

The Parent Coalition of Whatcom County

January 2003

1111 Cornwall Ave. #205
Bellingham, WA 98225
360-715-0170
1-866-284-8444 (toll free)
360-715-8522 fax
www.arcwhatcom.org
email: parentcoaltn@nas.com
Issue No. 1-03



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JANUARY 2003



15th, 22nd & 29th - Wednesdays—Olympia

Family members, self-advocates and service providers are invited to learn about the legislative process in person. Learn how to make a difference! Call The Arc of Washington: 1-888-754-8798 ext. 105

20 Monday - Bellingham

Parent to Parent Support Meeting. 7 pm. 2001 H Street. Whatcom Center for Early Learning. 360-255-6402.

20 Monday - Bellingham

SPIN Dance. 7-9 pm. 315 Halleck St.

29 Wednesday - Bellingham

Independent Leisure at Home. 4:30-6 pm. Bellingham Public Library presentation room. An educational forum for advocates, family members and supported living staff, on creating home recreation resources. Bellingham Parks and Rec. and WWU Recreation Program. 676-6985

31 Friday - Bellingham

People First of Whatcom County. 7-8:30 pm. Max Higbee Community Recreation Center, 315 Halleck. 360-715-0170.

FEBRUARY 2003

3 Monday - Bellingham

The Arc of Whatcom County.- Board of Directors meeting. 4-6 pm. 360-715-0170.

5th, 12th, 19th, 26th-Wednesdays-

Olympia- Family members, self-advocates and service providers are invited to learn about the legislative process in person. Call The Arc : 1-888-754-8798 ext. 105

8 Saturday - Bellingham

FACES Super Saturday day camp, 4 - 18 year olds & siblings. 10 am—1pm. Bloedel Donovan Park Gym. RSVP by calling 360-756-5298.

10 Monday - Bellingham

Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board meeting. 4:30 - 6 pm. 1000 N. Forest St. 360-676-6829.

10 Monday - Bellingham

Parent to Parent Support Meeting. 7 pm. 2001 H Street. Whatcom Center for Early Learning. 360-255-6402.

17 Monday - Bellingham

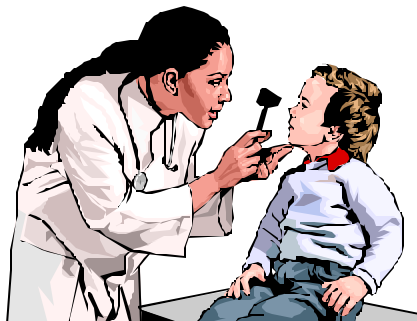
SPIN Dance. 7-9 pm. 315 Halleck St.

28 Friday - Bellingham

People First of Whatcom County. 7-8:30 pm. Max Higbee Center, 315 Halleck. 360-715-0170.

"We welcome people with disabilities at Scotia Medi-Clinic"

Scotia Medi-Clinic is a new walk-in/primary care, broad-spectrum health care clinic for Whatcom, Skagit Island, San Juan, Snohomish and King County residents! The clinic intends to be open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. by sometime in Febru-



ary. The Clinic accepts Medicaid, Medicare and all major medical insurance.

Scotia Medi-Clinic offers a full range of medical services to individuals with physical and/or mental health needs. Being open 12 hours a day, seven days a week is just one way that Director of Clinical Operations Tom Wildgoose wants to "think out of the box" in meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities, who often face many obstacles when they require services.

"We want to offer the quality of care," says Wildgoose, "that gives attention and comfort to individuals and families when they need it most. We want to be there for those small emergencies or crises when getting sound guidance, in person or by phone, can make all the difference."

(continued on page 4)

HOUSING AUTHORITY VALIDATES 'SECTION 8' WAITING LIST

January 2, 2003 Press Release:

John Harmon, Executive Director of the Bellingham and Whatcom County Housing Authorities, has announced that letters are being sent to applicant families who are waiting for housing assistance under the Housing Choice Voucher program (formerly called Section 8). According to Harmon, the program is currently using 100% of its available vouchers and is only refilling vacancies as they occur.

The Bellingham Housing Authority does not expect to receive any new vouchers in the foreseeable future, said Harmon. The purpose of the letter is to inform families who are waiting for vouchers that they must verify their intention to remain on the waiting list despite what could be a long wait for assistance. By removing families who are no longer interested in waiting, we can reduce costs and staff time and get vouchers to needy families more quickly, said Harmon.

There are currently over 2,000 families on the waiting list. A lot of those families have moved from the area or have found other solutions to their housing problems, he said.

