



Utah Developmental Disabilities Council

Legislative *look*

Eric Stoker Recognized Nationally by NACDD!

Our Council Vice-Chairperson, Eric Stoker, was recognized as the national self-advocate award winner in July in Washington, DC. During the 2014 National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD), Eric was celebrated as the Champion of Equal Opportunity along with Sen. John Barrasso from the great State of Wyoming. Eric was selected by a committee from a number of highly qualified self-advocate candidates from across the nation. In a taped message, Rep. Chris Stewart highlighted the fact that Eric is self-determined and ambitious as he holds 3 part time jobs in addition to all the volunteering he does for the community as well as his many hobbies and interests. Fellow Utahns present for the award ceremony included: Kayci Lynam, Rita Bouillion, Frank Long, Tracy Justesen, and Claire Mantonya. We are so proud of Eric and all that he

does on behalf of the disability community!



UDDC Vice-Chair, Eric Stoker holding the CEO Award in

2015 Legislative Priorities

The Utah Developmental Disabilities Council (UDDC) believes that increasing direct care staff minimum wage is critical to support Utah's families who have a family member with a significant disability. Direct care workers support individuals with disabilities in their homes and communities to help the individual maintain health and safety, remain as independent as possible, reduce costs, and support families. The UDDC intends to increase awareness among the general public, policy makers and families about the importance of sustaining direct care staff and the vital support direct care staff professionals provide individuals with disabilities. Utah serves families and their family member with a disability through a strong public and private partnership. Basically, the Department of Human Services, through its Division of Services for People with Disabilities, contracts with private sector organizations that provide supported living, group homes, respite, supported employment, and other direct supports so that each individual with a disability can contribute fully to their community. Continued on page 2.

Next Full Council

Meeting:

*Thursday, February 5,
2015*

Utah State Capitol
Copper Room

UDDC 2015 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY

INCREASING DIRECT CARE WORKER WAGES IS CRITICAL FOR UTAH'S FAMILIES

- Direct care worker wages are so low that recruitment and retention is at critical levels. Today, providers are cutting essential services and not enrolling new individuals because there are no staff available.
- Because of low entry-level wages, staff turnover rates average 86% statewide. Individuals need to be able to depend on trained direct care providers. These turnover rates place families and individuals with disabilities at-risk.
- Private providers of services for people with disabilities are operating tightly on rates that, excluding modest cost-of-living increases, have not been adjusted for over 20 years.
- The average direct care pay rate is \$8.00 per hour. This hourly pay rate for skilled and trained workers cannot compete with other jobs, especially those with less demanding work.
- Today's direct care provider hourly wage rates were given a modest increase in 2008. These wages are not keeping pace with Utah's growing population and economy.
- Currently, providers are challenged even getting people to apply for open positions. This incredibly high turnover rate and lack of ability to attract employees will lead to serious health and safety concerns for Utah's most vulnerable population.
- We encourage the Utah State Legislature to upgrade community services to adequately support the needs of people in 2015. This would include funding \$5 million each year for the next three years for direct support worker wages and compensation benefits.

THE ABLE ACT AND WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The Utah Developmental Disabilities Council wants to thank Senator Hatch and Congressmen Stewart, Chaffetz, and Matheson for their support of the ABLE Act. The President signed it in December. The ABLE Act has the potential for many Utahns with disabilities and their families to save for costs related to their

disability. The ABLE Act amends Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Service Code of 1986 to create tax-free savings accounts for individuals with disabilities. The statute aims to ease financial strains faced by individuals with disabilities by making tax-free savings accounts available to cover qualified expenses such as education, housing, and transportation. The ABLE Act supplements, but not supplants, benefits provided through private insurances, the Medicaid program, the supplemental security income program, the beneficiary's employment, and other sources.

An ABLE account could fund a variety of essential expenses for individuals, including medical and dental care, education, community based supports, employment training, assistive technology, housing, and transportation. The ABLE Act provides individuals with disabilities the same types of flexible savings tools that all other Americans have through college savings accounts, health savings accounts, and individual retirement accounts. The legislation also contains Medicaid fraud protection against abuse and a Medicaid pay-back provision when the beneficiary passes away. It will eliminate barriers to work and saving by preventing dollars saved through ABLE accounts from counting against an individual's eligibility for any federal benefits program. For more information about the ABLE Act and ABLE Accounts visit <http://www.ndss.org> or visit www.utahddcouncil.org for a list of common questions and answers.

2015 Brings Planning Time to the Council

By our federal law requirements, the Council work is directed through a 5-Year Plan. 2015 marks the 4th year of our current 5-Year plan as well as the year to begin the process of developing the plans for 2017 – 2022. The Council brought in Nancy Thaler, the Executive Director of the National Association of Directors of Developmental Disability Services (NASDDS) – the organization of all the Division of Services for People with Developmental Disabilities across the country. Nancy visited Utah December 2, 2014 and presented the Council members with a national perspective on trends which will help inform the Council's start looking toward planning for the future. Planning is underway!



News From Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE)



SABE President Bryon Murray

Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) holds a national self-advocacy conference and elections every even numbered year. 2014's national conference, "The Sooner We Are Equal the Better" was held in Oklahoma City, October 9 – 12th. Former Council Chairperson and current President of National SABE, Bryon Murray from Roosevelt, Utah, presided over this conference. Bryon has been serving as the elected SABE Region 3 Board member since 2006 and for the last two years as President.

