

MetroWest

Center for Independent Living, Inc.

Winter in New England

Greetings!

Happy Holidays!

As we move into the winter season, the New England climate will be throwing some curve balls (and snowballs!) at us. *Everyone should have an emergency preparedness plan*, and we've provided some resource links here and on our website to help you devise your personal plan.

It's also the holiday season with its usual ups and downs - again, preparation will help reality match your expectations.

And finally, as if that were not enough, the state budget season is beginning in the midst of the "Great Recession". While the press will not be reporting with the same excitement as during the elections, the stakes are just as high. Stay on top of the discussions, and contact your legislators with your opinions - they need to know about your support and disagreement! The Secretary of the Commonwealth, William Galvin, has provided a website service with contact information for all of your representatives [My Election Information](#).

from Paul Spooner, Executive Director

Winter Emergencies

If you live in Massachusetts, then you will certainly be enjoying (or not!) snowy and cold weather this winter. Whether you watch the view from the window or venture out, a safe winter requires a plan.

Anyone who has life-dependent power needs or other medical requirements should register at their Town Hall with the Civil Defense Emergency Preparedness staff.

Make sure that you have extra food on hand, that you have back-up plans for services and medical needs, and that your friends and family can easily get in touch with you. Track down emergency numbers and put them in a visible, easily found location. The key to emergency preparedness is just that - *prepare!* Personally, I find that when I worry about what



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Holiday Open House

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Please join MWCIL and MASILC (MA Statewide Independent Living Council) for AN AFTERNOON OF CHEER
Wednesday, December 22.

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Time: 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Place: MWCIL - 280 Irving Street, Framingham

* * *

RSVP by Dec. 17
MWCIL: 508-875-7852
info@mwciil.org
MASILC: 508-620-7452
info@masilc.org

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could happen and make serious back-up plans, then everything goes smoothly and I don't need them. Win-win.

Visit our new [Emergency Preparedness](#) web page at mwcil.org for lots of online resources.

Accessible Winter Sports

The [Winter Outdoor Recreation Programs](#) is a comprehensive schedule of accessible activities and events at various locations. The activities range from skating to cross country skiing. Scroll all the way down so that you don't miss any of the opportunities listed by the state's Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Budgeting Begins

The state budgeting process has begun. The Secretary of Health and Human Services, Dr. JudyAnn Bigby, had her first public forum December 13. She is asking for help in finding ways to cut costs.

ADDP President & CEO, Gary Blumenthal, will presented testimony on behalf of ADDP Members and supporters. ([Gary Blumenthal's planned testimony](#)) His testimony emphasizes the importance of supports to people who do not want to live in institutions, and ensures that the administration understands that it is cheaper to support people in their own homes. His presentation includes statistics on the number of people affected by different services.

Holiday Blues

[Mental Health America](#) has some great advice for avoiding or mitigating those Holiday Blues. Some of their suggestions include: "Keep expectations manageable", "Do something for someone else" and "Save time for yourself!". Visit their website for more practical suggestions on how to enjoy the season. They also talk about SAD - Seasonal Affective Disorder - that can compound the stresses of the holidays.

NPR Reports on Nursing Homes

Surprisingly, the largest growing nursing home population is adults from ages 31 - 64 who now make up 14% of the nursing home residents. Unfortunately, the lack of availability and funding of state programs has caused this growth. And with the bad economy, many more programs are under consideration for elimination or more cuts even though it is cheaper for most people to live independently with supports than to live in nursing homes! Nationwide, there are some 400,000 (all age groups) people on state waiting lists for home-based care, double the number 10 years ago. Over the past 20 years, federal laws and policies have established a civil right to get long-term care at home. NPR found this right to be only sporadically enforced.

Read National Public Radio's full investigation entitled [Home or Nursing Home](#). Note that there are several articles under this topic.

\$ Help Us \$ \$ Help You \$

Watch your mailbox for MWCIL's first-ever mail appeal. As the Independent Living Center for 26 cities and towns, from Plainville in the south to Stowe in the north, we believe deeply in self-determination, self-respect and equal opportunities for people with disabilities. If you feel strongly that all individuals have the right to make the decisions about how to live their lives, then please support us with a contribution of any amount.

Thank you!

ADDP Conference and Expo in Worcester
March 18, 2011

The Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers and the Hanover Insurance Group will sponsor the annual conference with Judy Woodruff as keynote speaker.

The goal of the conference is to provide professional development and management tools for executive staff, directors and managers who support individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities or brain injuries.

[ADDP Web Info](#)

Charlie Cards for MetroWest



MetroWest Regional Transit Authority will now

How to get a Bargain Wheelchair in 1902

>From the Sears Catalog of course! Maybe a better question is where do people get them today? The [USA Tech Guide](#) has lots of information (product reviews and sources for wheelchairs and other assistive technology, wheelchairs sports and blogs. As an aside, they posted this story on [Wheelchairs in 1902](#).

Medicare Changes

The news from the National Council on Independent Living ([NCIL](#)) is that the new Medicare Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies (DMEPOS) Competitive Bidding Program starts very soon, and it is important that you are prepared for changes and/or potential problems with your service.

- [Your Guide to Medicare's Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies \(DMEPOS\) Competitive Bidding Program](#) is the official government guide.
- The government tip sheet is [What You Should Know if You Need Medicare covered Equipment or Supplies](#).

NCIL has opposed the implementation of this program for years due to serious questions regarding beneficiary access to quality service and equipment that enables more independence.

If you experience issues after the new program goes into effect, please report these issues *promptly* to NCIL so that they can file a formal complaint with the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services. If you have a problem, please send a letter or email to:
Austin Walker, Policy Analyst
National Council on Independent Living
1710 Rhode Island, NW 5th Floor
Washington, DC 20036
or austin@ncil.org.

Injured Workers

Under workers' comp, employees give up their right to sue their bosses for workplace injuries and illnesses in exchange for compensation from their employer under a no-fault system. Benefits for injured workers have declined significantly since the 1990s because of intensive state-level lobbying by insurers and self-insured employers. The latest guidelines for assessing workplace health issues may depress benefits even further.

The focus of a November 17 House Subcommittee (House Education & Labor Committee) Hearing was the latest (6th) edition of the American Medical Association's [Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment](#), the bible for determining how a workplace health problem translates into on-the-job impairment. Because fewer conditions are being considered for employer support, workers have to be compensated by insurance or SS - meaning that **employers have less responsibility for work-place induced health problems**.

The [In These Times](#) has an extensive report on this subcommittee hearing. The NCIL (National Council for Independent Living) [Weekly](#)

accept Charlie Cards. Customers can add stored card value at all ticket machines and through the [MBTA website](#).

About Us:

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(past issues are available at our website)

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