



**Montgomery County, MD
Commission on People with Disabilities
March 9th, 2016**

Welcome and Approval of February, 2016 Meeting Summary Minutes:

Seth Morgan, Chair, convened the meeting. The approval of the February 2016 Meeting Summary Minutes was tabled until the next meeting due to lack of a quorum. Approved minutes are available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd.

Independence Now – Sarah Sorensen, Executive Director, www.innow.org

Independence Now is a nonprofit organization designed, governed and staffed by people with disabilities. They are part of a nationwide network of Centers for Independent Living (CIL) providing the following core services: information and referral; advocacy; peer support; and independent living skills training. Independence Now is a resource and advocacy center that promotes independent living and equal access for people of all ages with all types of disabilities residing in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. All services are provided free of charge.

There are seven CIL's in Maryland that provide services to all the counties. Independent Living Specialists discuss with clients what their goals and needs are, such as personal care, housing, employment, financial education, and transportation, and assist them in achieving those goals. A CIL staff person is located within the Health & Human Services Aging and Disability Resource Unit (ADRU) at 401 Hungerford Drive in Rockville. They receive client intakes and referrals from ADRU.

The Independent Living Modification and Assistive Technology program assists eligible individuals with significant physical and mental disabilities living in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties to live independently at home in the community. Architectural modifications to a residence of an eligible individual may be authorized to the extent necessary to facilitate entry and exit to the residence, access to bathroom facilities, and access within the residence. Vehicular modifications are limited to removable aids such as Spinner knobs, Hand controls, Wheelchair lifts, and Pedal extenders. Assistive Technology includes: Aids for Daily Living (e.g., bathing and toileting equipment), Environmental Control Units (ECU), Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), Hearing Aides and other devices the Medicaid or other insurers will not provide. To be eligible you must be a Prince George's or Montgomery County resident; have a significant disability in any age group; and meet a financial needs test and provide a portion of matching funds.

Independence Now is part of the Maryland Work Incentives Network (WIN) and the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) project. WIPA is a program created and funded by Social Security to help disability beneficiaries understand and use the work incentives available to them. Many disability beneficiaries won't work or limit their earnings for fear of losing their benefits. INNOW manages the program for Montgomery and Prince George's County in their office and has contractors providing services to other counties. Work Incentive Counselors work with clients to review all the benefits they receive including housing, food stamps, health insurance and Medicaid.

Under contract with Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD), Independence Now staff visit 48 nursing facilities across Montgomery and Prince George's counties on a monthly basis to provide outreach and support to all residents who may be interested in transitioning to community living. Staff persons visit with nursing facility residents, their family members as well as staff to provide information and resources on accessing community services. While all residents are eligible to receive support and resources from staff about community living, only residents with Long Term Care or Community Medicaid are eligible for application assistance for Medicaid community based long-term supports and services, including Community First Choice and the Home and Community Based Options Waiver.

Independence Now offers several youth programs including a Youth Leadership Forum for students entering their junior and senior year of high school. It takes place over three days and is held at Towson University. Students get to experience being on campus and learn about employment of persons with disabilities. They also travel to Annapolis to

learn about the legislative process. Independence Now holds various social events such as movie nights and plan social programs during spring, summer and winter breaks.

The Supports Planning program assists and supports individuals to remain in community settings, transition from nursing facilities, and coordinate care. All Supports Planners have personal experience with disability and community living. 1 ½ staff serve 70 clients within Montgomery County. Ms. Sorensen stated they hope to add additional staff within the next year to serve a greater client base. Clients are predominately older and they would like to grow to serve a younger population.

Ms. Sorensen reported that within the next month they will be able to start providing employment services to Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) consumers. Services will include ongoing, but limited, job coaching as well as pre-employment training.

The floor was opened to questions.

Kathy Mann Koepke, Commissioner, asked what percentage of Independence Now clients have a mental illness. Ms. Sorensen reported that she does not have an exact number, but a fairly large percentage of clients do have a mental illness.

Jay Kenney, Chief, Aging and Disability Services, asked about the transitioning process for moving individuals out of nursing homes. Ms. Sorensen noted that it is a lot of work from the case management perspective and housing is the biggest barrier. The individuals Independence Now has assisted have moved back home with family members. It is harder to find housing for individuals within the community. She reported that there will soon be new housing opportunities available through bridge subsidies and the new Section 811 program geared towards individuals leaving nursing homes.

Carl Prather, Commissioner, asked about income eligibility requirements for programs and training of staff. The only income based program that Independence Now offers is home modifications. All other programs do not have income eligibility. Staffers receive extensive training over a series of months and work with other intake specialists. Think tank meetings are held to discuss difficult situations and how to resolve them. Monthly staff meetings include presentations on providers and services.

It was asked if Independence Now works with any veteran groups. They currently do not, but try to assist clients who are veterans by connecting them with veteran services.

Chair and Vice-Chair Report:

Seth Morgan, Chair, reported that [Senate Bill 819 - Independent Living Tax Credit Act](#) would create a tax credit against the State income tax for an individual or a corporation that incurs qualified expenses to renovate an existing home or construct a new home with accessibility and universal visibility features to assist individuals with disabilities. The nonrefundable credit is equal to 50% of the qualified expenses, not to exceed \$5,000 per taxpayer. A hearing on the bill was held on March 9th.

In regards to County Council Bill 37-15 - Boards, Committees, and Commissions – Advocacy the Office of Intergovernmental Relations may be making a presentation of their recommendations to the Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee on April 14th at 2 pm. Seth will attend the meeting.

