

**MetroWest
Center For
Independent Living**

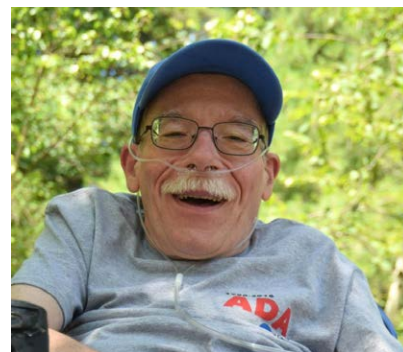
**People with Disabilities
Living in the Community**



Another busy summer... We enjoyed ADA Day at Dunn Pond State Park, and have been actively participating in the PCA Changes issue and the Mental Health vigil at the Boston Globe.

Please see the details below regarding an important PCA Rally at the State House on September 20.

We are also participants in REV UP MA, and hope that you are registered and ready to vote. Please contact us if you'd like to make a voting plan (on how to vote, NOT who to vote for!).



Thank you,

Paul Spooner,
Executive Director

Save the Date

Our annual Fundraiser and Awards Gala will be held Friday, November 4, 2016. Usual place and time - 5:30 at the Sheraton Tara in Framingham!



2015 Awardees

In This Issue

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ADA Day - Friday, July 22, 2016

Another hot ADA Day! 26 Years after the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Everyone enjoyed good food, fun activities, and best of all, great company!



Photo by Bill Allan



Photo by Paul Spooner

PCA Overtime

Please call the Governor:

We sent out an announcement about the upcoming changes to the PCA program earlier this month. These changes are still planned for September 1, so if you will need exceptions, now is the time to apply for overtime approval, hire additional PCAs or adjust your PCAs schedule. Please call Governor Charlie Baker (617-725-4005 or 888 870-7770) and let him know how this will affect you! Some advocates predict that these new restrictions will result in consumers being forced to move to nursing

homes!

Information on the changes:

Boston Center for Independent Living has published some well-written information on both the PCA program and the PCA Overtime Changes. Visit their website at bostoncil.org/pca-program/.

How to apply for overtime:

Thanks to DPC - here is a direct link to apply for overtime for your PCA. Remember, if your PCA is working for multiple consumers, they need to total all of their hours. If the PCA's total hours will exceed 40 hours per week, then at least one of the consumers should apply for them to work overtime.

The application form is on [mass.gov website](http://mass.gov). You will need to scroll down to the header Personal Care and then the sixth link says "Personal Care Attendant Overtime Approval Request Form [PCA-OAF] " with links for both pdf and word format forms.

PCA Rally on September 20

Overtime, Not Nursing Homes!

When:

Tuesday, September 20, 11:00 a.m.

Where:

State House, Boston

PCA work hours will be restricted. The authorization process for consumer PCA hours may change. Rally for the PCA program! Visits with legislators directly after the Rally.

One story about the overtime cap:

An elderly veteran, with a range of disabilities, including cancer, gets over 60 total PCA hours per week. In response to the mailing he received from the state, telling him he can't have his one PCA work more than 40 hours/week, he said, "I might as well pack up my house and move into a nursing home."

Rally sponsors include: DPC, BCIL, MWCIL, Stavros, Mass Home Care, 1199SEIU, IA, NE Arc, OCES, CLW, UCP of Metro Boston, CP MA, GSES, Enable, Inc., Easter Seals, NILP, more wanted.

For more information contact:

Charlie Carr: CharlesCarr@dpcma.org

Bill Henning: bhenning@bostoncil.org

Al Norman: anorman@lifepathma.org

Jennifer Lee: jlee@stavros.org

David Correia: dcorreia@mwail.org



Vigil at the Boston Globe

Mental Health has been in the news as we see gun violence escalate, opiate addictions on the rise, and people in overcrowded prisons who should be getting mental health services. Our mental health facilities are over-crowded or unavailable. The stated conclusions of most news stories is that more services are desperately needed, but the overriding take-away is to increase the stigma people with mental illness. On August 1, M-Power organized a vigil at the Boston Globe to protest their Spotlight Series titled the The Desperate and the Dead ([download the vigil flyer](#)).

