

Disability Community Celebrates Re-introduction of the DIA

On January 15th, disability leaders convened in Washington D.C. alongside Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer (D-NY) to reintroduce the Disability Integration Act (DIA) in the 116th Congress. Originally introduced in the 114th Congress, during the last session the DIA gained the co-sponsorship of 26 senators and 144 representatives. In addition, the new Congress brings in many new representatives who pledged to support the DIA during their campaigns. Disability leaders have established a goal to have both houses of Congress approve the DIA within the next two years.

The DIA provides people with disabilities a legally protected choice to receive Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS) through Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS). By putting this choice into law, people with disabilities can obtain the services they need, while living in the community. Too many people must live in institutional settings, simply because existing medical coverage will not pay for HCBS. In practice, the DIA will make community living a guaranteed right for people with disabilities.



Bruce Darling and Anita Cameron, the event's Master of Ceremonies, look on as Shonda McLaughlin speaks. Anita is the Not Dead Yet Director of Minority Outreach, and Shonda is a Not Dead Yet Board Officer.

While the *Olmstead v. L.C.* Supreme Court ruling in 1999 affirmed the right for Americans to live in the most integrated setting possible, little has changed in the two decades since. For example, the Affordable Care Act included a Community First Choice Option, which provided financial incentives for HCBS. However, only six states implemented the option; additionally, many states obtained the additional federal funds, but continue to have policies that encourage institutional placement over HCBS.

Debbie Bonomo
Board Chair

Bruce E. Darling
President/CEO

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LEARN ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS



Dear Friends,

On the anniversary of the late civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Junior's birthday, I had the pleasure to be in Washington D.C. for the reintroduction of the Disability Integration Act. You may have heard my statement "the Constitution does not have an asterisk on it," and the DIA's passage will make history for disabled Americans. Living in an institution does not safeguard the unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Many other things have been going on here at CDR. I invite you to check out our upcoming events, catch up on our programs and services, and read about our featured staff member.

Please contact us to learn more about CDR and how you can get involved. Stay tuned for more fun events and exciting news!

Center for Disability Rights works to ensure the full integration, independence and civil rights of people with disabilities and seniors in the community.

Bruce E. Darling

CDR's Staff Highlight: Kathryn Carroll

Kathryn "Katy" Carroll, who joined CDR as our Policy Analyst in January 2018, has been promoted to the Manager of Government Affairs. (Gregg Beratan, in turn, is our new Director of Development). With a background in human rights and inclusive development, she is licensed to practice law in New York state and earned her J.D. from St. John's University in Queens, NY.

Katy cited her biggest accomplishment to date as responding to the changes in the healthcare landscape in New York, citing the need for services and supports toward our mission of community integration. Katy has been integral in building a larger advocacy network, and can lay claim to advocacy experience at all levels: national, state, and local.

With her new role, Katy is excited to help CDR work with all levels of government to pursue our mission, and also is prepared for the reality that government seems to find endless ways of affecting the lives of disabled people, both for the better and for the worse. Katy is a member of the New York State Independent Living Council and an active member of the New York State Bar Association. We know that she is prepared for the challenges that will continue to lay ahead.



Katy Carroll outside the State Capitol building in Albany.

ADA
Gala

Celebrating the 29th anniversary
of the **Americans with Disabilities Act!**
ARTISANworks

Thursday, July 18, 2019
6 o'clock until 10 o'clock in the evening

Proceeds to benefit the Center for Disability Rights

For reservations, please contact Gregg Beratan
events@cdrmys.org • 585.546.7510

Wegmans

CDR would like to thank Wegmans for its Sponsorship

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MARK YOUR
CALENDAR!

June 12, 2019

Free Our People Film Festival

The Little Theatre, 240 East Ave., Rochester

6:00pm—8:30pm

June 16, 2019

ADA Picnic

Tupelo Shelter, Genesee Valley Park

1:00pm—3:00pm

July 18, 2019

ADA Gala

ARTISANworks, 565 Blossom Rd., Rochester

6:00pm—10:00pm

Updates From Advocacy Team

As you may know, the FY 2020 State Budget included plans to restrict and restructure Fiscal Intermediaries, which would radically affect Consumer Directed Personal Assistance (CDPA) programs. While the approved state budget differs from the initial proposals, many of our concerns remain.

The biggest change, so far, will be the contracting of Fiscal Intermediaries directly through the state Department of Health. This may sound harmless, but the DOH has yet to truly understand how FI's work. The pressure will continue to limit the number of FI's available to New Yorkers. While their belief is this will get rid of "bad actors" in the system, it would instead risk taking away CDPA services for disabled people that depend on the program to stay in their homes and communities.

What remains to be seen are the Medicaid reimbursement rates and structures. The Governor proposed a tiered per member per month structure, at a far lower rate. These radical changes would effectively jeopardize the ability to serve people with higher support needs. It would also compromise the FI's abilities to provide assistance in managing services, which go far beyond "payroll processing," and would certainly force disabled people into institutions.

Reintroduction of the DIA

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Passing the DIA will allow disabled Americans to choose full integration with non-disabled counterparts, and making independent living a reality to those who do not have that option now. By legally protecting the right to live in the community, while being able to access and pay for necessary supports, the disability community will have the same civil rights as our non-disabled counterparts.

Extensive evidence demonstrates that HCBS are less expensive than institutional services. According to *Do Noninstitutional Long-Term Care Services Reduce Medicaid Spending?* an average of \$44,000 was saved per person from utilizing HCBS through waiver programs, in lieu of institutional services. The Senate report *Separate and Unequal* cites 38 studies, proving HCBS are less expensive than institutional care, as well as evidence from 14 states proving lower costs for HCBS for individuals needing LTSS.

According to the CDC, one in four Americans identified as having a disability. While a considerable amount of the country's population, this pales to a 2010 Harris poll cited by advocates, which said that 89% of all Americans, and 94% of retirees, support legislation that would require the choice of HCBS for Americans needing LTSS.

What's New in Albany

When the New York State Legislature is in session, the Advocacy Team has a lot of work to do in Albany. CDR staff and consumers have several opportunities each session to join us! Here are some examples of current legislation that would impact the disability community:

Oppose Assisted Suicide legislation (AB2694/SB3947)

Support re-establishing the Office of the Advocate for People with Disabilities (A4737/S1674)

Support ending Subminimum Wages for New Yorkers with Disabilities (A7077/S2018)

Support ensuring disabled people have a permanent voice at the table for Public Transit System transportation authorities (A6168-A/S3656)

Want to join us on our Advocacy Trips? Call us at 585.546.7510 or email us at advocacy@cdrnys.org to join our Advocacy Group!

Contact Advocacy



(585) 546-7510
Ask for Advocacy!



advocacy@cdrnys.org
Email Our Team!

Get Involved
With Us Today!

Upcoming Board Meeting

June 20, 2019
4:00pm-7:00pm
497 State Street
Rochester, NY 14608

For dates of upcoming board meetings, please contact Linda Taylor:
Ltaylor@cdrnys.org

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FEATURES

Rochester Housing Authority Awarded 89 Housing Vouchers

Last year, we announced that CDR collaborated with the Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) for the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Mainstream Voucher Program. In this newsletter issue, we are excited to announce that the Request for Proposal (RFP) granted RHA an award of 89 housing vouchers!

As the supporting agency, CDR will work with the participants in providing supportive services for their first year of participation. Examples of assistance may include finding eligible housing units, paperwork such as recertification and reporting changes, and with advocating for participants.

This award reflects that both CDR and RHA have histories of successes in the Greater Rochester Area. What CDR brings to the table with this relationship is our experience with people with disabilities, in addition to our history in working with property managers to address housing needs.

HUD awarded 12,027 housing vouchers throughout the United States to 286 public housing agencies. This was possible through the Omnibus Appropriations Acts in 2017 and 2018, which provided new funding for the Mainstream Voucher program for the first time since 2005.



Are you interested in getting involved with us?

You can help by:

- **Volunteering**
- **Donating**
- **Attending Events**

You can join our:

- **Teams**
- **Advocacy Efforts**
- **Committees**

Ask us how you can get involved!

We are not-for profit organizations working to keep people with disabilities living independently in the community, with help from services and support they may need.



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