



Speaking out for people with intellectual & developmental disabilities



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**Reminders:
Help VOR Grow!**

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News and views for VOR Advocates

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Calendar Reminders

VOR and YOU

1. [#VOR4Choice](#). [#GivingTuesday](#). [#Gratitude](#).

**Make a Lasting
Impact with a
Will Bequest**

**Reminders:
Help VOR Grow!**

#Unselfie

Send your #unselfie pictures to VOR and we'll share on Twitter and Facebook, or you can post directly to [VOR's Facebook page](#) or copy us on [Twitter](#).



Thanks to this young volunteer!

2. VOTE: Use your voice

VOR cannot, as a nonprofit, endorse any candidate for office. **But, we can encourage you to VOTE.**

On Tuesday, November 4, 2014, the U.S. Midterm Election will be held for all 435 members of the United States House of Representatives and 33 of the 100 members of the United States Senate.

A **Vote is a Voice** – in support of policies, against policies. for change. or for more of the

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same. Your vote, combined with others, tells a story – whether your candidate wins or loses.

So, VOTE!

[Here is a good article on why you should vote from the Knox County Clerk in Illinois.](#)

3. Make a plan to make a difference

***Rapid City Journal* * October 19, 2014 * by Bonnie Spain, executive director of Consumer Credit Counseling Service of the Black Hills**

Excerpts

Q. *This time of year, we are often inundated with requests for donations. We want to help, but we don't want to break our budget. Any suggestions?*

A. You can support many worthwhile organizations in the community and around the world, but knowing how much money you have to give is the first step in giving wisely. The best way to do this is to include charitable contributions in your budget — the same way you budget for your regular monthly expenses. Some people review their income and expenses and determine what they can afford to donate, while others tithe a certain amount each month.

Setting aside a certain amount each month will mean you're ready to donate when you want

to help fund a worthy organization. It can also help determine how much you can realistically afford to give. As you look ahead and plan for charitable giving, you may also want to consider planning a certain amount for miscellaneous donations. This way, you'll have funds available when co-workers or family members ask for your help supporting a worthy cause.

Once you know how much you can set aside for charitable giving, then you can decide where to give. Will you give to one organization or to a variety of worthy causes? What organizations support causes that are close to your heart?

Considering what you value and appreciate

Make a Lasting Impact with a Will Bequest

can help you choose the organization where you wish to donate. You may also consider giving your time, if your budget won't support a monetary donation.

Regardless of your beliefs or philosophy on donations, if everyone gave to an organization or cause they believe in, the effects would ripple out into our community and beyond.

Mark your calendars: One day can make a difference! Saturday October 25th is **National Make a Difference Day**. What can you do to make a difference for VOR? Share your thoughts with us.

4. Massachusetts: VOR, COFAR and CCMR Team Up to Secure Changes to New State Laws

VOR * October 23, 2014

In a letter sent today, three nonprofit advocacy organizations joined together asking the State Legislature to make important changes to legislation passed recently.

VOR, the Massachusetts Coalition of Families and Advocates (COFAR), and CCMR (Malden, MA), all support access to high quality care across a continuum of care options for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). In a letter to the legislature, they sought changes to the National Background Check Law, the Eligibility and Autism Commission Law, and the Real Lives Law, all passed recently.

“While all three laws,” the organizations wrote, “advance certain rights for people with I/DD, they also all contain shortcomings that will, upon implementation, harm the very people these new laws aim to assist.”

The letter enclosed three position papers, each calling on the legislature to “fix these

shortcomings so that individuals with I/DD can realize the full and favorable impact of each new law.”

[The position papers are available on VOR's website.](#)

Read related blog from COFAR: [Why we won't be at the bill signing at Fenway Park \(October 22, 2014\)](#)

Read related article and comment: [Mass Governor to Sign Bill at Fenway Protecting People with Disabilities from Out-of-State Criminals](#)(October 20, 2014)

5. Free Webinar: Medicaid Long-Term Services and Supports - Appeals 101 (sponsored by the National Senior Citizens Law Center)

When: Wednesday, November 5, 2014 2-3 PM EDT

[Register Here](#)

Since 2009, the number of states delivering Medicaid long-term services and supports (LTSS) through managed care has increased more than four-fold, so that presently, 28 states either operate a managed care long-term services and supports program, or intend to operate a program in the near future. This overlay of managed care in Medicaid LTSS raises new issue in how Medicaid consumers can -- or cannot -- access needed services and understand and exercise their right to appeal unfavorable managed care decisions. Understanding the rules and options is crucial both for assisting individual clients and negotiating policy improvements.

This session will provide an introduction to the governing federal regulations, and will examine how

various states and managed care organizations are handling notices, appeals, and fair hearings. Real-life examples from Florida, Kansas and New Jersey will be used to illustrate promising practices as well as areas where beneficiary due process rights are at risk.

[Register here.](#)

STATE NEWS

6. Maryland: Reports of abuse of disabled increasing, advocates say

***The Baltimore Sun* * October 21, 2014**

As Maryland health officials begin [reforming](#) their oversight of services for adults and children with disabilities, advocates are demanding greater urgency and specific fixes to address a reported increase in incidents of abuse and neglect.