The Bellingham Housing Authority expects all of the families who want to remain on the Housing Choice Voucher waiting list to return their letter before the end of January. **Any family that is waiting for assistance but has not yet received a letter should contact the Housing Authority.**

The telephone number for the Housing Choice Voucher program (Section 8) is (360) 676-6887.

Join the Parent Coalition's Grass Roots Housing Committee-360-715-0170

The Arc of Whatcom County serves Whatcom, Skagit and Island Counties. Our mission is to improve the quality of life, increase the independence, and assure the full inclusion in the community of any person with a developmental disability.



It could have been worse...

With the exception of a few harsh cuts, the Governor's proposed 2003-05 budget for developmental disabilities fared well in the face of devastating budget conditions. In other words, it could have been much worse. (See below for a list of changes to the DD budget).

Governor Locke's proposed 2003-05 budget (proposed in mid-December 2002), lands one of its biggest hits on low income adults (through the proposed elimination of General Assistance Unemployable and Basic Health coverage for childless adults). It also eliminates 2,500 state employee positions, and suspends teacher pay increases and funding for class size reduction.

Locke stated that the current budget deficit of \$2.6 billion would require a 2% increase in the sales tax, an option that he feels would place too high a burden on citizens during such trying economic times.

Locke's recommendations were built on "zero based" budgeting, a process that eliminated the total budget of each state agency and then added funding for functions that are consistent with the Governor's ten priorities of government.

The Governor's budget proposals represent the first step in a long and bumpy road (lest we forget... unresolved transportation issues will play a major role this session). Considering all those who were left out of the budget, or removed entirely, the battle in the Legislature will be fierce. Please commit to ensuring that issues affecting persons with developmental disabilities and their families are not lost this session. Stay in touch with your legislators, respond to Action Alerts, attend DD Advocacy Days in Olympia -- be heard! We will continue to keep you posted as we learn more...

*from information provided by
The Arc of Washington State*

Budget Recommendations:

Division of Developmental Disabilities

Elimination of prevocational training (sheltered workshops) for approximately 1,400 individuals. About 1,000 of these individuals are on the Home and Community-Based waiver, and 700 receive a residential service. In addition, the budget directs the state to notify the federal government that it will no longer cover this service in its new Home and Community Based waiver. (\$13.1 million reduction).

Reduction of DDD program administration. (\$170 thousand reduction).

Funding for the Marr tentative settlement for the support of persons with mental illness and developmental disabilities at Eastern State Hospital. (\$731 thousand new funding)

Department of Community Trade and Economic Development

Elimination of funding for the administration of the Developmental Disabilities Endowment. The cost is to be assumed by customer fees.

Elimination of the Long Term Care Ombudsman (\$1.2 million reduction).

Medical Assistance Administration

Elimination of optional Medicaid Programs: dental, vision and hearing. (\$101 million reduction)

Elimination of optional Health Care for Workers with Disability. This is the Medicaid Buy-In portion of Ticket to Work. (\$1.5 million reduction: GF-State; \$1.5 million Health Services Account-State)

Elimination of medical care for General Assistance Unemployable (GAU). (\$65.9 million reduction: General Fund - State)

Elimination of the Medically Indigent program. (\$81 million reduction: General Fund-Private/Local; \$54 million General Fund-Federal)

Increased eligibility controls for the State Childrens Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). (\$1.4 million reduction: General Fund-Federal; Health Services Account-State)

Increased eligibility controls for optional Medicaid services for children. (\$22.6 million reduction)

Health Care Authority

Elimination of the Basic Health Plan for

(\$274 million reduction: Health Services Account-State)

Elimination of the scheduled expansion of the Basic Health Plan funded by Initiative 773. (\$93 million reduction: Health Services Account-State).

Office of the Governor

Elimination of the Family and Childrens Ombudsman. (\$990 thousand reduction: General Fund-State).

Members needed for independent task force reviewing DDD services

The Developmental Disabilities Council is forming a new group that will independently review data being collected about the services provided by the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

This data is being collected as part of a national project called the National Core Indicators, which measures the performance of state and government-funded programs that are used by people with developmental disabilities. It is co-sponsored by the National Association of Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services and the Human Services Research Institute.

The DDC is committed to this Core Indicators Task Force with 12-15 members, for the next three years. It will meet 3 or 4 times a year for half a day. Travel and related expenses will be reimbursed.

The DDC encourages you to apply for the task force if you are: an adult who receives services from DDD; the parent or family member of an adult who receives services from DDD; the parent or foster parent of a child who receives services from DDD; a service provider who helps people get services from DDD.

