



TARC NEWSLETTER

Oklahoma's leading information source on issues impacting the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families

January/February
2010

CONTENTS

Decade in Disability Services.....1-3

Second Session of the Legislature.....4

Rosa's Law.....5

OK Deaf-Blind Assistance Project.....5

The Crunch and the Cliff.....6-7

Genes Identified as Cause for Intellectual Disability.....7

New Pathologies and Autism..8

Autism News Roundup.....9

Olmstead Enforcement.....10

Calendar of Events.....10

THE DECADE IN DISABILITY SERVICES

Legislature



PEOPLE SERVED

SERVICES



Courts

The BIG ISSUES

Personality



TRENDS

MONEY \$

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TARC is committed to ensuring a high quality of life for Oklahomans with developmental disabilities through education, empowerment, support and advocacy. For additional information about TARC or to volunteer, contact us at:

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THE DECADE IN DISABILITY SERVICES

By: John F. Gajda, TARC Executive Director

It seems like just yesterday that we were celebrating the beginning of the new millennium -the year 2000 and now the first decade of the 21st century has run its course. It's hard to believe!

At the beginning of 2010 as we mark the beginning of a new decade, it is a good time to look back at the 10 years of the past decade in Oklahoma from a disability perspective. We have had changes in our state service system for the good and for the bad. The social and political landscape had definitely changed and as a result we look at service for people with disabilities differently.

These highlights focus on an Oklahoma perspective. There were many other noteworthy events on the national level that affected the lives of people with developmental disabilities in the past decade.

After going over the events of the past decade to put together these highlights, it is hard to believe that so much has happened and so little has changed. Two factors drive this impression: 1. The decade has been a real rollercoaster for funding – disability services have had several cycles of good years, better years and bad years. 2.) Too many of the positive initiatives are either pilot projects or special initiatives and too few have yet become permanent programs.

I wish I could look into a crystal ball and tell you where we are going to be at the end of this new decade we are starting. Based on the lesson of the past 10 years I would have to guess that wherever disability services end up, the path we follow will be winding, rocky, filled with hairpin turns, and difficult to maintain forward motion at a reasonable pace. In short, the new decade will continue to confront advocates for people with disabilities with difficult challenges that will test our resolve.

10 Respected Disability Advocates in the Oklahoma Legislature

With the full impact of term limits now being felt, the Oklahoma state legislature is becoming a revolving door with fewer members who can remember when and why programs were created and initiatives begun. While reviewing bills of interest to the disability community over the past decade a number of names of some legislative sponsors who filed bills to address concerns of the disability community kept coming up over and over again. Many are no longer serving in the legislature. The 10 most notable are:

Representative Debbie Blackburn

Senator Bernest Cain

Senator Mary Easley

Representative Darrell Gilbert

Senator Jay Paul Gumm

Senator Constance Johnson

Representative Al Lindley

Representative Mark Liotta

Senator Angela Monson

Representative Opio Toure

The 10 Big Disability Issues

- * Autism
- * Direct Care Staff Retention
- * Dually Diagnosed
- * Funding
- * Mandated Insurance Coverage
- * Olmstead Decision
- * State-run institutions
- * Self-Directed Care
- * Training
- * Waiting List

Lost Leaders

We lost some giants in the disability advocacy movement this decade.

They include:

September 13, 2001 - *Dr. Gunnar Dybwad*: One of the founding fathers of Inclusion International. Persons with special needs, their families and friends, lost one of their most outspoken and loving advocates. Together with his wife Rosemary, who died in 1992, they committed their life work to promoting and fighting for the civil rights and self determination of persons with mental disabilities around the globe.

June 21, 2002- *Justin Dart*: He was a leader of the international disability rights movement and a renowned human rights activist. Dart is best known for his work in passing the Americans with Disabilities Act.

