



Fall 2022



THE CLIPBOARD

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The mission of MDS is to work toward inclusion, participation and mutual relationships for all people who are at risk of isolation from their community.

www.mds-nh.org

Inclusion
Participation
Mutual
Relationships



Message from Mary-Anne

Staffing Challenges—An Ongoing Issue

Staffing challenges have been an issue in our field of service for many years. The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated this issue to a point none of us could have imagined. It goes without saying that staff shortages present a serious concern when it comes to the safety and well-being of the individuals we support. It is important to also recognize the impact lack of staffing has on the families of the individuals who receive services, and the current staff persons.

There are many individuals in our region who are not receiving the services they are authorized to receive. This is not due to lack of funding or ineligibility. There are simply not enough staff to provide the required services. Many of the individuals we support have experienced a reduction in services, share services with other individuals we support, or simply receive no services at all until staff can be hired. Any decrease in services presents safety concerns as well as the potential for a less desirable quality of life.

Too often, the support needs provider agencies have historically provided now fall to parents or other family members until appropriate staff can be hired and trained. This scenario has far reaching implications for the entire family. Families are being put in nearly impossible situations. How can a single working parent provide supervision and support for their adult child, while still working a full time job? How does that parent decide between losing their job and leaving their child unattended? How can an elderly parent meet the physical demands of caring for their adult child who needs assistance with personal care or has behavioral challenges? These situations, and many variations of them, are happening every day in our community.

In addition to families providing essential physical and emotional care for their loved ones, the workforce shortages have necessitated them going well beyond their traditional day to day routines. For almost three years, family members have had to become educators, computer technicians, healthcare providers, and many other critical roles their loved one no longer has access to, due to lack of staffing. This affects all aspects of a caregiver's relationships – the relationship with the family member they support, their partner, their extended family, their co-workers, and their friends. On the heel of the social isolation caused by the pandemic, the need for community is greater than ever, yet for some, impossible to participate in safely due to the lack of staffing.



Mary-Anne Wisell
MDS Executive Director

THE CLIPBOARD



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The Clipboard is an agency-wide MDS newsletter. All departments, families, individuals, and community organizations are invited to submit items to be included in the publication. The opinions expressed in articles are those of the people who have written and submitted the material. Therefore, the information contained in these articles is not necessarily the opinion of MDS.

Send your comments or articles to:

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Message from Mary-Anne (continued from page 1)

Dedicated staff in the Monadnock region and throughout the state are under enormous pressure every day to meet the needs of the individuals we support as well as provide all possible supports to their families. This is no small feat, as there are over 1,000 individuals and families in the Monadnock region that receive our services. The stress and strain has been constant for almost three years. Staff are often working 100+ hour weeks to compensate for the staffing shortage, which at this time is over 45 open positions at Monadnock Developmental Services alone.

Agencies recognize the staffing problem we face, and are doing their best to find creative solutions – for the individuals we support, their families, and our staff. Unlike most businesses, our providers cannot simply increase prices due to the economy. Our budgets are set and cannot be increased due to inflation or competitive employment markets. Additional funds can only be requested if the needs of the individual increase. Because of this, agencies have done their best to develop innovative incentives to attract and retain talented employees. Sign on bonuses, free training programs, flexible work schedules and tuition reimbursement are just a sample of what agencies offer. Like many agencies, Monadnock Developmental Services also offers all of our employees the intangible benefit of enhancing the lives of the individuals we support and making a positive impact in the community.

We thank you all for your continued patience and support as we move forward with providing the best services and employment opportunities for our community.

Mary-Anne Wisell

Executive Director

New Employee Benefits—Education Reimbursement Options!

Have you ever thought about going back to school, attending a seminar, or taking a certificate course? You now have two ways to apply for education assistance and tuition reimbursement. Both MDS and CSNI offer assistance to help you further your career! In some cases you can apply for both.

To read an overview of the different programs, eligibility and how to apply, click the following link to go to the Employees section of the MDS website.

<https://www.mds-nh.org/index.php/employees>

Scroll down the list of Benefits to **Educational Assistance/Tuition Reimbursement section**.