If you are interested in being on the task force to review and make recommendations on DDD services, contact:

Tory Henderson
1-800-634-4473
toryh@cted.wa.gov

**DDC Core Indicators Task Force
Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council**

2600 Martin Way E, Suite F
Olympia, WA 98504 8314

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)

Washington State has had one full service HCBS waiver for individuals with developmental disabilities since 1983 which has been renewed every five years following the required Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) review. The waiver is designed to provide home and community based services to approximately 11,500 individuals who would otherwise require a high level of care such as is provided in an intermediate Care Facility (ICF/MR). The waiver allows the state to receive federal Medicaid funding of about 50% that matches the state dollars.

The final report by the CMS of the CAP program found that the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) hasn't been implementing the program properly. The review also re-

vealed CAP clients are being denied their choice of waiver services. The Division proposes to terminate the current waiver December 31, 2002 and replace it as of January 1, 2003 with the Home and Community Service Options System providing 6 waivers.

Enrollment on any waiver is dependent on meeting all eligibility criteria, waiver capacity, have assessed needs and choosing to receive services in a community setting. The intent is to provide high quality services within the resources available and explore creative, low cost service options that use natural supports and community resources. It is expected that the majority of CAP waiver participants will move to one of the Basic Waivers.

Advocacy Days 2003 in Olympia

Advocacy Day begins at 10 a.m. every Wednesday during the legislative session in Olympia and ends about 3 p.m. Participants are given a 90-minute briefing on current issues (budget and bills), and have the afternoon to visit their legislators.

In addition to the topics each Wednesday, every Advocacy Day briefing covers bills of interest, late-breaking news, and tips on planning for the day's advocacy.

JANUARY 2003

- Jan. 15 Session Overview
- Jan. 22 Changing Face of DD
- Jan. 29 Budget

FEBRUARY 2003

- Feb. 5 Health Care
- Feb. 12 Family Issues
- Feb. 19 Employment
- Feb. 26 Provider Wages & Quality Assurance

MARCH 2003

- Mar. 5 Independent Living
- Mar. 12 Special Education & Birth-3
- Mar. 19 Transportation
- Mar. 26 Current Issues

APRIL 2003

- April 2 Budget
- April 9 Health Care
- April 16 Session Wrap up

1-888-754-8798 ext. 105
The Arc of Washington State
 2600 Martin Way E, Suite D
 Olympia, WA 98506

Limited reimbursements for travel, respite and interpreter service are available on a one time, first-come first-served basis.

Basic Waiver #1

Expenditure level up to \$7,500/year

- Will serve children and adults living in family homes, their own homes, adult family homes and foster care.
- Will rely heavily on Medicaid Personal Care.
- Will use community participation services and home supports.

Intensive Waiver

Expenditure level \$45,001 - \$85,000/year

- Will serve primarily adults living in their own homes or residential facilities.
- Will need more intense level of 24-hour support.
- Will use community participation services, home supports and professional services such as behavior management.

Basic Waiver #2

Expenditure level up to \$15,000/year

- Will serve children and adults living in family homes, their own homes, adult family homes and foster care.
- Will rely heavily on Medicaid Personal Care.
- Will use community participation services and home supports.

Exception Waiver

Expenditure level \$85,001 - not to exceed ICF/MR rate

- Will serve primarily adults in highly individualized settings.
- Will use community participation services, home supports and significant amounts of behavior management.
- Extensive staff support (1:1 & 2:1 ratios)

Core Waiver

Expenditure level \$15,001-\$45,000/year

- Will serve primarily adults living in their own homes or residential facilities.
- Will need moderate level of 24-hour support.
- Will use community participation services and home supports.

Public Safety Waiver

Expenditure level not to exceed ICF/MR rate

- Will serve those currently in the Community Protection Plan and others who may be a danger to themselves and others.
- Individuals with developmental disabilities released from state mental hospitals.



DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ENDOWMENT TRUST FUND

The Washington State Developmental Disabilities Endowment Trust Fund was created by the legislature to help address the life-long need that people with developmental disabilities have for supports. Families and advocates have long looked for a way to save money for the future of their loved ones, while protecting the public benefits that they are entitled to use.

Special Features of the Trust Fund

- * Provides an attractive and convenient way to save for the future.
- * Protects beneficiaries' eligibility for public benefits, such as Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid.
- * Provides matching funds for the individual trust accounts.

Incentives to Participate

- * The state will pay up to \$7,750 in matching funds per beneficiary, by providing a 25 percent match on private contributions.

- * Any individual or group can establish a trust account on behalf of a person with a developmental disability.
- * Families can tailor contribution and disbursement plans to meet the individual needs of their family member.
- * A minimum contribution of \$25.00 each month will qualify the account for matching funds.