In January WMATA proposed allowing transportation network companies, such as Uber and Lyft, to provide alternative paratransit services to MetroAccess clients. Uber and Lyft currently do not offer access to wheelchair accessible vehicles. Councilmember Roger Berliner has drafted a letter in opposition to WMATA and will be giving it to the other Councilmembers to review and potentially sign once it is finalized.

Recently the issue of service animals in training was addressed by the County when an employee requested that they be allowed to bring their service animal in training to work with them. Maryland law states that a service animal in training and their trainer should be given the same rights as a person with a disability and their service animal. It is anticipated that a memo will go out to employees about this issue

Seth reminded Commissioners about the attendance policy. Members that miss four or more scheduled meetings in the past 12 months or three consecutive scheduled meetings, are considered to have resigned and will be automatically receive a notice of this. There are no excused absences. Members can submit a waiver request from the attendance policy to the County Executive. Commissions cannot function without a quorum.

Ex-Officio Updates:

Charlie Butler, Department of Recreation (DR), reported that registration for spring classes has begun. Kathy discussed issues she has been experiencing with Recreation's new registration system and the too often cancellation of classes.

Anil Saini, ADA Compliance, Department of General Services (DGS), reported that DGS has administered an online ADA training pilot test to all facility and maintenance property managers. The ADA training will be mandatory for all County employees who have not attended an in-person training. The renovation of the Executive Office Building traffic circle is expected to be completed in September. DGS will be working with MetroAccess to set up a designated stop using GPS. Anil and Steve Maggi, will be available to assist with training volunteers for the Respect the Space project.

Faisal Khan, Department of Transportation (DOT), discussed County Executive Isiah Leggett's [recommendations on better transit options for MD 355, US 29 and Veirs Mill Road](#) in Montgomery County.

Susan Smith, Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), reported that the Bridge Subsidy Program will go into effect at the end of 2016, which will assist people with disabilities who are now living in nursing facilities and wish to live independently. Stacy Spann, Executive Director of HOC, has stated he wants to provide 60 housing units for persons with disabilities that are living in nursing homes, are homeless, or in deplorable housing conditions. Individuals would pay 50% of their income for rent. HOC is also seeking funding to renovate units and make them accessible.

Rita Gale, Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL), reported that the Wheaton Library will be closing on Sunday, March 13th in preparation for the building's demolition so that a new combined Wheaton Library/Community Recreation Center can be built on the site. There will be a closing ceremony at the library on March 13th from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. where County Executive Leggett will announce plans for an interim facility. Staff will be in the building through April 8th completing closing down processes and the building will be demolished in summer 2016. The Wheaton Library and Recreation Center will open summer 2018. **Update:** 2400 Arcola Avenue, the site of the Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad Ballroom at Wheaton Glen. The library hours will remain the same as the current branch hours: Monday to Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Friday/Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Sunday 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Rita reported that construction on the Noyes Library has been completed and an accessible ramp has been installed.

Margie Parrott, Montgomery County Public Schools, reported that the Department of Special Education Services will be holding a parent meeting on April 13th at Julius West Middle School. On May 3rd the Transition Services Unit will be hosting a provider fair for transitioning youth students exiting the school system in 2017. On May 14th there will be a Special Education Summit for Parents at Gaithersburg High School. On May 20th there will be a transition services career fair for juniors to be held at the Montgomery College Germantown Campus.

Jay Kenney, Chief, Aging and Disability Services, reported that County Executive Isiah Leggett will be releasing his recommended FY17 Operating Budget on Tuesday, March 15th.

Kathy Mann Koepke, Liaison to Commission on Health (COH), reported that COH is still looking into certification of their primary care health clinics.]

Karen Maricheau, Liaison to Commission on Aging (COA), reported that the COA is supporting Senate Bill 819. She also reported that the Care Act has completed the first process of approval.

Mike Subin, Special Assistant to County Executive, reported that the Respect the Space Program will begin again. Volunteers will be trained on accessible parking spaces and how to report parking lots that are not in compliance. Completed forms will be given to Betsy for review. If the parking lot falls under Title III (private sector) the report will be given to the Office of Human Rights who will contact the parking lot owner to try and remediate. If the parking lot

falls under Title II (County owned parking lots) the report will be given to Nancy Greene to remediate. By bringing parking lots into compliance police officers will then be able to ticket individuals who are illegally parked in accessible spaces.

Roundtable:

Larry Bram reported that Easter Seals is hosting a meeting on Wednesday, April 6th at 7:00 p.m. for caregivers and self-advocates about Medical Adult Day as an option for adults who are:

- On the DDA waiting list (age 22 and up);
- Have higher medical or self help needs than can be handled in other day programs;
- Are transitioning from sheltered workshops or other work programs because of age or increasing medical or ADL support needs.

Registration is required:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/Conversation%20about%20ADS_SM.pdf

Easter Seals purpose is two-fold:

1. To inform about what Medical Adult Day services are and how you can use regular Medicaid to access it (separate from DDA funds).
2. To design a program that specifically meets the needs of the I/DD population.

He hopes to get as many parents and individuals as possible to attend so that there will be a lively discussion.

Public Comments: None.

Next Full Commission Meeting: **PLEASE NOTE LOCATION** - Wednesday, April 13th, 2016 – Gaithersburg Regional Library, 18330 Montgomery Village Avenue, Gaithersburg, MD 20879 – 2nd Floor, Room 1 – 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Free parking.

Steering Committee Meeting: Wednesday, April 20th, 2016 – Health & Human Services, 401 Hungerford Drive, 1st Floor 1D Conference Room, Rockville, MD 20850 – 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by: Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist I
Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager