

Enabled Voices



An advocacy publication of Tri-County Independent Living

Volume I, Number 15

September 19, 2007

Support for Community Choice Act Growing

Support for the **Community Choice Act** continues to grow in DC. Current versions of the bill include S. 799 in the U.S. Senate and HR 1621 in the U.S. House of Representatives. It was known in past sessions as the Medicaid Community Attendant Services and Supports Act (MiCASSA), and it was originally initiated by Iowa Senator Tom Harkin.



and supports. It would allow dollars to follow the person and let eligible individuals, or their representatives, choose where they would receive services and supports.

The Community Choice Act is intended to support people with disabilities so they can continue living in their communities. It releases more Medicaid money for this goal by providing equal access to community based attendant services

Currently, **Senator Barbara Boxer** is the only California elected official in DC who is co-sponsoring the Act. A hearing on the proposed Act, by the Senate Finance Committee, will also be held on September 25 at 10 a.m. If you would like to see this effort continue to move forward and see some support from our California representation, now is a good time to contact Senators Feinstein and Congressman Thompson and tell them to get on-board! To contact **Senator Diane Feinstein**--One Post St., Ste. 2450, San Francisco, CA 94104, Tel: (415) 393-0707, Fax: (415) (916) 448-2563 or 112 Hart Senate Office Bldng., Washington, DC, 20510, Tel: (202) 224-3553, Fax: (909) 888-8613, TTY: (202) 224-4264, www.boxer.senate.gov. To Contact **Congressman Mike Thompson**--317 3rd St., Ste. 1, Eureka, CA 95501, (707) 269-9595; Fax: (707) 269-9598; or Cannon House Office Bldng., Rm. 415, Washington, DC 20515; (202) 225-3311, www.mikethompson.house.gov/.

New Reg Affects Paratransit

Does your paratransit agency offer "origin to destination" service?

The California Department of Transportation has enacted a new regulation (49 CFR SS37.129) that requires door-to-door assistance in certain circumstances. Many transit agencies just offer curb-to-curb services without accommodations. There are certain requirements contained in the regulation relative to requesting the service in advance and the degree of accommodation and the reg can be seen at http://www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/ada/civil_rights_3891.html (or you can call TCIL for more information about it).

If, after review of the specifics of the regulations, you feel your paratransit provider is **not** in compliance, you can file an ADA complaint through the same web site, or by calling (415) 744-3133; TTY: 800-877-8339.

State Budget Slams People with Disabilities

Cuts to public transportation. A freeze on cost-of-living wage increases for SSI recipients (until 6/1/08). The Governor vetoing funds for such programs as AB 2034, which had successfully provided services for thousands of homeless, mentally ill during the last five years.

continued next page

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No matter how you look at it, the 2006-2007 legislative session and the resulting California state budget were harsh for people with disabilities in this area as well as throughout the State. Recent articles in the local newspapers have talked about potential impacts in Humboldt County, for instance, that include about \$500,000 in cuts to mental health services. To add insult to injury, the budget also contained tax breaks for Hollywood and yacht owners.

Now would be a great time to become involved in advocating for disability rights. One way is by joining the **Disability Rights Network (call Cindy**

Calderon at 707-445-8404) and another is by registering to vote (forms available at the TCIL offices). Elected officials also need to hear more from the estimated 32,000 people with disabilities in Humboldt, Trinity and Del Norte Counties.

ADAPT Protesters Make Waves in Illinois

Meanwhile, in the Midwest, Illinois Governor Blagojevich agreed to meet with disability rights protesters who had occupied a building in the state capitol of Springfield on September 11. The activists, organized by the group ADAPT, were demanding that the State spend less money on nursing homes and other institutions and more on programs that enable people with disabilities to live in their own homes.

A note on the newspaper article: It mentioned that *“hundreds of visitors were inconvenienced during the protests.”* Rather ironic, since it said nothing about the millions of **people with disabilities who face major inconveniences on a daily basis.**

Tri-County Independent Living: (707) 445-8404. For questions on this publication, call Glenn Reed.

Tri-County Independent Living's

4TH ANNUAL ASSISTIVE

TECHNOLOGY &

RESPECT FOR ABILITIES FAIR

11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday, Oct. 5, 2007,

Adorni Center, Eureka, CA

Free Event; Open to the Public!

For further information contact Tri-County Independent Living, (707) 445-8404, toll free: 1-877-576-5000, TTY: (707) 445-8405