Eligibility

A beneficiary must reside in the state of Washington and meet the definition of developmental disability as determined by a representative of the Department of Social and Health Services.

Types of Individual Trust Accounts

- * Trust I: "Third Party Trust", anyone other than the beneficiary may contribute.
- * Trust II: "Self Settled Trust", can only accept contributions from the beneficiary.

Contact

People interested in the trust fund should contact Patti Bell or Lisa Remlinger at The Arc of Washington State, 1-888-754-8798 or visit the website at www.arcwa.org.

Scotia Medi-Clinic

(cont'd from page 1)

The clinic is staffed by a pediatrician and pulmonary specialist, and by a certified physician's assistant. There will be one practitioner in the office Tuesdays through Thursdays. Two practitioners will see patients Fridays through Mondays. A pediatric psychologist will see patients three Fridays each month at the clinic.

Director of Clinical Operations Tom Wildgoose states that his goal is not to create a clinical environment, but a responsive clinic where patients feel the healing process

"We specialize in caring for individuals with disabilities, including those with dual diagnoses. Our mission is to aid in the psychological and physical well-being of all persons served."

start when they walk in the door.

If successfully used by individuals with disabilities, the clinic may be able to expand with additional services in the future. Although the clinic has received no government funding, they appreciate their harmonious relationship with the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

The Clinic's EMR (electronic medical records) system is state-of-the-art, allowing medical notes to be made directly on-screen from any of the three exam rooms.

Clinic coordinator Delphine Holmes earned her Master's Degree in psychology from Eastern Washington University in Spokane, and worked for four years at Eastern State Hospital.

For more information about Medicaid services or the Scotia Clinic, contact The Arc at 360-715-0170 or 1-866-284-8444.

reported by J. Wilke

iBOT 3000: wheelchair that climbs stairs now being tested for FDA approval in the U.S.



On Nov. 20, 2002, advisers to the Food and Drug administration recommended approval of the Independence iBOT 3000 Mobility System, a wheelchair that can climb stairs.

Its four wheels are all the same size and use sensors and gyroscopes to rotate over each other and keep balanced. While still seated, an occupant can be elevated to reach overhead, and carry on eye-level conversations with people standing nearby.

Inventor Dean Kaman has licensed the iBOT to Johnson & Johnson. The FDA advisors' approval means it is one step closer to being available in the U.S.

The chair is not for everyone. Us-

ers must have the use of at least one arm to operate it. So far, it's built to seat only adults and large teenagers. It also requires users to lean forward or backward, helping direct the chair to go up or down and adults to the user's center of gravity.

The cost is expected to be \$29,000. Manufactured by the Johnson & Johnson subsidiary Independence Technology, the iBOT will require special training for those prescribing it, as well as for those using it. Independence Technology president Jean-Luc Butel is negotiating with Medicare and other insurers to pay for the iBOT, which may prove cheaper in the long run than the average cost for ramps, elevators and other home modifications for accessibility.

For more information contact The Arc @ 360-715-0170 or 1-866-284-8444 (toll free)

A message from the Parent Coalition: Please help us keep our distribution costs down. Contact us to verify your correct MAILING ADDRESS, ZIP CODE and EMAIL ADDRESS. Coming soon—Parent Coalition newsletter online!

Communicate daily

A communication notebook that travels between home and school each day will inform both parents and teachers. The notebook should go to all the student's teachers. It is helpful for parents to note things like, "John didn't sleep well last night," or "Eliza went to the park with her brother last night and had a terrific time."

A teacher may be unable to respond each day, but parents should not give up. Parent comments help teachers understand a child's behavior during the school day. The comments also give teachers a springboard for conversation that may be used in speech-language therapy and other areas.

Share ideas with the teacher

I believe teachers will welcome your ideas about what would help your child in school. Adaptations in equipment or techniques that work at home could help in school as well. If a child has challenges such as socialization, a parent may wish to suggest an idea like assigning another student to be their child's "helper of the week."

Participate in school activities

Volunteering at school is a good way to meet school staff and other families. At school, a parent may be able to read to a class, help supervise snack time, clean toys or put up bulletin boards. From home, parents can cut lettering for

bulletin boards or gather games and treats for room parties.

A child with a disability is part of the school. Attending activities as a family and participating in fundraisers helps your child socialize with classmates and acquaints staff and other parents with your family.

Some parents may be comfortable presenting an in-service at school about their child's disability to help staff and others understand the child. Bring photos or home videos. This can help eliminate misconceptions about living with a child with a disability, with the opportunity to see all the activities that your family shares.

