



Speaking out for people with intellectual & developmental disabilities



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**Reminders:
Help VOR Grow!**

About VOR

VOR Weekly News Update

News and views for VOR Advocates

When we are free, we are given the power to choose” ~ Mia Wright

Happy Independence Day from VOR

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THANK YOU SPONSORS and PARTICIPANTS

"Thanks for such an excellent conference. The time and energy spent in organizing this event is much appreciated. All the presentations were relevant, educational, and useful." ~ 2014 Participant

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**Reminders:
Help VOR Grow!**

A tribute to Mary McTernan, outgoing VOR Board Member and long-time VOR leader, member and advocate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

2014 State Reports, as shared during VOR's Annual State Report Forum in Washington, D.C.

VOR 2014 Annual Conference and Initiative Update

1. Thank You Annual Conference and Initiative Sponsors!

VOR expresses sincere gratitude to our generous 2014 [Annual Conference and Initiative Sponsors](#).

Many organizations, individuals and businesses sponsored our event. Without these generous sponsors, our annual event would not be possible.

Please take a moment to check out our [Sponsor list](#) and, if any are in your state, say thanks with words and patronage!

2. Congratulations to VOR's 2014 Voice and Advocacy Award Recipients

VOR presented its Annual Voice and Advocacy Awards during its 2014 Annual Conference on June 8 in Washington, D.C.

The **2014 Voice Award** recipient is **Sybil Finken**, VOR's Immediate Past President, Secretary, State Coordinator, Committee Chair, and long-time Board Member. Sybil was recognized for her decades of advocacy on behalf of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Iowa, including her son, Seth, and his peers across the country. For most of her volunteer advocacy career, she has been involved in VOR as a member and leader. She is best known for her no-nonsense approach to our advocacy and her leadership, as well as her wit. VOR is very grateful to Sybil her outstanding leadership over so many years on behalf of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The **2014 Advocacy Award** was presented

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to **Rebecca Underwood**, VOR's Wisconsin State Coordinator, long-time member and volunteer. Rebecca is a strong advocate who is savvy about her own state's process, policy and politics, as well as our federal challenges. She spends a significant amount of her own time and dime attending meetings and conferences to give her son a voice - and that has been to the benefit of our collective advocacy on behalf of all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. VOR appreciates very much Rebecca's advocacy contributions in Wisconsin and nationally, on behalf her son, Aaron, and his peers around the country.

3. VOR Announces the Election of its 2014-2015 Officers

On Saturday, June 7, 2014, the VOR Board of Directors elected the following Board Members to serve as Officers of the organization:

Ann Knighton, President
Geoff Dubrowsky, First Vice President
Jill Barker, Second Vice President
Jill Goldstein, Treasurer
Sybil Finken, Secretary and Immediate Past President

These officers were installed at the Annual Conference on June 8, 2014. They began their one-year term on July 1, 2014.

VOR is grateful to these leaders for the extra time and commitment they offer to VOR as Officers.

A current list of [VOR Officers and Board Members](#) is available on VOR's website.

4. VOR Calls for Direct Care Worker Background Checks to Ensure Safe, Competent Care in all Medicaid Long Term Care Settings

As part of its 2014 Congressional Initiative, VOR volunteers called on Congress to support direct care worker mandatory national background checks to better ensure a safe and qualified direct care workforce across all long-term care settings and across all states.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) currently offers a voluntary grant program for states to implement background checks. In support

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CMS noted that “long term care (LTC) patient abuse, neglect and misappropriation of funds have been identified as a widespread problem for millions of Americans receiving LTC services.” ([CMS National Background Checks Program](#)).

Even before VOR’s visits to Congressional offices, Congress has signaled support for added protections. The 2003 Medicare Modernization Act (Section 307) provided for a demonstration program, and the Affordable Care Act’s national background check grant program was even more robust. According to [CMS](#), “both actions point in the direction of potential national applicability.”

VOR’s [position and additional resources](#) are available on our website.

5. How to Use *Olmstead* as a Sword, Not a Shield: Presentation by attorney Bill Choslovsky at VOR’s Annual Conference

Summary of Presentation:

- * “The best defense is a good offense.” ~ Jack Dempsey
- * Offensive Tools: Legislation, Education, Popular Opinion, Litigation
- * Using Illinois’ Ligas case as an example.

[Read full presentation here.](#)

OLMSTEAD ISSUE BRIEF

6. *Olmstead* Supreme Court Decision-Role in Community Integration for Persons with Disabilities

***Kaiser Family Foundation Issue Brief* * June 2014**

June 2014 marks the 15th anniversary of the United States Supreme Court’s landmark civil rights decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, finding that the unjustified institutionalization of people with disabilities is illegal discrimination.

While many cases are resolved without involving the courts, during the last 15 years, the lower courts have had the opportunity to apply *Olmstead* in a number of contexts. resultina in decisions furtherina communitv

integration for people with disabilities. This issue brief examines the legacy of *Olmstead*, with an emphasis on legal case developments and policy trends emerging in the last five years and the related contributions of the Medicaid program.

Medicaid is important because of its unique role in financing the home and community-based services (HCBS) that enable individuals in institutions to return to the community and those at risk of institutionalization to remain in the community with support.

[Read Issue Brief Here](#)

STATE NEWS

7. New Jersey: Developmental center closings cause family hardships

The Daily Journal * June 30, 2014

Anthony Porcile, 68, arrives at Woodbridge Developmental Center between 10:30 and 11 a.m. every Saturday to pick up his 65-year-old brother, Peter, who has lived at the Middlesex County facility for the past 50 years.

Anthony fears their weekend routine may soon end. Peter is among about 147 residents at the Woodbridge Developmental Center who will be relocated to another developmental center or group home before the facility closes in late December.

Peter is scheduled to be moved to a group home in Monmouth County or a developmental center in Woodbine, both locations a long distance from his brother's home.

"If I can't see see him, I wouldn't be in his life. I've been very dedicated to him," said Anthony, adding he won't put his brother in a group home for fear he wouldn't get the round-the-clock care he needs. "He knows me. If he doesn't see me, he doesn't live a month."

[Read more, comment and share](#)

Read related editorial: [Do not close developmental centers](#)(by Gloria DuPree-Wynn, RN)

Read related editorial: [The Politics behind closing of](#)

[developmental centers](#) (by Len Polizzi, Parent)

8. Massachusetts: Does the Administration have a double standard in the care of the disabled?

COFAR Blog * June 26, 2014

As [The Boston Globe](#) reported last week, Governor Patrick has “unveiled an ambitious and potentially costly plan” to reform the way the state’s criminal justice system handles mentally ill people.

The governor has proposed both a major increase in staff at Bridgewater State Hospital and a new facility there where potentially violent patients could receive care, according to the *Globe*.

We support the administration’s commitment to expanding care at Bridgewater State. But we wonder whether this is yet more evidence of what appears to be a double standard on the part of the administration with regard to care of the mentally ill versus persons with developmental disabilities.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

9. Iowa: "Impacts of Waiting Periods for Home and Community-Based Services on Consumers and Medicaid Long-Term Care Costs in Iowa."

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,
Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Office of
Disability, Aging and Long-Term Care Policy (January 14, 2014)

This study assessed the effects of waiting periods on the risk of long-term nursing home stays and hospitalization, and Medicaid long-term care costs. The study found that consumers who applied when wait times were shorter than six months were 25 percent less likely to have ever had a long-term nursing home stay within three years after application than those who applied when wait times were longer.

[Read full study here.](#)

NEWS YOU CAN USE

10. new resource for state-level advocacy in response to new federal “community rule”

HCRSAadvocacy.org is a platform for the aging and disability

communities to post information and resources regarding the new Home and Community-Based Settings (HCBS) rule and steps each state is making to comply with the new rule.

Click on a state or choose from the list below to see resources, dates and deadlines, state documents, news, and other information from that state.

Upcoming Comment Deadlines for Transition Plans (which will determine which settings are “community enough” to allow HCBS funding): Kansas, Oregon and Florida.

States with a September 30, 2014 deadline: California, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, New Hampshire, Nevada, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Utah, Tennessee, and Wisconsin

The rule requires opportunity for public comment.

Read more at <http://hcbadvocacy.org/>.

Additional resources can be found at the [Coalition for Community Choice](#) and on [VOR's website](#).

11. Issues Facing Siblings of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: The Balancing Act in Family Life

National Autism Network * Dr. Robert Naseef

Parents often wonder and worry about how raising a child with autism affects their other children. In this webinar, psychologist Dr. Robert Naseef helps parents explore their own sibling relationships to understand the impact of their child's special needs has on their more 'typical' brothers and sisters. Listen to pick up strategies for meeting everyone's needs.

[Watch Webinar](#)

[Download PDF](#)

Also available VOR's website under [Sibling's Voice](#)

12. Yellow Pages for Kids with Disabilities

WrightsLaw * June 2014

The Yellow Pages for Kids with Disabilities allows you to search for services in your city, state or region by clicking on a map of the United States.

Also available VOR's website under [Get Help](#).

13. No, You Don't Have to Disinherit a Child With Special Needs

Forbes Magazine * July 2, 2014 by Mark Eghrari, Esq. (Long Island, NY)

Many people assume they will have to, in effect, disinherit a child with disabilities because if they leave them money... they'll lose the government benefits they are entitled to.

Wrong.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

Also available VOR's website under [Get Help](#).

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEWS

14. A 'Major Shift' In Oversight Of Special Education

NPR Ed * June 24, 2014

The Obama administration said Tuesday that the vast majority of the 6.5 million students with disabilities in U.S. schools today are not receiving a quality education, and that it will hold states accountable for demonstrating that those students are making progress.

Education Secretary Arne Duncan announced what he calls "a major shift" in how the government evaluates the effectiveness of federally funded special education programs.

"It's not enough for a state to be compliant if students can't read or do math," Duncan said. "We must have a system that will do more than just measure compliance."

[Read more, comment and share](#)

Related Blog: [Asking Kids With Special Needs To Clear The Same Bar](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

15. Archived webinar - Take it Up a Notch: Communicating for Impact on Twitter

Salsa Labs * June 25, 2014

[View Slides Here slides here.](#)
[View Recording Here recording here.](#)

16. Eight Ways to Make Social Media Matter

Nonprofit Marketing Blog * July 2, 2014

Excerpts

You can boost marketing and fundraising impact. Here's how:

1. Get to know your people.
2. Use your marketing/fundraising plan to remind yourself exactly who your prospects are (the people who are most likely to take the actions that will drive your marketing or fundraising goals forward).
3. Assess if and where to invest in social media, even if your organization has been there for years.
4. Focus your energy and time on the single most-used channel, but only if the return on investment (ROI) seems to be there.
5. Invest the time. Block out at least 30 minutes, twice daily, for social media if you are using just one platform. I urge you to get that one channel to work—or realize it's the wrong one—before you take on another platform.
6. Create some incremental benchmarks so you get a sense of how your investment is or is not paying off.
7. Like or follow five to 10 colleague or competitive organizations on that channel, be it Facebook or Instagram.
8. Adapt your approach as needed on an ongoing basis.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

Quotable

“You gotta enjoy life in a massive way.” ~ Chef Guy Fieri

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[Calendar Reminders:](#)

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 information and the schedule can be found [here](#)

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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