Here you'll find an overview of the educational reimbursement programs that MDS and CSNI offer, who is eligible, how to apply, and the required forms.

For more information or help in applying for this benefit, please contact your Supervisor or MDS Human Resources.

Run~Walk~Smile - Sign Up Now!

Join us for Run~Walk~Smile on Sat, Nov 5th



Come join the fun on Saturday, November 5th at Run~Walk~Smile, our 8th annual fundraiser for dental care. This family-friendly event takes place at Railroad Street and Community Way. The first race, the 1-Mile Fun Run, goes off at 9:30. The 5K and 10K will start at 10 a.m.

Want to run or walk the 5K or 1-Mile? We've got a 25% family discount for four or more. Hardier runners can tackle the 10K Chapman Challenge. Come cheer folks on while they race for MDS!

There'll be fun for the whole family on site. Stop by the Children's Dental Care tent for contests and giveaways. The MDS Children's department will provide games and activities. We're also hosting a Selfie Station for great photo opportunities for everyone.

Prizes and medals for race winners will be presented mid-morning. Everyone who registers is entered into a drawing for more than a dozen raffle prizes.

Want to register for RWS? [Sign Up for RWS online.](#)

- 10K Chapman Challenge: \$25 (runners only)
- 5K Run~Walk~Smile: \$25 (run or walk)
- 1-Mile Fun Run: \$15 (run or walk)
- 25% Family Rate discount: Register 4 or more immediate family members (any mix of events). Discount shows up at check-out.
- \$15 for age 12 & under. Children 3 & under are free, no need to register!
- Price increase of \$5 after online registration closes at noon on October 31.

Can't attend, but want to support the Dental Fund? Click the Donate button on the [RWS Registration page.](#)

Every dollar counts as we replenish the MDS Dental Fund so that MDS can provide critical dental care for adults with developmental disabilities.

We hope to see you there!
Thank you for your support!

[Register for RWS online.](#)

Thank You to Our Sponsors

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Connecticut Valley Oral Surgery Associates
GemGraphics ♦ Hastings Dental ♦ Whitney Brothers
Miller Orthodontic Specialists ♦ Monadnock Food Co-op
Northeast Delta Dental ♦ The Richards Group

Photo Gallery



A Day at the Lake!

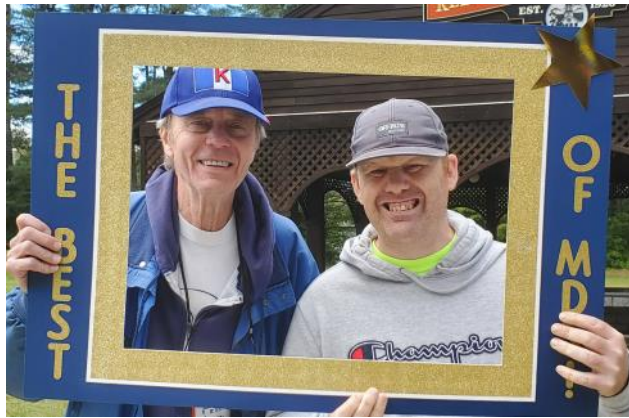
On August 27 the Family Council of the Monadnock Region and New Hampshire Partners In Health sponsored a "Day at the Lake." Over 60 participants spent the afternoon at Camp Spofford on Spofford Lake. There were lots of fun activities, including swimming, canoeing, paddle boarding, kayaking, and making sand castles! Fruits, desserts, and drinks were included, along with other fun activities.



Photo Gallery



MDS Staff Appreciation Day was held on Friday, September 23. MDS recognizes the dedication our employees show every day!



Staff got the chance to enjoy a delicious BBQ lunch, lawn games, and a photo station! But best of all, we took time to connect and have fun with our co-workers!