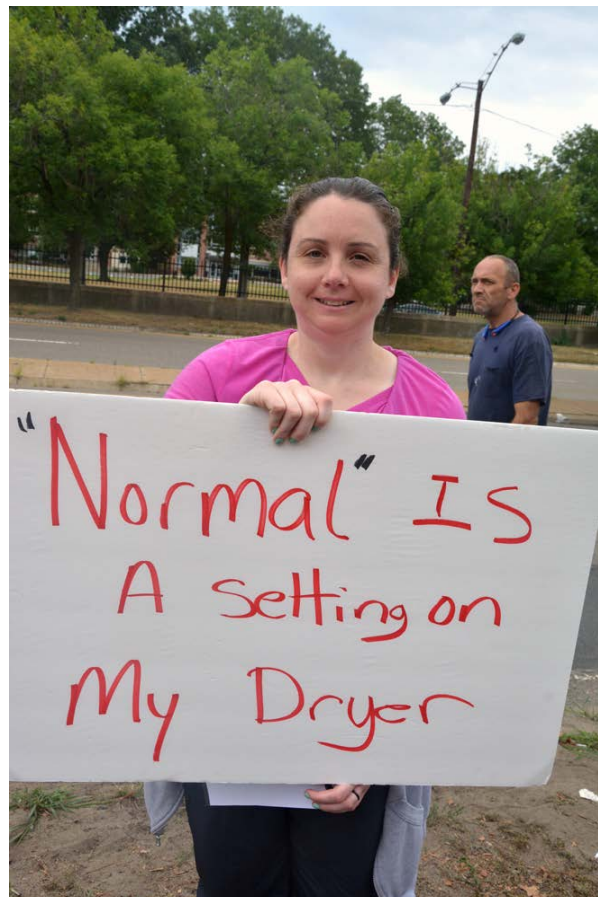
A striking aspect of the Globe vigil was the variety of messages that marchers carried. While many were directed specifically at the Boston Globe, many others pointed out the deficiencies in the system. The Mental Health community encompasses an enormous range of issues. There are no quick fixes, no magic pill, and no perfect legislation. The community needs more funding for research and treatment, better acknowledgment of everyone's civil rights, removing the stigma of mental illness and a seat at the table when legislation is crafted.

- Hospitals can Never be Home Sweet Home
- Mentally ill, Peaceful Still
- Psychiatric Survivor Doesn't Equal Violent
- Put the Spotlight on Recovery
- Your Fear Mongering - Our Deaths
- Mentally Ill - Full of Skill
- Correlation is NOT Causation
- Normal is a setting on My Dryer
- That which kills us is not Treatment





At the Boston Globe vigil, the names of 600 people who had mental illness and were victims were read out loud to the Globe. We were very disappointed in the [Globe response](#), as they continued to insist that their series is correct. While both sides are proponents of better care for those with mental illness, if 150 people are willing to rally for hours... maybe the Globe is just not listening.



We were also disappointed in the Globe's reliance on the Boston Police and aggressive security people, instead of taking the time to understand

what the protesters were asking. Read [Sera Davidow's article on the Vigil](#) - she nails it.



Going forward, we need to advocate for better mental health services at all levels - local, state and national.

We've posted photos on our [FB page](#) and [website](#).