Every two years the Council sponsors a number of People First members to attend this leadership opportunity. The Utah delegation included: Bryon Murray, Kayci Lynam, James O'Neill, Eric Stoker, Lenny Jones, Kristen Hone, Libbi Waters, Ginny Rouse and Tom Brownlee. This year several self-advocates submitted proposals to make presentations, and everyone from Utah was selected. Former Council members Tom Brownlee, James O'Neill, Bryon Murray, Kelly Holt, and current Council member Kayci Lynam, all had proposals selected. This interest in leadership and recognition of our Utah People First members willing to provide educational experiences on a national level demonstrates the development of great leaders.

Dear SABE Members,

I just can't believe that 2 years has already gone by as being your president of SABE. Yes there have been struggles but the overall experience has been exciting, challenging and rewarding. I am proud to say that many changes have been made within the organization that we hope will move people forward. Changes such as new representation in Washington DC who can represent SABE's mission, webinar board meetings and we also have new a fundraiser position that will assist SABE in our desire to grow. I am also proud that are voices are starting to be heard together with our new partnerships within the disability community. It just demonstrates how working together can make a huge impact on how people with disabilities can continue to achieve equality. I wish the new president and the board members the best of luck. It has been my greatest pleasure to serve you. I wasn't the president just for myself but I hope that I represented all of you with dignity and respect. I hope that I brought us closer to our dreams. My hero, Abe Lincoln, faced many battles and he believed, like me, that "A House divided against itself, cannot stand". We must continue to find ways to support and honor one another. Good luck to all of you and remember, "Nothing About Us Without Us"

Sincerely,

Outgoing President
Self Advocates Becoming Empowered

HCBSadvocacy.org A New Resource for Aging and Disability Communities

HCBSadvocacy.org is a new platform to share information and resources regarding the new Home and Community Based Settings (HCBS) rule and stay informed about steps each state is taking to comply with the new rule. The website is a project of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities, and the National Disability Rights Network. It includes news and documents from states, advocacy resources, comment deadlines, and links to the final rule and official guidance. Send your news and resources to post to the site .

**UDDC
Welcomes
2014 Council
Members
Appointed in
September**

The Utah Developmental Disabilities Council is pleased to announce two new Citizen Council Members: Denell Miles of West Jordan and Greg Smith of Taylorsville!

We also welcome Agency Members Noel Taxin of the Department of Health and Jessica Bowman of the Department of Education as well as liaison member Julia Pearce of the Utah Center for Assistive Technology.



Citizen Member
Greg Smith

WIA is Now the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA)

With the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Congress has reauthorized the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), including the Rehabilitation Act, through 2020.

Commenting on the bill's passage, President Obama stated that the bill "...will help workers, including workers with disabilities, access employment, education, job- driven training, and support services that give them the chance to advance their careers and secure the good jobs of the future."

What does this 300-page legislation mean for people with disabilities? Major highlights include:

- A much larger role for public vocational rehabilitation (VR) as people with disabilities make the transition from school to adult life.
- Efforts intended to limit the use of sub-minimum wage.
- Required agreements between state VR systems and state Medicaid systems, and state intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) agencies.
- A definition of "customized employment" in federal statute, and an updated definition of "supported employment" that includes customized employment.
- A definition for "competitive integrated employment" as an optimal outcome.
- Enhanced roles and requirements for the general workforce system and One-Stop Career Centers in meeting the needs of people with disabilities.
- A number of disability agencies moving from the

Department of Education (DOE) to the Department of Health and Human Services, including the Independent Living Program.

-Changes in performance measures, with potentially major implications for VR.

What's Next?

Implementation of WIOA will occur over the next couple of years. A major next step will be publication of proposed regulations for public comment by mid-January 2015. These regulations will provide details on the implantation of WIOA. All major provisions of WIOA, except as specifically noted in the legislation, will go into effect on July 1, 2015.

For more on the WIOA, visit the U.S. Department of Labor's Training and Employment Notice: http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=3556

Information specific to changes in the Rehabilitation Act can be found on the Department of Education website:

www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/publications/wioa-changes-to-rehab-act.pdf

Full bill text:

<https://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/803/text>

A Big Thank You for 6 Years of Service



September 30, 2014 was the last day of 6 years of service on the Council for two awesome advocates – Jennifer Kuhn and Eric Stoker. During their years of service, both Jennifer and Eric have been willing to serve and volunteer in many different situations from committee work to testifying at the Utah Legislature.



Seeking New Council Members for 2015-2016!



UDDC
Co-Chair,
Eric Stoker



Employment/Education
Committee Chair,
Jennifer Kuhn

The Utah Developmental Disabilities Council is an Advisory Board. An advisory board provides advice and makes recommendations to another person or entity who makes policy for the benefit of the general public. It is created by statute or executive order. It performs its duties only under the supervision of another person, as provided in statute.” (Handbook For Members of Utah State Boards and Commissions, p. 1)

In order to be eligible to serve as a citizen appointed Council Member the applicant must be a person with a developmental disability or a family member (including adult siblings) of a person with a developmental disability as defined by law.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- Fill in the Council Member Application Form by the appropriate deadline.
- Applications must be submitted to the Council by **March 31, 2015**.
- Eligible applications will be reviewed by the Council Nominating Committee and then forwarded to the Governor’s Office for his approval.
- The Governor will make the appointment to the Council.
- Terms of volunteer service start October 1st through September 30th for 3 years. Council members may serve a maximum of 3 terms for a total of 9 years.
- You will be notified of your appointment by the Governor’s office.

In 2015, there are tentatively six positions open for individual and family members: adult siblings are encouraged to make application! Additional openings may become available.

Applications and full criteria are available online at www.utahddcouncil.org or by contacting the Council Office at 801.533.3965

<https://www.facebook.com/UtahDevelopmentalDisabilitiesCouncil>

