

Pipeline . . . direct from the state . . .

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
Ted Strickland, Governor John L. Martin, Director

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Happy New Year!



1. Open Letter from ODMRDD Director John Martin

Dear MRDD Community:

Like all of us, I have been reflecting on things – the way we all have become so used to doing with the advent of a new year. It occurs to me that in many ways, this year’s annual process of examination is no different from any other new year. Like you, I have been thinking about what changes 2009 might bring, what might come from my own efforts (as a person, a public servant, and as a member of the community). I wonder, also, what I might learn from past experiences.

This annual ritual has become so familiar that the results sometimes seem trite or trivial. I wonder how many of us have resolved (maybe once again!) to do some of those “familiar” things. Have we resolved to save a little more, waste a little less, and use our resources for what matters most? Are we trying to make better choices in our diets, our habits, and how we care for our health? Maybe we are planning to be kinder toward our loved ones, more helpful to our neighbors, and more understanding of other people? Maybe we are hoping to improve or stabilize our financial situation? Maybe we are committed to doing the best we can with what we have.

I recall many new year conversations where someone remarks with humor, that, “Yes, indeed, this is the year I will start exercising! This time it will happen.”

Maybe it does, and with great gusto at first. As time marches on, the gusto is gone, and so we try again next January. We find that next January what we did before wasn’t all that successful – wasn’t what we really meant to do, or tried to do. It might mean we will have a ‘harder row to hoe’ as we try again.

This is when we may realize that this understanding brings with it some challenges and opportunities. It doesn't mean we shouldn't try – and even though we didn't quite realize all we had resolved to, generally all is not lost. There are consequences to deal with, and feelings of disappointment to resolve, but with the new year we try again.

Over the years I have observed that so many goals really do come to fruition through continued effort, through adjusting an approach, or sometimes when something happens that makes *not changing* no longer a viable option.

In 2009, it occurs to me that there is much that is familiar about the annual new year ritual that gives us the fresh opportunity to try again, try something different, or learn from the past. It fosters a spirit of hope and renewal.

For example, take saving more and wasting less. Maybe this one matters a great deal more than it did just a short while ago. For that matter, I wonder if that may be true for each of the things I mentioned earlier that we ponder each new year. I think it is truer than ever in 2009 that our community may have to grapple with things more urgently, or a little differently, and in light of what is changing around us. Throughout it all, we must bear in mind what we have learned together these past few years.

In December, *Pipeline* readers learned about the impact of the national economy’s deterioration, the budget reductions we need to make in Ohio, and how Governor Strickland and our department plan to approach these challenges. You may remember Governor Strickland saying last month,

“Our great state is confronted with economic challenges of historic proportions. But armed with a true understanding of the challenges we face, Ohioans will be better equipped to honestly address these difficult circumstances with the same strong resolve and spirit of cooperation we have applied to trying times in our past.”

And, you may remember my thoughts on the budget, as well ...

“ It is important to stay focused on our mission to provide opportunities for the continuous improvement of the quality of life for Ohio’s citizens with developmental disabilities and their families. It is our hope that with an increase in federal funding, the impact of these budget cuts can be softened. ”

What is most true for me this year is the commitment that we are all in this together. I believe there are things we can do this year to help us get through these challenging times. I have always believed that by listening to each other, we learn from each other. I have always believed that by

working together, we strengthen and preserve those common values, aspirations, and commitments that bind us. When we cannot have everything that each of us wants or needs, I believe that it is through dialogue and constructive problem-solving that we will be able to look back on 2009 as the year that we were able to do the very best we could for the individuals and families needing our help.

Most importantly, I am hopeful that we will look back and know that this was done with the involvement and in solidarity with all segments of the MRDD community.

Last fall, I wrote to you in *Pipeline* that ...

“Approximately 24 years ago I drove from Philadelphia to Toledo to interview at Sunshine Inc. for the Director’s position. Prior to the interview I was given a tour of the program. The person who gave me that tour was Leola (‘Lee’) Howe. I was extremely impressed by her caring, commitment, and overall knowledge of all of the individuals I met there that day. Having been a direct care worker myself, I thought, “If everyone here is like Lee Howe, this is a place I want to work.”