August 11, 2009 - *Eunice Kennedy Shriver*: She worked tirelessly on behalf of persons with intellectual disabilities. As Executive Vice President of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, Mrs. Shriver helped achieve many advances in both social policy and general understanding of the issues facing individuals with intellectual disabilities. She is best known as the founder of Special Olympics International.

10 New Positive Program Initiatives

- Agrability Program
- Assisted Technology Loan program
- Autism Pilot
- Money Follow the Person (MFP) Systems Change Grant
- Person Centered Planning
- Prader Willie Group Home Program
- Self Directed Care Pilot
- Special Education Resolution Center
- Specialized Group Homes
- TEFRA Medicaid Option

Enduring State Bureaucrats

Top level government bureaucrats seem to come and go with some regularity. In Oklahoma in the disability arena there were only a few individuals who have major policy roles who started and ended the decade in the same position. Included are :

Michael Fogerty - Chief Executive Officer, Oklahoma Health Care Authority

Sandy Garrett – Superintendent of Public Instruction

Howard Hendrick – Director of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services

Jim Nicholson – Division Administrator of the OKDHS Developmental Disabilities Services Division

Steve Stokes- Director of the Oklahoma Office of Disability Concerns

Anne Trudgeon – Director, Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council

Valerie Williams – Director, Center for Learning and Leadership/Oklahoma’s federally designated University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center

Notable Name Changes

It seems that the titles and acronyms are always changing just to keep even those on the inside on their toes. In the past decade notable changes included these shifts:

From University Affiliated Programs (UAP)

...to University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Services (UCEDD)

From American Association on Mental Retardation(AAMR)

...to American Association on Intellectual and related Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD)

From Oklahoma Office of Handicapped Concerns

... to Oklahoma Office of Disability Concerns

Good Ideas That Died at the Oklahoma Legislative

Each year bills filed in the Oklahoma Legislature fail to be approved. Some really should not be approved while other good ideas just fade away. There are a handful of good proposals that would benefit people with disabilities that were filed in this past decade over and over again that still did not become law – certainly not for lack of trying:

- ◇ Tax credits for expenses associated with the cost of caring for a child with disabilities. In a decade when rewards for special interests were gifted with numerous tax breaks, families of children with disabilities didn't count.
- ◇ Sales tax exemption for the purchase of hearing aids.
- ◇ Nick's Law that would mandate that insurance companies provide coverage for the treatment of autism.

Noteworthy Federal Court Decisions

In the past decade there were many Federal court rulings but two have had the most enduring impact on people with disabilities in Oklahoma:

2002 - U.S. Supreme Court ruled that executing people with mental retardation was cruel and unusual punishment prohibited by the constitution.

2005 – Decision by U.S. Federal District Court in Tulsa to end the 20 year class action law suit that led to the closing of the Hissom Memorial Center and removing the case from the court's active docket.

People Served by DDS in State Run Institutions

1/1/2000- 407

1/1/2010- 335

People Served by Home & Comm. Based Wavier

1/1/2000- 3,276

1/1/2010- 5,200

Names in the News

Sometimes people become well known not just for who they are but because of issues their circumstances represent. That was the case for these individuals in the past decade:

» Terri Schiavo – Young woman who died in Florida after a protracted debate in the courts, legislative bodies and the media on end-of-life and quality of life issues.

» Ashley – Yes, simply “Ashley”. This child with significant disabilities came to national attention when it was revealed that her parents subjected her to removal of her uterus and breasts and administered hormone treatments to stunt her growth. This became known as “the Ashley Treatment” and ignited a flurry of both criticism and support for her parents for authorizing this procedure.

Notable Decade Ending OKDHS Developmental Disabilities Services Division Numbers

▶ People Served - 14,179

▶ People on Waiting List- 5,359

Second Session of the 52nd Legislature

The 2010 Oklahoma legislative session convened at noon on February 1 in a joint session of the House and Senate to hear Governor Henry present his State of the State address and his constitutionally-mandated balanced budget.

