

DISABILITY RIGHTS NETWORK OF PENNSYLVANIA

Goals FY 2009 – 2012

Objectives FY 2012
(October 2011 - September 2012)

- I. Protect and advocate for persons with disabilities who are victims of abuse, neglect, and rights violations, including:**
 - A. Respond to incidents of abuse or neglect through technical assistance, follow-up, monitoring, investigation and/or litigation.
 - B. Improve, expand, and monitor systems for reporting, investigating and responding to abuse in state-licensed facilities and unlicensed residential facilities.
 - C. Work to ensure the appropriate implementation of an Adult Protective Services System in Pennsylvania for persons aged 18-59.
 - D. Advocate for services for persons with disabilities who are victims of crimes, including medical care, victim services, assistance in reporting crimes to police and information about civil suits, and maintain collaborative charters with statewide victim services organizations.
 - E. Advocate for the decrease in the use of chemical, mechanical, and/or physical restraints and seclusion.
 - F. Advocate for the implementation of regulations and policies that protect persons with disabilities living in personal care homes and assisted living facilities.
 - G. Identify and respond to systemic incidents of abuse, neglect, and rights violations, including contesting challenges to DRN's authority to access facilities, residents, or records.
 - H. Advocate for the passage of hate crime legislation.

- I. Provide outreach and training to emergency room staffs on issues related to persons with mental illness and other disabilities in crisis or otherwise seeking emergency services.
- II. **Eliminate the unnecessary institutionalization of persons with disabilities, including:**
 - A. Advocate for community alternatives for persons institutionalized or at risk of institutionalization, including:
 1. persons living in state psychiatric hospitals;
 2. persons with intellectual disabilities living in state centers and large, private ICF/MRs;
 3. adolescents or children living in Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities, living in facilities out of state, or in other institutional settings;
 4. persons living in large personal care homes;
 5. persons living in nursing facilities;
 6. persons with intellectual disabilities, mental illness, autism, or traumatic brain injury at risk of incarceration;
 7. persons living in homeless shelters.
 - B. Promote and expand affordable, integrated, accessible housing, including:
 1. increasing the number of accessible public housing units;
 2. expanding the availability of accessible Section 8 housing to 5% of the total units and to assist persons

with disabilities in locating accessible Section 8 housing;

3. working to expand the stock of safe accessible, affordable housing, including permanent supportive housing;
4. working to expand homeownership by persons with disabilities and programs which support people with disabilities to be homeowners;
5. providing assistance to persons who experience housing-related discrimination;
6. ensuring that allotted housing funds are used for the intended target population;
7. expanding the definition of homelessness.

C. Limit the growth of Medicaid and other funding for congregate care, including:

1. limiting the use of Home and Community Based Waivers for congregate care;
2. advocating for the closure of state-operated centers for persons with intellectual disabilities and large, private ICF/MRs;
3. limiting the unnecessary placement of persons in nursing homes and continue advocating for the decrease of nursing home beds across the state.

D. Ensure appropriate service planning continues at state psychiatric hospitals through monitoring and assuring implementation of the Service Area Planning, including the Community Service Planning process.

E. End discrimination in waiver services of persons who have a secondary diagnosis of mental illness.

F. Development of plans for community integration.

III. Promote an array of quality consumer-controlled and/or consumer-driven services to enable adults and children with disabilities to live and thrive in their own homes, schools, workplaces, and communities, including:

A. Advocate for consumer control and direction in the delivery of services, including the development of participant-directed services across all ages and all disabilities.

B. Advocate for additional home, school, and community-based options for children and adolescents who have behavioral health needs and/or developmental disabilities, including:

1. increasing availability of evidence-based practices and services to support children and their families in their homes;
2. increasing availability and coordination of positive behavioral supports in neighborhood schools provided through the behavioral health and education systems;
3. increasing availability of home-like, community-based residential options for children who cannot live with their families;
4. increasing services and supports for persons under age 22 to assist them to transition to the adult service system.