Know all your child's teachers

It's important to work well with all your child's teachers. They are all part of your child's school day. Parents often don't receive the whole picture of what goes on at school if they don't have a relationship with staff other than the special education teacher.

Parents may need to take the initiative in contacting general education teachers. I have heard some teachers say that they did not want to burden parents with school issues because the family was already dealing with the disability issues. If teachers know your family and how it functions, they often are more comfortable talking to you about your child.

Organize at home

Preparing a child at home usually helps the teacher at school. Make sure any permission forms are signed, lunch or cafeteria card is packed, homework and communication notebook is enclosed, and equipment or medication is ready. It saves the teacher time and effort at school, so that he or she can concentrate on teaching. Using color-coded folders might help your child organize by classroom or subject matter.

Help your child fit in

Children who dress age-appropriately and bring age-appropriate items to show and share fit in more easily with other students, and that helps teachers in the classroom.

Helping children behave appropriately to the extent that their disabilities allow also helps them fit in. Teaching

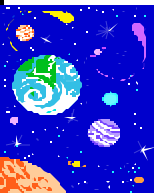
tant, and families can help their child find ways to demonstrate courtesy. If a child with autism is unlikely to make eye contact, for example, he or she might be able to say, "Hello."

Be tactful

Teachers want your child to succeed! It helps if parents can present their concerns in a way that encourages cooperation. It adds pleasure to teaching a child whose parents show interest in school and are supportive of the teacher and other staff.

For additional information on how parents can help their children with disabilities at school, see the Families and Advocates Partnerships for Education (FAPE) website: www.fape.org

NASA Helps Readers



Touch the Universe

A new book of majestic images, taken by NASA's Hubble Space Telescope, brings the wonders of our universe to children with visual disabilities.

The 64-page book, titled **Touch the Universe: A NASA Braille Book of Astronomy**, presents 14 color photographs of planets, nebulae, stars, and galaxies that are embossed with lines, bumps, and other textures. The book incorporates Braille and large-print descriptions, making it accessible to readers of most visual abilities.

For more information contact:
The Arc at (360) 715-0170



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1111 Cornwall Ave. #205

Bellingham, WA 98225

360-715-0170 or

1-866-284-8444 (toll free)

email parentcoaltn@nas.com

or arc2@nas.com

Newsletter Editor

Jennifer Wilke

Newsletter Production Staff:

Harshpreet Wallia, Tony La,

Alice Lloyd, Rose Formichella,

Nancy Briegel, Erica Miller, A dam

Garman & Sara Achey.

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The Arc of Whatcom County Board of Directors

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Lisa Rolston, Vice President

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There are currently three vacancies.

Executive Director

Susan Jewell

Office Manager

Dana Little

OFFICE HOURS:

9 am - Noon, Monday-Friday



THE ARC OF WHATCOM COUNTY

1111 Cornwall Avenue #205
Bellingham, WA 98225



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CHOICE & SELF-DETERMINATION

People with developmental disabilities and their families want services and supports delivered by a system that allows us choice and control over our own lives.



Children's Alliance 2003 Public Policy Priorities

NEW STATE REVENUE

reprinted from *The Catalyst*, 10/2002

With the state facing a \$2 billion budget deficit, it is imperative that state lawmakers not simply cut the budget, but that they support new sources of revenue. While a specific revenue source has not been identified, we are working closely with the Tax Fairness Coalition.

Program) funding and public health backfill funding; potential support for an increase in the alcohol tax.

- Action on childhood obesity; may include proposing legislation that would require competitive foods sold in schools to meet certain nutritional standards.

HEALTH INSURANCE FOR CHILDREN

- Preserve open enrollment for children below 250% of the federal poverty level.
- Oppose provisions of the Medicaid waiver that would compromise children's health.
- Keep the pressure on to insure that the transition of immigrants from Medicaid to the Basic Health Plan is fair, comprehensive and inclusive. (A report on the transition of 25,000 kids from Medicaid to the Basic Health Plan is available at www.childrensalliance.org)

The mission of the Children's Alliance is to improve the well being of children by effecting positive changes in public policies, priorities, and programs. Our vision is that all of Washington's children will have what they need to grow up to be the people they dream of becoming.
www.childrensalliance.org

PREVENTION - EARLY INTERVENTION

Support funding for programs that keep kids out of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

CHILD CARE

- Defend the ECEAP (Early Childhood Education and Assistance) program.
- Stop cuts to child care subsidies.
- Work in partnership with other child care advocate organizations.

To receive instant information on decisions being made for kids in Olympia, sign up by contacting:
Action@childrensalliance.org
or call 1-800-854-KIDS ext. 11

CHILD NUTRITION

- Preserve WIC (Women, Infants and Children