Appropriation subcommittees in both the House and Senate spent the month of December meeting with agency officials to examine the impact of current budget cuts and to hear agencies' proposals for additional reductions. The Governor and the legislature will be looking at a whole host of options, from the Rainy Day Fund and federal stimulus funds, to additional targeted cuts and other kinds of efficiencies and revenue enhancements. The full legislature will decide early on whether to follow the leadership's budget outline for the remainder of FY2010 then turn its attention to the FY2011 budget.

Much of the session will be consumed with the legislature trying to find the proper balance of savings, new or additional fees, budgeting devices and painful cuts to put together a budget for FY2011. The political will probably does not exist for any tax increases. No one knows when or how quickly the Oklahoma economy will recover but hopefully the proper balance will be achieved between certain cuts now and possible cuts later. Some programs, if lost now, will never be recovered.

In the final analysis, the legislature may choose to not face these difficult issues, but instead to punt them to state agencies. Arguably, agencies know more about the needs of the people they serve, but sometimes the agencies seem to get distracted by other priorities. And there is certainly less opportunity for public input with the agencies than there is with the legislature.

In addition to the budget, 2235 new bills were filed by the January 14th deadline. Speaker Benge suspended the usual January committee meetings, which means both the House and Senate will begin committee hearings on substantive bills after February 1. This allows four weeks for passing bills out of House committees by the February 25 deadline and only three weeks to meet the Senate deadline of February 18. Once session convenes, each legislator is extremely pressed for time to chair committee meetings, attend other commit-

tee meetings and still present his/her own bills to the proper committee.

The March edition of the TARC Newsletter will include an analysis of the bills being considered.

Oklahoma Legislative and Budget Process Overview: *All You Need to Know for the 2010 Legislative Session*

What is a conference committee? Why does it take so long for a bill to be passed? Who is Vice-Chair of the Appropriations and Budget Committee? How much money is there in the Rainy Day Fund?

With the start of the 2010 legislative session on February 1st, OK Policy released its fully updated Oklahoma Legislative and Budget Process Overview. The Overview provides clear and comprehensive on such subjects as:

- Composition of the Legislature, including leadership positions and committee chairs;
- the Executive Branch;
- the policy path from bill introduction to law;
- Budget process;
- Legislative resources.

Whether you are a veteran at the Capitol or novice; a 6-term legislator, interest group director or occasional advocate, you will find the Overview informative and helpful over the coming months. To download the 2010 Oklahoma Legislative and Budget Process Overview or view it as an online presentation go to <http://okpolicy.org/2010-oklahoma-legislative-overview>

16th Annual People with Disabilities Awareness Day 2010

When: Wednesday April 7th, 2010

Where: State Capitol, 2300 N. Lincoln Blvd.,
Oklahoma City

Time: 8:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.

"Be Seen, Wear Green", if you can to increase our impact at the State Capitol

ROSA'S LAW – A Call to Action!

Congress is on a roll for disability issues—first with the passage of hate crimes legislation that included protections for people with disabilities, and now with the introduction of Rosa's Law (s.2871), a bill being considered by the U.S. Congress to substitute outdated, stigmatizing terms in federal health, education and labor laws. This bill would replace the term “mental retardation” and “mentally retarded” with “intellectual disability” and “individual with an intellectual disability” in federal health, education and labor policy statutes.

It is important to note that Rosa's Law will not affect in any way the eligibility and/or services and supports available through the federal laws that would be altered by this change in terminology.

This bill is very important for people with intellectual disabilities who understand that language plays a crucial role in how they are perceived and treated in society and are actively advocating for terminology changes in federal and state laws. “Mentally retarded,” once an accepted medical term, is now often used to demean and insult people. Changing how we talk about people with intellectual disabilities is a critical step in promoting and protecting basic civil and human rights.

As of December 21, Rosa's Law has 23 cosponsors (none from Oklahoma) in the Senate and the support of more than 30 national organizations, including The Arc of the U.S.

Each community needs to raise their voices and let Congress know that the more than 6 million people with intellectual disabilities and their families in America have the power to create change. Successfully passing this legislation depends on all participation at the grassroots level.

All supporters are urged to contact their local representatives in Congress and tell them to support Rosa's Law. If grassroots advocates continue to let their Senators and Representatives know that Rosa's law is a priority, the bills will be much more likely to make their way through the lengthy legislative process and become law. Those who are interested can use The Arc of the U.S. Legislative action center to contact their representative by going to www.thearc.org, clicking on “Public Policy” in the left column and then the red “Federal Legislative Action Center” link on the bottom of the page.

Source: The ARC

Oklahoma Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Project: Awareness Information

Oklahoma Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Project (OKDBTAP) has a goal to increase the capacity to improve outcomes for children and youth with deaf-blindness (DB) and their families through technical assistance using research/evidence based teaching strategies, professional development workshops, and to share research/evidence based learning materials and resources.

Any parent or guardian of a child with deaf-blindness, age birth - 21 years, may request technical assistance from the project. In addition, educational personnel and service providers from Oklahoma's SoonerStart Program, Oklahoma School Districts (LEAs), private schools, or other agency personnel serving students with deaf-blindness may also receive project services.

Who is Eligible for Services?

- Individuals from birth through age 21 who are deaf-blind.
- Family members and care providers of individuals who are deaf-blind.
- Personnel from public and private schools, as well as public and private agencies, who serve persons who are deaf-blind and their families.

Very few children who qualify for the census are totally deaf or blind. Qualified individuals may have additional disabilities, such as: intellectual disabilities, motor, or medical conditions.

Oklahoma Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Project provides technical assistance and consultation to children, families, SoonerStart, and to private/public schools and their individual teachers and service providers. The types of Technical Assistance (TA) provided are listed below:

- Site visits / classroom
- Telephone TA
- Materials— research/evidence based written materials or DVDs
- In-service workshops
- Statewide training workshops
- Information regarding state resources
- A combination of the above listing

There are no fees for services. You can print a referral form and learn more about this project at: <http://www.ou.edu/okdbp/>.

The Crunch and the Cliff: Medicaid Funding Faces Dual Perils

by David Blatt

Oklahoma in the midst of what is certain to be a severe and extended fiscal crisis, protecting core public services in every area of state government from deep and painful budget cuts poses a great challenge. However, protecting the budget of Medicaid, the main health insurance program for low-income children, seniors, pregnant women, and persons with disabilities, will present policymakers with special difficulties.

As noted in a recent fact sheet from the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, state Medicaid budgets face two distinct dilemmas: “the crunch” and “the cliff”. The crunch refers to the surge in Medicaid enrollment and spending associated with the economic downturn, as those losing jobs and access to employer-based coverage turn to Medicaid for coverage. Nationally, the Kaiser Commission found that total Medicaid spending growth averaged 7.9 percent across all states in FY 2009, the highest rate of growth in six years. As we reported in our last Numbers You Need bulletin, Oklahoma’s SoonerCare (Medicaid) enrollment climbed 8.9 percent between August 2008 and August 2009 and shows no signs of letting up.

With the crunch expected to keep Medicaid expenditures growing, states are simultaneously heading towards “the cliff”, namely the end of enhanced federal Medicaid funding provided as part of the stimulus, or American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The stimulus bill increased the federal government’s share of Medicaid expenditures, known as FMAP, by a substantial amount. Oklahoma is receiving an FMAP of 75.83 in FY ‘10 instead of its normal rate of 64.43. However, the enhanced FMAP is in effect only temporarily, for nine quarters, beginning in October 2008 and terminating December 31, 2010. This year’s state initial budget includes over \$430 million of enhanced FMAP funds, and a similar, or larger, amount will almost certainly be allocated for FY ‘11. However, if and when the ARRA clock strikes midnight, Oklahoma’s federal match rate will revert to below 65 percent – creating a shortfall of several hundred million dollars for FY ‘12. Even if the economy has begun a strong recovery, state revenues are unlikely to grow sufficiently to fill a hole

of that magnitude.

