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Speaking out for people with intellectual & developmental disabilities



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**Reminders:
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February 21, 2014

VOR Weekly News Update

News and views for VOR Advocates

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VOR and YOU

1. Facebook 500! Help VOR reach 500 Likes

For the past year, VOR has been working on awareness and outreach. Our efforts have resulted in many more Twitter followers and an ever growing “fan” base on Facebook. Just this week, we saw a jump in the number of individuals and advocates interested in VOR – so much so we are approaching 500 Likes!

Can you help us spread the word? [Please share VOR's Facebook with your friends](#). We are now at 438 Likes. Helps us reach 500+.

Thank you!

2. 2014 Speaker Feature: Meet Kathleen Brown, President of the Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association

Kathleen Brown, RN, BA, CDDN, is the President of the Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association. She'll be offering [VOR 2014 conference](#) participants a look at “The Impact of Residential Setting on Nursing Outcomes and Data.”

Kathy has been working in the field of developmental disabilities for 36 years. She is the Director of Development for Pharmacy Alternatives, that provides pharmacy services and medications systems exclusively for people with I/DD. She has worked in the DD field for the last 33 years.

Kathy helped start the Northern Illinois DD Network of nurses in 1994 and has served as its president for the past 16 years. She helped craft legislation for medication delegation in Illinois and taught the course for 7 years, training over 600 nurses.

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Kathy is very interested in developing and expanding DDNA networks and increasing the number of nurses sitting for the certification exam. She recognizes first-hand the varied needs and abilities of the I/DD population, from those individuals capable of self-administration of medication to individuals requiring 24/7 nursing care.

Kathy lives in the Chicago-area with her family.

Just a Good Editorial on Person-First Language

3. The Problem with Person-First Language: What's Wrong with This Picture?

Disability and Representation Blog * May 30, 2012
*** by Rachel Cohen-Rottenberg**

VOR Editor's Note: This editorial is quite refreshing. Decades of advocacy efforts aimed at normalizing people with disabilities has resulted in a sort of denial that disability exists. While a disability may be just one part of an individual, it also should not be denied or glossed over, especially if necessary services and supports would allow that individual to be happier, safer, and more independently.



[The image consists of four standing figures — two male and two female — with a wheelchair logo in shadow behind each one. The background is grey-green. The text reads, “See the Person, Not the Disability.”]

This graphic came across my Facebook page a

while back. It took me some time to discern all the things about it that are problematic.

At first, all I could see was a problem with the intent of the text: the idea that one has to choose between seeing the person and seeing the disability. Why should that be a choice? My immediate response was to reframe it as follows: "See BOTH the person AND the disability. Because there is nothing dehumanizing or shameful about a disability."

My rewriting speaks to the heart of the problem with person-first language and its insistence on turns of phrase like "person with disabilities" rather than the identity-first language of "disabled person." Such language betrays the assumption that disability renders one less of a person. If that assumption were not present, there would be no reason to foreground the fact that we really, really, really are people, and that one has to put the disability aside in order to see how really, really, really human we are. Of course, that rather problematic logic begs the question: How exactly does one pretend not to see a disability once it has made itself known? In most contexts, that would be called denial.

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In the News

4. Kentucky: Adult abuse registry bill heads to House

***Capitol Notes, KY Forward* * February 21, 2014**

The Kentucky Senate approved a measure today that would create an adult abuse registry in the state.

Senate Bill 98, sponsored by Sen. Sara Beth Gregory, R-Monticello, would direct the Cabinet for Health and Family Services to maintain the adult abuse registry of substantiated cases of abuse or neglect by paid caregivers. The bill

would require personal care agencies, including nursing home facilities, to check the registry as part of the background check process prior to hiring an individual.

SB 98 would create due process protections for individuals accused of abuse or neglect and would allow them to appeal their cases to civil court. The bill would also permit individuals to provide their registry information to families or others seeking to hire a personal caregiver.

“It is about protecting those elderly and disabled, vulnerable adults who are not in a position to be able to protect themselves,” Gregory said.

SB 98 was approved unanimously and now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

[Read, comment and share](#)

5. Too many intellectually disabled are still excluded from the world of work, study says

***Washington Post* * February 17, 2014**

Most Americans with intellectual or developmental disabilities remain shut out of the workforce, despite changing attitudes and billions of dollars spent on government programs to help them. Even when they find work, it's often part time, in a dead-end job or for pay well below the minimum wage.

Only 44 percent of intellectually disabled adults are in the labor force, either employed or looking for work, while just 34 percent are actually working, according to a survey by Special Olympics and conducted by Gallup and the University of Massachusetts at Boston. That compares with 83 percent of non-disabled, working-age adults who are in the workforce.

About 30 percent of intellectually disabled people who work do so in sheltered workshops, where they perform basic tasks. They can legally be paid less than the minimum wage

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under a 1938 federal law that allows wages to be based on comparing their productivity level with that of a non-disabled worker.

Disability rights advocates call these workshops outdated and say it's discriminatory to pay them less than other workers. Critics say they don't do enough to build skills or help transition intellectually disabled workers into a mainstream work setting.

Defenders argue that thousands of severely disabled people would be left sitting at home without the carefully structured environments. Of the 420,000 disabled people who work at sheltered workshops, only 5 percent ever leave for other jobs alongside non-disabled workers.

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Quality in the Community?

6. Washington, D.C.: 25 charged in largest Medicaid fraud bust in D.C. history, feds say

***D.C. Crime Stories* * February 20, 2014**

More than 20 people have been arrested in what federal prosecutors are calling the largest healthcare fraud takedown in the history of the District of Columbia.

Following a multi-year-long investigation into bogus Medicaid billing practices, more than 200 law enforcement agents spread across the region Thursday to raid homes and businesses, make arrests and seize dozens of bank accounts and property.

Those arrested include operators of home care agencies, operators of nurse staffing agencies, office workers and personal care assistants. One woman is accused of bilking taxpayers out of \$75 million.

Investigators uncovered numerous and separate schemes involving fraud, kickbacks, and false billings in the growing field of home

care services for D.C. Medicaid patients. Medicaid pays for home health care aides to help people with daily living, such as getting in and out of bed, bathing, dressing and keeping track of medication.

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Quotable

"It should not be surprising that the coalition of deinstitutionalization advocates and fiscal conservatives largely achieved their goal of closing and downsizing institutions and that deinstitutionalization advocates were less successful in achieving their goal of developing community services." ~ Samuel R. Bagenstos, The Past and Future of Deinstitutionalization Litigation, 34 Cardoza L. Rev. 1, 21 (2012)

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Calendar Reminders:

Tuesday, March 25, 2014

AHCA/NCAL's fifth annual "ID/DD Residential Services Providers Hill Fly-In." Questions? Dana Halvorson, dhalvorson@ahca.org.

June 8, 2014

VOR 2014 Annual Conference and Initiative:

"Making it Happen: Reforming Policy and Law in Support of Person-Centered Quality and Choice"; Hyatt Regency, Washington, D.C.

Register today!

Week of June 9, 2013

VOR 2014 Congressional Initiative: Families and advocates visit Capitol Hill.

Sunday, October 5, 2014

American Health Care Association's 2014 ID/DD Residential Services Day during AHCA/NCAL's 65th Annual Convention & Expo at the Gaylord National Harbor just outside of Washington, DC. Registration will open in Spring 2014.

Archives

***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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