Today, as I write this letter to you, I will get into the car and drive to Byesville, Ohio. And, tomorrow I will drive to Findlay, Ohio ... and if you look at the schedule below, you’ll see that I am going around the state ... to hear ideas about how to make the best use of the resources we have. *I am especially looking forward to hearing from individuals and families needing or receiving services, along with those who help them.*

I believe that in 2009, the choices we make together will affect what many more January’s to come will look like. I anticipate listening and learning, and working with all of you, not just these first few weeks of January, but throughout the year, and in many settings. I know you have ideas for saving more, and wasting less. And, some 24 years after I first drove to Toledo to interview for a position in this field, I know that our community *is* “like Lee Howe” – and that despite our challenges, Ohio is *still* the place I want to be.

If we resolve to listen and make choices that mean the resources we have are used in the best possible ways to protect the health and safety of the people depending on us, I know we will look back on 2009 as the year we did very important things together, affecting not only what we will be thinking about in January 2010, or even 2011, but for many years to come. I look forward to this journey with you. – *John Martin*

**Schedule of Statewide ‘Budget Conversations’
- All Meetings will be from 7-9 p.m. -**

January 7, 2009
Guernsey County Board of MRDD
60770 Southgate Road
Byesville, Ohio 43723-9699
(740) 439-4451

January 8, 2009
The Findlay Inn & Conference Center

200 E. Main Cross Street
Findlay, Ohio 45840
(419) 422-5682

January 12, 2009
Cox Arboretum & Gardens Metro Park
6733 Springboro Pike
Dayton, Ohio 45449
(937) 434-9005

January 13, 2009
Holiday Inn Columbus/Worthington
7007 N. High Street
Worthington, Ohio 43085
(614) 436-0700

January 15, 2009
Sheraton Suites Akron/Cuyahoga Falls
1989 Front Street
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio 44221
(330) 929-3000



2. CMS Approves Additional Capacity for Level One Waiver

On Friday, January 2, 2009, ODMRDD received notification from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that our Request for Amendment to increase capacity for the Level One waiver was approved. This gives ODMRDD the ability to allocate approximately 2,000 additional Level One waivers to County Boards of MRDD, which brings the total number of available capacity for the Level One waiver to 8500. ODMRDD will begin processing the requests for allocation of this additional capacity and will be sending allocation letters to the County Boards of MRDD as soon as possible.

Patrick Stephan, Deputy Director, Medicaid Development and Administration, notes,

“The increase in capacity of the Level One waiver allocation is encouraging for Ohio in these difficult economic times. We are pleased that CMS has approved our request.”



Allen, Hardin and Putnam Counties

3. New Program to Help Protect Victims with Disabilities

Crime Victim Services in the Lima, Ohio, area announced last month that it has received one of three national grants awarded to protect victims with disabilities. The grant will serve Allen, Hardin and Putnam counties, and was awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of

Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. It is administered through the Massachusetts Building Partnerships for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities and the Massachusetts Disabled Persons Protection Commission.

After a competitive bid process, the State of Delaware; Ohio's Allen, Hardin, and Putnam Counties; and, the City of Portland, Oregon, were selected to receive awards of \$60,000 each, over the next two years, to replicate the Massachusetts multi-disciplinary approach.

The project will be coordinated in Ohio by Allen County Board of MRDD Investigative Agents, in cooperation with Crime Victim Services. According to a recent press release, the project will be implemented through the collaboration of community partners, including: Hardin and Putnam County Boards of MRDD; local law enforcement and prosecutors; The Arc; Adult Protection Services in each county; and, other victim service agencies.

Historically, crimes committed against persons with disabilities have not been adequately recognized or reported to the appropriate authorities, and, given the complex nature of the cases, prosecution rates are low. Some reasons for under-reporting or inadequate investigation are:

- Lack of awareness by victims and caregivers regarding the definition of abuse and the systems used for reporting;
- Lack of effective coordination between law enforcement, adult protection, and human service agencies; and,
- Reluctance by police, prosecutors, and judges to rely on the testimony of a person with a disability.

