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April 17, 2015

VOR Weekly News Update

News and views for VOR Advocates

Speaking out for people with
intellectual & developmental
disabilities



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**Reminders:
Help VOR Grow!**

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Registration Remains Open through May 1, 2015

VOR and YOU

1. [Registration Open Through May 1, 2015 for VOR's Annual Conference](#)

2. VOR Submits House Testimony Opposing Federally-Financed Deinstitutionalization by U.S. Department of Justice

3. VOR Supports Texas Legislation For Tracking Pilot Program

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**2015
Conference:
Advocating for
Choice by
Expanding
Opportunities**

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About VOR

QUOTABLE by Melinda Gates

Calendar Reminders

VOR and YOU

1. Registration Open Through May 1, 2015 for VOR's Annual Conference

[Full Conference, Registration, and Hotel details are available on VOR's website.](#)

Thanks to the many of you who have already registered. We look forward to seeing everyone in Washington, D.C. this June.

2. VOR Submits House Testimony Opposing Federally-Financed Deinstitutionalization by U.S. Department of Justice.

April 13, 2015

VOR urges the Subcommittee to build on this language and adopt bill language that conditions DOJ's appropriations, prior to bringing any court action, on (1) DOJ first consulting with residents, or their legal guardians, to determine residents' needs and choices with regard to residential services and supports and, (2) consistent with the Olmstead decision, not impose "community-based treatment on patients who do not desire it." [*Olmstead* at 602].

[Read more](#)

3. VOR Supports Texas Legislation For Tracking Pilot Program

March 30, 2015 * VOR * Submitted to the Texas House Human Services Committee, Texas House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Raymond, Vice Chair Rose, and Members of the House Human Services Committee,

Please accept this written testimony in SUPPORT of [HB 967](#), a bill for a pilot project to evaluate the use of radio frequency identification technology (RFID) to transmit information regarding residents of certain group homes.

Of keen interest to our organization are best practices and strategies to ensure high quality care in all service settings. HB 967, which will provide for a pilot program for the use of RFID in Home and Community Settings (HCS) upon individual or guardian consent, will serve to ensure that individuals who willingly participate enjoy greater independence and protection.

HB 967, if passed, will help ensure medications are dispensed accurately and, with the potential of tracking which individuals have entered private bedrooms, either deter abuse or ensure justice when abuse has occurred.

**2015
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About VOR

Some individuals with I/DD and autism, who by vast majority are served in small community settings, have a tendency of wandering from their homes (“elopement”), placing themselves at risk of traffic, exposure to the elements, personal injury, law enforcement encounters, drownings, and more.

[Read more](#)

AUTISM NEWS

4. 'You Don't Outgrow Autism': What Happens When Help Ends at 21?

NBC News * April 12, 2015

Federal law guarantees an education for children with developmental disabilities like autism until the age of 21. But after turning 21 (each state determines the exact date), those young adults lose the specialized help and structure they've had for most of their lives. And there is no equivalent state or federal support required to take over.

Parents of children with autism compare it to falling off a cliff.

[Read more and watch Dateline video](#)

5. The most promising areas of autism research

CBS News * April 16, 2015

Researchers have been making tremendous progress in their efforts to understand the causes of autism, as well as which interventions may be most effective to help children with the disorder thrive.

This work is especially critical as the number of children in the U.S. with autism grows. Approximately 1 in 68 children in the U.S. currently has autism, an increase of nearly 30 percent in recent years -- at least partly due to greater awareness and improved diagnostics.

Experts in the field say there are a number of areas of research that could potentially change the lives of millions of families. Here are a few that are showing significant progress -- and promise.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

FEDERAL UPDATE

6. Feds Take Aim At Sheltered Workshops

Disability Scoop * April 14, 2015

The Obama administration is proposing new regulations that would sharply limit people with disabilities from entering employment situations where they earn less than minimum wage.

The U.S. Department of Education is unveiling a draft rule this week designed to encourage competitive employment for most people with disabilities, largely through modifications to the Vocational Rehabilitation program

The proposal comes less than a year after the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act was signed into law mandating the changes.

With the rule, the administration is placing a heightened emphasis on competitive integrated employment. Unpaid work would no longer qualify as a potential employment outcome in Vocational Rehabilitation plans and “economic self-sufficiency” must be among the criteria considered in helping individuals with disabilities establish goals.

The proposed rule is expected to be published Thursday in the Federal Register and will be open for public comment for 60 days.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

[Click here for the Proposed Rule](#)

STATE NEWS

7. House rejects, then revives, bill to close the Montana Developmental Center in Boulder

The Montana Standard * April 16, 2015

The Montana House Thursday evening first voted to kill but then later revised a bill to close the state facility in Boulder for the developmentally disabled.

After an hour-plus emotional debate late Thursday afternoon, House members first voted 51-49 to defeat Senate Bill 411, which would set up a committee to oversee and direct the closure of the Montana Developmental Center by July 2017, sending most or all of its 50 residents to community-based programs. Yet three hours later, supporters of the bill asked fellow House members to reconsider the measure, and a 55-45 majority agreed. The second vote places SB 411 up for yet another debate and vote in the House on Friday.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

QUOTABLE

“Sometimes it’s the people you can’t help who inspire you the most.” ~ Melinda Gates

Calendar Reminders:

Sunday, June 7, 2015:

[**VOR Annual Conference: ADVOCATING FOR CHOICE BY EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES. Registration Open.**](#)

Archives:

* Thursday, March 20, 2014

[**VOR's "Regional Meetings: The Need for Advocates to Act Global and Local" Webinar**](#)

***Social Media Strengths: Using Facebook and Twitter to Advance Your Cause (VOR, July 2013).** [Visit VOR's website for a copy of the powerpoint presentation and an audio of the event.](#)

*** How Congress Works Webinar: Recorded - Listen Here.** Tuesday, April 23, 2013 - 12:00 pm central / 1:00 pm eastern. How Congress Works: The Basics. Hosted by Peter Kinzler and Larry Innis.

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