Legislative Update

CSNI and Legislative Liaisons from the Area Agencies have worked together to identify three “Hot Topics” to consider during this election season. Their goal is to educate and inform both the candidates, individuals and their families who receive services from the state designated Area Agencies. The three Hot Topics are:

- NH BDS System Redesign for Developmental Disabilities
- Waitlist for Developmental Disabilities/Acquired Brain Disorders
- Workforce Rate Increase

Let’s take a closer look at each of these Hot Topics.

NH BDS System Redesign for Developmental Disabilities

NH Bureau of Developmental Services is redesigning their system in order to comply with federal requirements and to increase efficiency. The national consulting firm, Alvarez and Marsal, provided recommendations that have now been adopted as decision. Those are:

1. Conflict free case management
2. Implement direct billing by July 1, 2023

These decisions have created multiple concerns among the individuals and families who receive services, as well as the Area Agencies. Some of the top concerns are the speed at which decisions are being made and the timeline in which they are being implemented; lack of attention to operational changes, which causes confusion and poor services; making sure new rates don’t decrease services; and the possibility of creating a cap that reduces services.

In response, an Advisory Committee and workgroup have been created. You can help by attending the information sessions, providing feedback to DHHS and BDS, and informing legislators and community members about these changes.

Waitlist for DD/ABD

The Waitlist is made up of people who need funding to provide services for a developmental disability or an acquired brain disorder. Waitlist funding in the state budget allows two main things:

- ⇒ Individuals to receive services and supports when they leave school and enter adulthood.
- ⇒ Existing services and supports to be adjusted when individual needs change.

This common sense approach became law in New Hampshire. RSA 171-A states that individuals who are deemed eligible to receive services shall not wait longer than 90 days to receive them.

For a number of years there has been strong support to fully fund the waitlist. Going forward, we need to ensure that the state budget continues to include adequate funding for the waitlist.

Workforce Rate Increase

A Direct Support Professional (DSP) provides services to individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. These services include:

- Help with daily living skills, personal care, and activities
- Assistance at work and in the community
- Encouragement for individuals to live a self-directed life

At this time, many retail stores and fast food restaurants pay a higher wage and provide benefits for jobs that require less responsibilities than DSPs. Ultimately, DSPs are responsible for caring for another person’s life and wellbeing.

A Medicaid rate increase would make a substantial impact in the lives of DSPs in our state. It is imperative that the Governor and Legislature prioritize this rate increase as they develop the next two-year budget, which will begin on July 1, 2023.

Local Caregiver Receives Statewide Award

Rachel Moses of Keene has been named New Hampshire's Home Provider of the Year by the New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities, as part of Direct Support Professional (DSP) Appreciation during the month of September. Rachel was nominated by local service provider Residential Resources Inc., and joins a group of six Monadnock area Home Providers and DSPs who have received this statewide award.

Each year, the NH Council's DSP Conference Committee selects a Direct Support Professional (DSP) and a Home Provider from the many statewide nominations they receive. These awards recognize caregivers who have shown outstanding service in supporting the people with whom they work on a daily basis.

Rachel Moses and her husband, Peter, opened their home to an individual with developmental disabilities more than a decade ago, bringing her in as part of their family. In recent years, the individual has had some major health issues, resulting in her having to stay in a nursing home for rehabilitation. During this time, Rachel stepped right up to continue with care and advocacy to see this woman through cancer, blood transfusions, and procedures. Rachel has taken her to several appointments weekly, helped her adjust to new medications and protocols, and helping her go through surgeries.

Never missing a beat, she always brings in her favorite food, Dunkin coffee and a donut. Rachel has worked hard to make sure that all of the individual's needs are being met while in nursing home care.

"Rachel Moses so deserves to be recognized for the outstanding care she gives," says Vikki White, Program Manager at Residential Resources, a provider agency working with Monadnock Developmental Services. "There is just no one else like her. She is top notch in my book, for the fun she creates and the love that she shows to her individual. Rachel never gives up, and is always sharing a smile with everyone around her!"



Kenda Howell (left), President of Residential Resources Inc., presents the NH Home Provider of the Year award to Rachel Moses on the State House lawn in Concord on September 16.

The individual herself says: "I love Rachel and Peter, they are my family and I want to be with them forever."

