2009 State Legislator Breakfast**

Meet with your elected officials on Monday, April 27 from 10am – 12 noon at the Italian Community Center in Milwaukee. For more information, call ARC of Greater Milwaukee at (414) 774-6255.

### **Write an Editorial**

Write a letter to the editor of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel about Family Care. Letters are limited to 200 words and you must include your name, home address, and daytime phone number. Email to [jsedit@journal sentinel.com](mailto:jsedit@journal sentinel.com) or fax to (414) 223-5444.

### **For More on Family Care**

Visit: <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/lc care/INDEX.HTM>.

## ***"New Freedom Pass" provides free bus rides to Milwaukee Transit Plus riders***

Save money, reclaim your spontaneity; get to where you want to go with the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) "New Freedom Pass".

MCTS has partnered with the Milwaukee County Office for Persons with Disabilities to provide free MCTS bus rides to Transit Plus clients.

In addition to the free bus pass being offered by Milwaukee County, the State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation is also funding travel assistance training. If you are not familiar with how to use the Milwaukee County bus system, you can participate in a group training session. During the session you will learn how to get to the right bus stop, read bus signs, get on the right bus and how to enter and exit the bus. Training will also include how to use a bus schedule and trip planner.

Participation is voluntary and you may continue to ride Transit Plus while using the New Freedom Pass.

Your "New Freedom Pass" will be good for free rides on all MCTS buses until December 31, 2009.

For more information, contact Tom Kenney, Mobility Manager at the Milwaukee County Transit System via phone at (414) 344-4550 ext. 3507 or via email at [tkenney@mcts.org](mailto:tkenney@mcts.org).

## ***Express Yourself in Art***

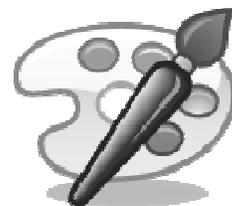
Explore your creative side! VSA Arts of Wisconsin will be hosting a spring painting class, *Painting Techniques with Mary Fran Murray*, for individuals with disabilities on Thursday mornings this spring.

*Where:* Marian Center for Nonprofits, Room 123, 3211 S. Lake Drive, St. Francis, WI 53235

*When:* Thursdays, April 30, May 7, May 14, May 21  
10:00am-11:30am

*Cost:* \$42 per student (no charge for caregivers); partial scholarships are available

To register, call (414) 489-0451.



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**Thank You to Our 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Raffle and Silent Auction Contributors**

