



Tuesday Morning Memo

Wednesday, May 13, 2009

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- **UPDATE ON FEDERAL ACTIVITIES**

Super advocate/parent/Kennedy Foundation Fellow Lisa Pugh continues to be in the middle of many activities taking place at the federal level. She reports that the “buzz” in Washington is that there will be a draft of a comprehensive health care reform bill ready for discussion by the end of June. A senior staffer involved in the development of the draft proposal is a parent of a young adult with a disability. The staffer is ensuring that people with disabilities are a part of the conversations.

There is also much talk at the federal level about the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. This provision includes vocational rehabilitation and general employment services to all, including people with disabilities. Members and staffers from both the U.S. House and Senate are putting in much preliminary work on this issue. There is a push to develop effective performance measures that should lead to better outcomes for underserved populations. There is also a push to develop better accessibility (both physical and programmatic) at one-stop centers.

President Obama recently signed the Kennedy volunteerism act into law. This proposal provides increased support to develop volunteer opportunities for everyone, including people with disabilities.

In April, several Wisconsin disability groups released a report on the inappropriate use of seclusion and restraints in our schools. Efforts to ensure that all schools use only appropriate means to encourage appropriate behaviors of students are gaining steam at the federal level.

- **FEDERAL HEALTH CARE REFORM**

Speaking of comprehensive health care reform, there has been a storm of recent activity and publicity at the federal level. Many related news reports are posted on the website of The Arc-Wisconsin at www.arc-wisconsin.org.

- **THE STATE LEVEL**

Last week, it was announced that the state budget deficit continues to climb. It now stands at about \$6.5 billion. This change has a tremendous impact on the activities and discussions of the members of the Joint Committee on Finance. In fact, the regularly scheduled committee were postponed for a few days to give committee members and staff the chance to review how the increased deficit will impact recent, current and future decisions made by the committee. Again, for related news reports, please visit The Arc-Wisconsin website at www.arc-wisconsin.org.

- **MILWAUKEE TO HOST NATIONAL APSE CONFERENCE**

The 20th annual conference of APSE, a national organization that promotes equitable employment for people with disabilities, will be held from June 30 – July 2 at the Hyatt Regency in Milwaukee. This is an excellent opportunity to learn how to better promote inclusive employment opportunities for people with disabilities. For more information on the conference, please visit the APSE website at <http://www.apse.org/training/index.cfm>.