MDS sends out its deepest thanks to the hundreds of Direct Support Professionals and Home Providers in the Monadnock Region, who are the closest to the front line, after families, in supporting people with disabilities. These caregiving heroes make a difference each and every day in the lives of those with developmental disabilities, providing long-term care and support.

If you or someone you know would like to enhance the lives of others while enriching your own, MDS is looking for compassionate, caring people for full and part-time work.

Call 603-352-1304 or email employment@mds-nh.org.

News & Notes

Self-Advocate Connections – All About Us

The Connections – All About Us self-advocacy group is a safe and friendly group that meets the third Monday of each month via Zoom from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Self-advocacy is about making connections and friendships. It's about learning how to speak up for yourself, thinking about what your own good life should look like, and how to move in that direction. The Connections – All About Us group is a safe place to learn about our rights and responsibilities, talk about things that we are struggling with or hoping for, make connections in our communities, and share our thoughts. Join one of our meetings and see what we do. We like to have fun and invite you to join us.

Meetings are posted on the [MDS training calendar](#) which is where you'll find the Zoom link to each session.

Contact Mari Schacht by email: mari@mds-nh.org or by phone: 603-352-1304, ext 212.

Project iGuardian

Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) has developed advice for parents, guardians, and educators to keep children safe from online predators.

- ◇ Have regular conversations about online safety with kids/teens.
- ◇ Review web applications and games before they are downloaded.
- ◇ Set strict privacy levels for mobile apps and online gaming.
- ◇ Monitor kids' use of the internet and what information they share online.
- ◇ Explain pictures they post can be shared with others.
- ◇ Let kids know it's never their fault if they are victimized.

For more detailed information, visit

<https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/project-iguadian-offers-back-school-tips-help-keep-kids-safe-online>

Hello! I would love to hear from you!

Our Region 5 Area Agency serves about 1,000 individuals and families in the Monadnock Region. You are the reason we are here. We want to be sure your voice is heard.

As your new Executive Director, I want to hear from you.

- Do you have feedback you'd like to share?
- Do you have unresolved concerns?
- Do you have questions about your current services or the BDS system redesign?
- Do you want to find out more about our MDS mission of inclusion, participation and mutual relationships?



Mary-Anne Wisell
MDS Executive Director

Please reach out — 603-352-1304 or MaryAnneW@mds-nh.org.

Know Your Voting Rights

Background

The New Hampshire Constitution, as amended by the voters of New Hampshire in 1984, requires that all polling places be accessible and that absentee voting be available to voters who are unable to vote in person:

“The general court shall provide by law for voting by qualified voters who at the time of the biennial or state elections, or of the primary elections therefor, or of city elections, or of town elections by official ballot, are absent from the city or town of which they are inhabitants, or who by reason of physical disability are unable to vote in person, in the choice of any officer or officers to be elected or upon any question submitted at such election. Voting registration and polling places shall be easily accessible to all persons including disabled and elderly persons who are otherwise qualified to vote in the choice of any officer or officers to be elected or upon any question submitted at such election.”

New Hampshire Constitution, Part First – Bill of Rights, Article 11.

Know Your Rights

If you need help voting because of your disability, you can request an accommodation. Accommodations do not permit another person to vote on behalf of a person with a disability, but they do permit a person with a disability to receive help to register, understand the ballot and the voting process, and to cast a ballot. Legally, accommodations are limited by whether they are “reasonable.”

Examples of reasonable accommodations:

- You can bring your service animal. Service animals are allowed to go in areas of the polling place where the public is allowed to go.
- If you have a physical disability and standing in line is difficult, you can ask for a chair or to move to front of the line.
- If you cannot physically access the polling place, you can request ‘curbside voting’ where an absentee ballot is brought to you in your car or other accessible location outside of the polling location.
- You can request help with completing your ballot. Help can be provided by a friend, family member, caregiver, service provider, or a poll worker. The only people who cannot help you mark or cast your ballot are your employer or union representative.