State governments and advocates for the populations served by Medicaid are working hard to get Congress to consider an FMAP phase-down over a period of two to three years to allow state revenues time to recover. The health reform bill passed by the House of Representatives on October 29th would extend temporary enhanced FMAP rates for two quarters, through June 2011. It’s not clear whether this extension will be part of any final legislation that passes both Chambers, or whether Congress will be willing to extend assistance past June 2011.

For now, at least, the option of responding to budget shortfalls by cutting Medicaid eligibility is formally off the table. ARRA expressly prohibits states from implementing any eligibility standards, methodologies or procedures that are more restrictive than those in effect on July 1, 2008. This leaves eliminating or reducing coverage of non-mandatory benefits and provider rate cuts as the only options for addressing budget shortfalls in the short term, as are currently being considered by the Oklahoma Health Care Authority. Once ARRA ends, however, all bets are off; as the Kaiser Commission notes, “Without the ARRA funds and maintenance of eligibility requirements, states may consider severe eligibility and benefit cuts to meet balanced budget requirements.”

The additional wild card in the Medicaid funding deck is federal health care reform. A sizable number of the uninsured would become newly eligible for Medicaid under both the House and Senate versions of health care reform. In addition, many of those who are currently eligible for Medicaid but not enrolled would be added to the program should coverage become mandated. The federal government would pay the vast majority of the costs for those newly covered by Medicaid, but the states would be obligated for at least some portion. The Oklahoma Health Care Authority has estimated the annual additional state expense of this coverage at \$128 million. While this has elicited strong expressions of alarm from Republicans in the Legislature and running for Governor, a recent report from the President’s Council of Economic Advisors points out that health care reform would have substantial benefits for state



“Crunch” continued on pg. 7

governments. States would be absolved of covering the health care costs of low-income uninsured citizens and legal residents, who currently require a large sum of state spending on uncompensated care, and would benefit from a reduction of the “hidden tax” of paying for the uninsured that inflates the health care premium costs of public employees.

Amidst all this uncertainty, the only thing clear is that to make it through the state fiscal crisis without endangering the health care coverage of hundreds of thousands of low-income Oklahomans will require help from Washington and creative and courageous policymaking here in Oklahoma.

Gene Identified as Cause of Some Forms of Intellectual Disability



A gene involved in some forms of intellectual disability has been identified by scientists at the Center for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), as published this month in *The American Journal of Human Genetics*. The gene is called TRAPPC9.

In the same journal two other international research teams independently confirm the findings of Dr. John B. Vincent, a scientist at CAMH, and his team. “This spotlights the intense interest that genetics is bringing to types of inherited intellectual disability that, to date, have been poorly understood,” says Dr. Vincent.

“Now that we have identified TRAPPC9 as a gene that may be associated with hundreds of thousands of cases of intellectual disability world-wide, we can build on that knowledge with research to help individuals and their families,” says Dr. Vincent.

Unlike intellectual disabilities that are part of a syndrome with other medical conditions or physical abnormalities, TRAPPC9 is associated with non-syndromic types of intellectual disability; these cause up to 50 per cent of intellectual disability worldwide. “The discovery announced today sheds light on a gene for intellectual disability on one of the non-sex chromosomes,” says Dr. Vincent, “just the seventh such gene that we know of.” The mutation in the TRAPPC9 gene identified by

Dr. Vincent’s team causes the production of a truncated version of a protein and results in faulty cell function.