According to the Crime Victim Services press release,

“Through formalized agreements among local police, prosecutors, law enforcement, victim services agencies, and adult protective services, the newly-funded program creates a continuum of protection for our most vulnerable persons. It has clearly changed how professionals in Massachusetts address victimization of persons with disabilities, by affording them the same protections and rights as the public at large, and ensuring that suspected criminal activities are investigated and prosecuted by trained law enforcement.”

It is hoped that through the grant opportunity, positive changes result from training, policy development, and a multidisciplinary approach -- enhancing the safety and well-being of people with disabilities.

Laurel Neufeld Weaver, Rape Crisis Coordinator, and licensed clinical social worker for Crime Victim Services in Allen and Putnam Counties, is project supervisor for the grant. Contact her at 419-222-8666



4. NASDDDS Releases Health Reform White Paper

The National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS) has released a document titled, *Health Care Reform: Long-Term Services and Supports for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities*. This policy paper is meant to inform the national health care reform debate by focusing attention on long term care and articulating a set of key principles for legislators to consider when approaching the long term care system -- specifically services for people with developmental disabilities.

The principles described in the paper include:

- The outcome of supports and services should be a good everyday life in the community.
- People with developmental disabilities must have control over their lives.
- Employment is a central feature of independence and life in the community.
- Families play a central role in supporting both adults and children with disabilities.
- Waiting Lists must be addressed.
- Services must be coordinated and managed.
- Disability-specific expertise must be retained as part of the service system.
- Quality of services and supports are an essential feature of a service system.
- Information technology is an essential element to delivering quality services.

The complete document can be found at <http://www.nasddds.org/pdf/HealthCareReform.pdf>



[2009 Scholarships...](#)

5. For Students with *Parents Who Have Disabilities*

Through the Looking Glass, and its [New National Center for Parents with Disabilities and their Families](#), will award new scholarships specifically for high school seniors and college students who have *parents with disabilities*. These scholarships are part of a new federal grant, and are new awards that have different application procedures than in the past.

There are two separate scholarship awards, and each has separate eligibility requirements:

- *High School Seniors*: To be eligible, a student must be a high school graduate (or graduating senior) by Summer 2009, planning to attend college in Fall 2009, and have at least one *parent with a disability*. Five separate \$1000 awards will be awarded in Fall 2009. Individuals may submit only one application per award period.
- *College Students*: To be eligible, a student must be currently enrolled in a college or university, be 21 years of age or younger as of March 16, 2009, and have at least one *parent with a disability*. Five separate \$1000 awards will be awarded in Fall 2009. Individuals may submit only one application per award period.

Selection criteria for all scholarships include academic performance, community activities and service, letters of recommendation, and an original essay describing the experience of growing up with a parent with a disability.

Research Study

These scholarships are also part of a research study on young adult children of parents with disabilities. Applicants should be willing to participate in an optional survey about young adult children of parents with disabilities. Once a person consents to participate in the optional survey, it will be emailed after receipt of the completed application. The additional information submitted on this survey will *not* affect a person's scholarship chances, and will *not* be disclosed to anyone other than the project researchers. All identifying information will be removed.

All application materials must be completed and postmarked by March 16, 2009.

*For more information, contact: Scholarships Coordinator, Through the Looking Glass,
The National Center for Parents with Disabilities and their Families
2198 Sixth Street, Suite 100, Berkeley, CA 94710
(800) 644-2666 (voice); (800) 804-1616 (TDD/TTY); FAX: (510) 848-4445
Website: <http://www.lookingglass.org/>*



6. Governor Strickland Signs House Bill 129, Vetoes Others

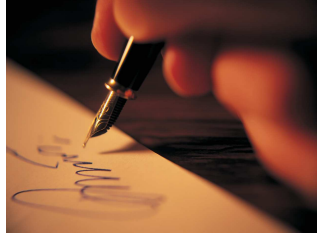
House Bill 129 (*HB 129 -- Pilot program: Certain councils/boards meet by means of telecommunication*) was sent to Governor Ted Strickland on December 31, 2008, after passing both houses of the Ohio General Assembly. The bill was signed into law on January 6, 2009, and will allow, as a pilot program for two years, specific Councils and Boards (*see legislative summary below*) to adopt a rule to allow members to participate in their public meetings by teleconference or by interactive video conference. A minimum of three members must be physically present to participate.

Why HB129 is Important to the MRDD Community

Each Council or Board must subsequently prepare a report on the results of this pilot program for the General Assembly on the effects of this pilot program. If the recipients of the reports determine that the pilot program results could be profitably applied to meetings of all public bodies or only to public bodies whose members must travel long distances to attend meetings, the recipient may recommend the relevant type of legislation for introduction.

The pilot program also will allow the outlined Board and Council Members to 'be present' meetings while not needing to travel long distances or brave inclement weather. Additionally, this will give people with significant disabilities the opportunity to become Board or Council Members and participate in proceedings without concern for stamina or physical issues that might limit travel or attendance at meetings.

HB129 will increase opportunities for people with disabilities to have input into programs and services that affect their daily lives. Moreover, members of the public should be able to attend these meetings without concern regarding the cost or the distance of travel. This pilot will allow these organizations to take full advantage of the talents and abilities of persons with disabilities without barriers due to travel or other individual disability issues.



Summary of HB 129

For a period of two years immediately following the bill's effective date, a pilot program is authorized that allows –

- Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council;
- Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council;
- Governor's Council on People with Disabilities; and,
- The facility governing board and judicial advisory board that govern and advise the STAR Community Justice Center located in Franklin Furnace, Ohio;

– each to adopt a rule that authorizes its members to be present at council or board meetings open to the public *by teleconference or by interactive video teleconference*, in lieu of being present in person, in order to be considered *present, or to vote at those meetings* and for purposes of determining whether *a quorum is present* at those meetings, provided that a minimum of three members be physically present to participate and to count towards a quorum at those meetings. Additionally, during the second year of the pilot program a council or board must hold at least one meeting at which members must be physically present to participate and to count towards a quorum.

A council or board that desires to allow its members to participate in meetings in this manner must *adopt a rule that:*

- Authorizes the participation of the council's or board's members in the pilot program;
- Establishes a method to authenticate the identity of members who will be present at those meetings by teleconference or by interactive video teleconference; and,
- Establishes a policy regarding the distribution and circulation of appropriate documents to the council or board members, the public, and the media, in advance of the meeting.

Reporting Responsibilities

If such a rule is adopted by a council or board, each must provide, not later than 18 months after the bill's effective date (to the House Speaker, Senate President, and House and Senate Minority Leaders) a report that describes the effects on the operation of the council or board of member participation in council or board meetings by teleconference or by interactive video teleconference. The report must describe any additional costs the council or board incurred, and any cost savings the council or board realized, through member participation in council or board meetings in this manner. In addition, the report must document various other prescribed elements (complete text at http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=127_HB_129).

If any report recipient determines that the pilot program results could profitably be applied to meetings of all public bodies, or only to public bodies whose members must travel long distances to attend meetings, the recipient may recommend the relevant legislation for introduction.

In addition to the signing of HB 129, Governor Strickland, as expected, vetoed three measures that his administration had declined to endorse in the waning days of the 127th General Assembly. These included an update to election laws; a tax credit program for the movie industry; and, a military veterans bonus plan financed with 'rainy day' funds. The governor had promised to veto the veterans bonus measure, stating that he preferred a bond-backed approach.

*Description and analysis of this bill provided by Mark Seifarth, ODMRDD Legislative Liaison.
Mark.Seifarth@dmr.state.oh.us*



Toll-Free Hotline

ODMRDD Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)

The ODMRDD toll-free hotline number for reporting abuse/neglect and other MUIs is **1-866-313-MRDD (6733)**. Please note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of MRDD, however, it is understood that there may be times an individual, staff member, or family member may feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember that the hotline number exists, and is to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.



1-866-313-MRDD (6733)

Pipeline feedback ... direct from you to the state ...

Questions? Comments? Pipeline is an electronic publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD), distributed approximately twice monthly to update and inform readers of time-sensitive, relevant information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us about Pipeline at feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us, or contact Sherry Steinman at sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us, phone (614) 644-0262.

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