Hope, Healing and the ADA

After the vigil, The Institute for Human Centered Design held an event entitled "Hope, Healing and the ADA". Oryx Cohen, of the National Empowerment Center, presented a PowerPoint entitled 'Hope, Healing, and the ADA: New Perceptions on Mental Health'. [Download the Powerpoint](#). The presentation provides important background on the ADA and the rights of people with psychiatric disabilities. Oryx Cohen also describes two important national mental health bills:

- The Murphy Bill - HR 2646 - was crafted largely as a fear response, again blaming society's violence problem on people labeled with psychiatric disabilities. This bill needs us to Call our Representatives in Washington, and ask them to vote against HR 2646
- S 2680 - Mental Health Reform Act of 2016 - authorizes a wide array of critically important initiatives, including grants for jail diversion, treatment and recovery for homeless individuals, Primary Care Behavioral Health Integration grants and the HRSA-SAMHSA Mental and Behavioral Training Program. Contact Senators Warren and Markey and ask them to support S 2680.

Understanding Mental Illness

A grieving father wrote his daughter's obituary after her mental illness led

her to suicide. Please read this obituary - it's an education in mental illness.

["She loved life: A grieving father wrote openly about suicide and mental illness in daughter's obituary"](#) by Colby Itkowitz - Washington Post, August 17, 2016

Planning a Life Transition Conference

From the Federation of Special Needs:

If you have a child with a disability who is approaching the age of 14 to 21, this transition conference is for you.

Begin the transition planning process early and stay on schedule. Strategize now and prepare for a full productive life during and after high school.

Two action-packed days (Friday and Saturday) are filled with information and resources that will support you to understand your role, rights and responsibilities in the transition planning process.

Registration fees for this 2-day conference are \$125 per person, or \$175 per family or professional. FCSN's Planning A Life conference is open to families of students with disabilities, educators and other professionals. Scholarships are available.

Nov. 4 and 5, 2016 - Sturbridge

Feb. 3 and 10, 2017 - Boston

Mar. 31 and Apr. 1, 2017 - Pittsfield, MA

To register and learn more, visit the website at:

<http://fcsn.org/linkcenter/pal>

DDS Expanded Eligibility

Department of Developmental Disabilities, (DDS), has expanded their eligibility criteria for services to include qualified adults, ages 18 and older, with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Individuals who were previously ineligible for DSS services and supports may now be eligible. This may particularly apply to individuals with older diagnoses such as Asperger's Syndrome, PDD-NOS, High Level Autism, etc. The expanded criteria includes individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder with average to above average IQ's who are found to have a developmental disability. This is defined as a disability displayed prior to age 22 resulting in "substantial functional limitations" in three or more of the following areas of major life activity that is likely to continue indefinitely: Self Care, Receptive and Expressive Language, Learning, Mobility, Capacity for independent living, Economic self-sufficiency.

DDS is in the process of developing resources, supports, and services in areas that may be helpful as well as at a level appropriate for this newly eligible population. The first step in determining if an individual is

qualified for these new services is to complete the DDS Adult: Eligibility Determination Ages 22+.

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dmr/awp/application-adult.pdf>. Note: This application is to be used for anyone 18 years and older.

This information was posted by Dianne Crossley dcrossley@hmea.org 508-298-1611. Contact her for more information.

Government and Voting

A resource for voting and people with disabilities is REV UP, Massachusetts. REV UP is dedicated to getting all people with disabilities registered to vote, educated on the issues, and voting! Visit the website at www.revupma.org and sign up!



The state website has tons of information: [Elections Division on the state website](#). With more information, on-line registration, insistence on accessible polling venues, early voting (new for November 2016) and absentee ballots, Massachusetts residents have no excuse for not participating! Here are some useful links:

- [Find my Elected Officials](#)
- [Register to Vote ONLINE](#). Online registration requires a RMV ID. If you do not have an RMV ID, you can fill out the form, print it, and mail it in.
- [Voting for Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [Absentee Voting](#)

Please contact us at MWCIL if you have questions or need help registering or voting.

JoinREV UP - as we encourage people with disabilities to get to the polls!

For more information, visit www.revupma.org.





MetroWest Center for Independent Living

Website: www.mwcil.org

Email: info@mwcil.org

Phone: (508)875-7853

Address: 280 Irving Street, Framingham, MA 01702

Facebook: 

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