Because there are no highly recognizable physical differences that are associated with the non-syndromic intellectual disabilities, it is more difficult to tease out the genetic mutations that may cause them. But researchers and families themselves have long suspected an inherited factor, based on patterns observed in extended families. Families with many affected individuals, and particular families from cultures where cousin-cousin marriages are common, have become invaluable in the search for such genes, and with recent advances in technology it is now possible to map disease-causing genes in a single family.

Dr. Vincent’s team first identified and mapped out the TRAPPC9 gene in a large family from Pakistan that had at least seven members with non-syndromic intellectual disability. “To date, most such genes have only been found responsible for disease in a single family,” he adds.

But Dr. Vincent’s team also found a mutation in the same gene in a family from Iran, confirming the gene’s importance. “This additional finding gives us a very strong reason to continue to explore the gene and its possible mutations,” he says.

Future research may include studying how the gene is involved in normal brain function, as well as studying genes with similar functions as candidate genes for intellectual disability, and devising potential therapeutic strategies. Dr. Vincent’s team aims to provide scientists more clues to understand, diagnose, prevent, and treat intellectual disabilities.

Intellectual disabilities, also known as developmental delay or mental retardation, are a group of disorders defined by diminished cognitive and adaptive development. Affecting more males than females, they are diagnosed in between one and three percent of the population.

For more, see: <http://www.cell.com/AJHG/>

**To learn more about TARC
Visit us online at
www.ddadvocacy.net**

New Pediatrics Report Urges Medical Community to Address Underlying Pathologies in Patients with Autism

An article published today in the journal *Pediatrics* confirms what parents and advocacy organizations have been saying for years: many individuals with autism suffer from gastrointestinal disease that can contribute to behaviors and symptoms associated with autism

Evaluation, Diagnosis, and Treatment of Gastrointestinal Disorders in Individuals With ASDs: A Consensus Report is the result of expert panel study and discussion led by Dr. Timothy Buie of the Harvard Medical School Department of Pediatrics. The panel's findings point out not only the existence of underlying GI disturbances that can manifest as behavioral problems, but also notes that such medical issues have often gone undiagnosed or been ignored in the past by physicians treating patients diagnosed with autism.

"We are finally getting mainstream acknowledgement that our kids are physically sick, and not the victims of some mysterious genetic behavioral disorder," commented Lori McIlwain, National Autism Association (NAA) board chair. "With one in 110 children now diagnosed with autism, we are in the midst of a national health emergency. Physicians must address the underlying medical conditions involved in this epidemic if they are to help us find answers and relief for our children."

The panel arrived at several conclusions regarding current clinical practice guidelines and made recommendations for future medical and research priorities. These include:

- Current treatment guidelines do not routinely consider potential medical problems
- Problem behaviors including self-injury, aggression, irritability, and sleep disturbance may be manifestations of abdominal pain
- Behavioral treatment should not substitute for medical treatment
- Gastrointestinal symptoms should be considered an urgent indication for medical investigation
- Immunologic dysfunction, inflammation, metabolic dysfunction, and allergies are all potentially associated with autism
- Research is needed to determine the role of abnormal GI permeability in neuropsychiatric manifestations of autism

- Greater awareness is needed among health care providers of the atypical manifestations of GI disorders
- Awareness of unrecognized medical conditions in autism must become a priority of professional societies including the American Academy of Pediatrics
- Diagnostics should be performed to accurately identify co-morbid allergic disease
- Research is needed to determine the role of immune dysfunction in autism

"This is definitely a step in the right direction," said Ms. McIlwain. "Our kids need and deserve clinical investigation and treatment for the underlying medical conditions from which they suffer." For more information on autism, visit www.nationalautism.org

Keeping the Dream Alive

2010 Oklahoma Governor's Conference on Developmental Disabilities

The 2010 Oklahoma Governor's Conference on Developmental Disabilities, *Keeping the Dream Alive*, is scheduled on March 8-9, 2010 at the Embassy Suites – Norman, Hotel and Conference Center. The conference keynote speakers include John Hockenberry and Karen Gaffney.