The Maryland Disability Law Center wants regulators to move quickly because reports of serious incidents jumped 15 percent in a recent six-month period, according to its analysis. There were 2,608 reported incidents across all services regulated by the state between March and September, a marked increase over the previous six-month period, the center found.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

7. Florida: Permits issued for community for adults with disabilities

***The Daily Record* * October 20, 2014**

A series of building permits have been issued for The Arc Village, a planned South Jacksonville community for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

According to [The Arc Village website](#), this is Florida's first planned community of affordable apartment-style rental homes for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

There is a groundbreaking and celebration scheduled for 10-11 a.m. Nov. 5 at 3631 Hodges Blvd.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

8. New Jersey VIDEOS: Parents Petitioning To Keep Disabled Children In Out-Of-State Facilities

CBS New York * October 21, 2014

Hundreds of parents are taking on Gov. Chris Christie in a fight over their special needs children.

As CBS 2's Jessica Schneider reported, Bob Adams and his wife Marcia visit their son Drew every week at the Woods facility in Langhorne, Penn.

[Read more, Watch Video, Comment and Share](#)

Watch Related Follow-Up Newscasts:

[No Comment From Christie On Program Forcing Some Disabled New Jerseyans To Move](#) (*CBS New York*, October 22, 2014)

[Lawmakers Demand Answers About Controversial 'Return Home New Jersey' Program](#) (*CBS New York*, October 23, 2014)

9. New Mexico: Medicaid expansion leaves out people with disabilities

Santa Fe New Mexican * October 21, 2014

More than 170,000 New Mexico residents have enrolled in Medicaid, thanks to expansion of the program, according to a report to state lawmakers Tuesday.

But advocates for people with disabilities said the broader access to services that they expected hasn't materialized.

Centennial Care, a [managed care] state program launched this year in conjunction with the Medicaid expansion, was expected to cut down the waiting list of thousands for a program designed to keep low-income New Mexicans with an array of physical and functional limitations out of nursing homes. But that hasn't been the case, the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee was told Tuesday.

Currently, 2,945 people occupy the coveted and limited slots in HCBS, according to Julie Weinberg, director of the Medical Assistance Division of the Department of Human Services. The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has authorized the state to offer 4,289 slots in the program, raising questions among advocates for people with disabilities and lawmakers about why the spots are not all filled when the waiting list for the program consistently stands at about 15,000 people.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

10. Kansas: KanCare initiative concerns parents of developmentally disabled adults

Kansas Health Institute * October 20, 2014

Parents of adult children with developmental disabilities say state officials are breaking a provision in deliberations that led to legislators last year agreeing to include Medicaid-funded home- and community-based services for the developmentally disabled in the state's KanCare program.

Parents are upset over reports that a "health home" initiative recently announced by Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) includes language that encourages –

but stops short of requiring – KanCare companies to let developmentally disabled Kansans keep their current case managers if they so choose.

During several hearings last year, state officials promised families that if KanCare were to take over management of services for the developmentally disabled, beneficiaries' families would be allowed to keep their case managers, who would help them navigate the new system. Legislators, in turn, agreed to the so-called KanCare “carve in.”

[Read more, comment and share](#)

EMPLOYMENT NEWS

11. VIDEOS: Unintended Consequences of Closing Sheltered Workshops

*The DD News Blog * October 22, 2014*

[Parents have their say on closing sheltered workshops for their adult children.](#)

12. The National Disability Rights Network [P&A] launches Wage and Hour Complaint Initiative

*National Disability Rights Network * July 12, 2014*

Excerpts

The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) has launched a 14(c) Wage and Hour Complaint Initiative.

“The Protection and Advocacy (P&A) Network has the means to join forces to collectively advocate to end segregated employment and sub-minimum wages, said Decker. “The Fair Labor Standards Act and many state labor laws provide methods to challenge the payment of sub-minimum wages, and the P&A network [will] use these tools to halt the inappropriate or

illegal use of sub-minimum wages.”

[Read more, comment and share](#)

13. Labor Secretary: Shift Away From Subminimum Wage An ‘Example’

Disability Scoop * October 21, 2014 (summary of [Politico](#) article)

U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez is hoping that states will follow the federal government’s lead in moving away from paying people with disabilities less than minimum wage.

Earlier this year, President Barack Obama signed an executive order requiring all federal contract workers — including those with disabilities — to be paid at least \$10.10 per hour.

The change, which applies to government contracts starting in January, means that federal contractors will no longer be eligible to pay people with disabilities less than the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour.

Traditionally, some government contractors and other employers have been able to obtain special permission from the Department of Labor to pay what’s known as subminimum wage through a provision known as Section 14(c).

[Read more, comment and share](#)

QUOTABLE

“If the words you spoke appeared on your skin, would you still be beautiful?” ~ Unknown

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Calendar Reminders:
December 2, 2014

#GivingTuesday

<http://vor.net/donate-now>

Sunday June 7 2015

VOR Annual Conference

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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