C. End waiting lists for and other barriers to community services for people with intellectual and other disabilities who are unserved or underserved, including:

1. advocating for services for persons currently on the waiting list for persons with intellectual disabilities;

2. advocating for services for unserved adults with autism;
 3. advocating to end the waiting list for Office of Long Term Living and Aging services;
 4. advocating to assure appropriate services, including communication access, is provided to persons with intellectual and other disabilities who are Deaf/hard of hearing.
- D. Expand access to quality education, early intervention, and special education services in the most inclusive settings appropriate, including:
1. providing information and technical assistance and/or individual representation in selected cases to families seeking a free appropriate public education for their children with disabilities in inclusive settings;
 2. supporting coalitions in their efforts to improve the delivery of educational services;
 3. advocating for legislative or statewide policy improvements;
 4. assuring appropriate educational services in the least restrictive environment, including increasing the number of students with disabilities in inclusive settings.
- E. Assure access to Medicaid services, including:
1. advocating for assistive technology;
 2. assuring that persons with disabilities are not terminated from services or have services inappropriately reduced;

3. providing advice and technical assistance, through intake, training, and other means, to individuals or family members who are having difficulty obtaining or are being denied medical assistance services, including EPSDT services.
- F. Advocate to assure that people with disabilities have equal access to unbiased, comprehensive and coordinated health care.
- G. Advocate to assure implementation of Affordable Care Act to support persons with disabilities.
- H. Identify and work with unserved and underserved communities, including:
1. training individuals in institutions on self-advocacy and individual rights;
 2. identifying communities as underserved and targeting them for outreach;
 3. providing training and outreach to people with disabilities and other interested persons.
- I. Improve treatment for inmates with mental illness in Pennsylvania's state prisons and local jails, including focus on persons in restrictive housing units (i.e., isolation) due to disciplinary violations.
- J. Advocate for improved re-entry services for persons with disabilities released from incarceration.
- K. Provide advice and advocacy to ensure appropriate implementation of Act 62, the Autism Insurance Statute.
- L. Advocate for removal of barriers that exist in OMHSAS, ODP and DOH that prevent access to coordinated and effective co-occurring treatment for persons dually diagnosed and

initiatives that proactively serve individuals with co-occurring disorders.

- M. Advocate to assure that persons with disabilities make their own decisions to the maximum extent possible and receive appropriate substitute decision-making assistance when necessary, including in medical situations and at the end of life.

IV. Eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability, including:

- A. Assure access to government and public services and public accommodations, including:
 - 1. assuring effective communication in all service delivery systems for persons who are deaf, deaf/blind, or hard of hearing;
 - 2. assuring that state and local governments install and maintain curb ramps;
 - 3. providing assistance to persons who experience discrimination by government programs and services or public accommodations.
 - 4. advocating for law enforcement personnel to receive training to interact with persons with mental illness and other disabilities in an appropriate manner.
- B. Promote and expand employment of persons with disabilities, including:
 - 1. training attorneys, persons with disabilities, and others on the employment rights of persons with disabilities;
 - 2. providing assistance for individuals with disabilities in employment discrimination matters;

3. advocating for supports for persons with disabilities to participate fully in the workplace.

C. Assure that persons with disabilities have equal opportunity to vote, including:

1. advocating for increased accessibility of polling places and voting procedures for people with disabilities;
2. exploring best practices for accessible voting including for people with print disabilities;
3. working to assure that the right to vote of persons with Intellectual disabilities is protected;
4. working to support people with disabilities to register to vote and to ensure compliance by entities required by law to offer voter registration;
5. supporting coalitions in their efforts to improve access to the vote and to address barriers and impediment to people with disabilities voting.

D. Promote accessible transportation, including:

1. requiring transportation facilities to be accessible;
2. providing assistance to persons seeking accessible transportation;
3. advocating improved quality of services provided by the Persons with Disabilities Rural Shared Ride Program;
4. advocating increased transportation options, such as taxi services;
5. advocating for increased transportation services to rural areas.