John Hockenberry, an American journalist and co-host of National Public Radio's *The Takeaway*, will present *Eliminating Stereotypes – Words Matter*. Mr. Hockenberry will discuss how people with disabilities and their advocates are focusing much needed attention on tough issues that affect quality of life – issues like accessible transportation, housing, affordable health care, employment opportunities and discrimination. A crucial step in ending discrimination and segregation in employment, education and the community is eliminating prejudicial language about disabilities.

In her presentation, *Imagine the Possibilities*, Ms. Gaffney will discuss how early intervention and inclusion in the regular classroom can help students with developmental disabilities strive to reach their highest potential. Ms. Gaffney speaks from personal experience about growing up with Down syndrome and how she has overcome obstacles and barriers to become an accomplished open-water swimmer, the president of her non-profit foundation, and an advocate for others with Down syndrome. Anyone can do these things, if they just Imagine the Possibilities.

The conference registration fee is \$50. Scholarships are available for self-advocates, parents and family members. For more information about the conference, contact Gail Russell at Gail.Russell@okdhs.org or call (405) 521-6254 or 1-866-521-3571.

Autism News Roundup

Rate of Autism Disorders Climbs to 1 Percent Among 8-Year-Olds, Say UAB, CDC Researchers

Autism and related development disorders are becoming more common, with a prevalence rate approaching 1 percent among American 8-year-olds, according to new data from researchers at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) School of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The study is a partnership between UAB, the CDC and 10 other U.S. research sites. It shows that one in 110 American 8-year-olds is classified as having an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), a 57 percent increase in ASD cases compared to four years earlier.

The new findings, published Dec. 18 in the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), highlight the need for social and educational services to help those affected by the condition, said Beverly Mulvihill, Ph.D., a UAB associate professor of public health and co-author on the study.

ASDs are a group of developmental disabilities such as autism and Asperger disorder that are characterized by delays or changes in childhood socialization, communication and behavior.

"This is a dramatic increase in the number of kids classified as autistic or documented on the spectrum of similar disorders," Mulvihill said. "It is not entirely clear what is causing the rise, but we know major collaborative efforts are needed to improve the understanding and lives of people and families impacted."

The MMWR study discusses possible factors that might contribute to the increase in ASD cases. They include a broader definition of autism disorders and a heightened awareness of ASD by parents, doctors, educators and other professionals. The findings do not address whether or not any of the increase is attributable to a true increase in the risk of developing ASD, more frequent and earlier diagnoses, and other factors. Data comes from the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network, a collection of 11 sites in Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Wisconsin. ADDM reviewers are

uniformly trained to review and confirm cases; some children included in the study have documented ASD symptoms but never received a diagnosis.

The study also found that boys are 4.5 times more likely than girls to have ASD, a finding that confirms earlier studies, says Martha Wingate, Dr.P.H., a UAB assistant professor of public health and study co-author.

"It still is not clear why males more frequently are affected," Wingate said. "One thing we know for sure is that more research is needed to quantify the effects of single or multiple factors such as diagnosis patterns, inclusion of milder cases and other components." The ADDM sites are not selected based on any statistical pattern, but the 300,000-plus children included in the study represent 8 percent of the nation's 8-year-olds.

Source: National Institute of Health



Disability Data

The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, recently released a compendium of disability statistics for 2009. The Annual Disability Compendium brings together in one place disability statistics published by various federal agencies. It may be useful when individuals or organizations needs disability statistics for press or public information activities, advocacy materials, grant writing or other matters relating to persons with disabilities.

See: www.DisabilityCompendium.org

Source: Capitol Insider

Housing Report

The National Council on Disability (NCD) has released a report entitled The State of Housing in America in the 21st Century: A Disability Perspective. The report provides recommendations to improve housing opportunities for people with disabilities. The research contained in this report presents a comprehensive overview of the state of housing in the twenty-first century, and answers important questions about the current housing needs and options for people with disabilities living in the United States. See:

http://www.disability.gov/housing/news_%26_events

Source: Capitol Insider

Olmstead Enforcement

Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice Tom Perez spoke to the American Constitution Society in mid December. He explained his new vision for the Civil Rights Division and emphasized the Division's Olmstead Enforcement efforts by filing amicus briefs in cases in New York, Virginia and Connecticut. He discussed the Division's change of focus in CRIPA (Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act) investigations. When the Division is investigating institutions (e.g. institutions for people with cognitive disabilities), the first question investigators will ask will be, "Do these people need to be here?" If they do not, the next question will be "Does the state have a plan for moving them into more integrated community settings?" Under the previous administration, the focus of CRIPA investigations had been on making the institutions better. AG Perez also mentioned the Division's focus on hate crimes which now include crimes based on disability.



TARC
helps families

Learn more about TARC by visiting our website at www.ddadvocacy.net

Not a member of TARC? Join Today!

Visit us online to find out how to become a member today!!
www.ddadvocacy.net

TARC is a network of programs advocating for Oklahomans with developmental disabilities. Your membership allows TARC to continue providing the vital programs that help ensure a high quality of life for people with developmental disabilities.

TARC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Beginning in February, DayMakers Tulsa will be moving to Whiteside Park 4009 S. Pittsburgh, Tulsa, 74135.

links to support, to information, to friends.
Support Group for Adults with Asperger's Syndrome

Links Meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month:

Jan. 20th	Feb. 27th	March 17th
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Meetings are held at TARC's new office:
2516 East 71st St., Suite A
Tulsa, OK 74136-5531
6:00 pm- 7:45 pm
Links is a support group for adults with Asperger's Syndrome. Contact Amie Farinella, 918-582-8272 for more information.

Day Makers Activities group for adults with developmental disabilities
Contact: Amie, 918-582-8272

Tuesdays • 10:00-11:00 a.m.
Gatesway Foundation-Mabee Gym
1217 E. College in Broken Arrow

Thursdays • 1:00-2:30 p.m.
Whiteside Park, 4009 S. Pittsburgh,
Tulsa, 74135

Hispanic Parents Support Group
El Grupo Hispano de Apoyo a Padres de Familia

Meets last Tuesday of each month

Jan. 26th	Feb. 23rd	March 30th
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7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

St. Thomas Moore Catholic Church,
2720 S. 129th E. Ave., Tulsa
Contact Zaida at 918-582-8272 for more information.

Connections Asperger's Group

Connections meets the 4th Wednesday of each month:

Jan. 27th	Feb. 24th	March 24th
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Hardesty Regional Library
8316 E. 93rd St.
4:30 pm- 6:00 pm

The "Connections" Asperger's Group is a social skills group for adolescents and young adults with Asperger's Syndrome. The group meets monthly. Contact Sherilyn or Amie at 918-582-8272 for more information.

MOMS & DADS SUPPORT GROUP

Moms and Dads meets the last Thursday of each month:

Jan. 28th	Feb. 25th	March 25th
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7:00 pm-9:00 p.m.
TARC Office
2516 East 71st St., Tulsa

The mission of the Moms & Dads Support Group is to nurture and support families whose children have a developmental disability, to encourage positive strategies in dealing with challenges, and to share in the joys of raising our children.

For more information, contact Sherilyn, 918-582-8272

1ST TULSA PEOPLE FIRST

Tulsa People First meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month:

Jan. 12th	Feb. 9th	March 9th
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Dinner 5:30 p.m.
Meeting 6:30 p.m.

For more information call Amie Farinella at 918-582-8272

Families in Transition

Families in Transition is a support group for parents of adult children with developmental disabilities and meets Quarterly

Next Meeting February 10th 6:30 p.m.

Contact Amie Farinella, 918-582-8272 For more information about the next meeting