Frequently Asked Questions

Find the answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for voters with disabilities at this link to the NH Secretary of State website: <https://www.sos.nh.gov/elections/information/faqs/voters-disabilities>

Read or download a flyer from the Disability Rights Center-NH (DRC-NH) here:

https://drcnh.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Voting-Rights_1004_Interactive.pdf

If you require assistance, contact DRC-NH: (603) 228-0432 or the NH Secretary of State’s Help Desk: (603) 271-8241.



Community

Recognizing Local Employers for their Leadership with Employing Individuals with Disabilities

October is Disability Employment Awareness Month. We celebrate the contributions of America's workers with disabilities and also recognize supportive, inclusive employment policies and practices, especially those here in the Monadnock region.

Each year, NH businesses are nominated for the Employment Leadership Award for their inclusive hiring practices. This year **Cheshire Medical Center, JOANN Fabric & Crafts, Keene Beauty Academy, Moore Nanotech, Multi Med, and Touchstone Farm** were all nominated for the award. We applaud their efforts to build inclusive workplaces. These businesses have created opportunities that assist people with disabilities to develop the skills they need to obtain competitive employment, have adopted inclusive hiring practices that allow people with disabilities to fairly compete for employment, and engage community partners to become a more diverse workplace.

NH's disability employment rate hovers around 25%. In the Monadnock Region our disability employment rate is 33%, with 145 people working an average of 14.4 hours per week, earning an average of \$10.14 per hour. MDS and its partners are committed to closing this employment gap so that individuals with developmental disabilities who want to work are able to do so.

The NH Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) and the Institute on Disability (IOD) provide quarterly reports on disability employment data. You can access these reports online at the DHHS website. (link) <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/programs-services/disability-care/employment-individuals-disabilities>

*The data in this article is from the most recent DHHS Employment Data Report (12/31/2021).

Remembering "Freda" Smith

Alfreda "Freda" Smith, 94, of Windham, NH, passed away on October 1, 2022. From 1977 to 1980, Alfreda served as a NH State Representative, as well as the President of the Laconia State School (ARC).



Alfreda "Freda" Smith—7/12/1928 to 10/1/2022

In 1978, she was instrumental in the class action suit against the State of New Hampshire, regarding the deplorable conditions at Laconia State School. She contacted the US Department of Justice, and they joined in the lawsuit, which resulted in the closing of the school in the early 1990s. New Hampshire was the first state in the union to close its doors to their own institution that housed developmentally challenged individuals.

Freda traveled to many states as a speaker at conventions regarding the Laconia State School. Alfreda provided others with an example to follow in their own states. If you have not seen *Freda Smith: Her History with Laconia State School* on YouTube, you can watch it on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4O-LO5WmYo>

"There is no greater disability in society, than the inability to see a person as more." - Robert M. Hensel

Resources

New Hampshire Resources

ABLE NH

2 1/2 Beacon Street
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 271-2336
www.ablenh.org

Advocates for the civil and human rights of all children and adults with disabilities. Promotes full participation by improving systems of supports, connecting families, inspiring communities, and influencing public policy.

Disabilities Rights Center

64 N. Main Street, Suite 2
Concord, NH 03302
(800) 834-1721 (603) 228-0432
www.drcnh.org

Provides advocacy assistance, information and referral services to families and individuals with disabilities.

Governor's Commission on Disability

121 South Fruit Street, Suite 101
Concord, NH 03301
(800) 852-3405 (603) 271-2773
www.nh.gov/disability
Information and referral service, Client Assistance Program for vocational rehab clients, Barrier Free Committee, and newsletter.

NH Council on Developmental Disabilities

2 1/2 Beacon Street, Suite 10
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 271-3236
www.nhddc.org
Recommends policy and advocates for legislative change on issues affecting people with developmental disabilities. Not a direct service agency, but likes to hear your thoughts.

NH Family Voices

129 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 271-4525
www.nhfv.org

Family organization that provides services to families and professionals caring for children with special health care needs and/or disabilities. network of families speaking on behalf of children with special health care needs.



People Can't Wait

Make your voice heard during this election & budget season!

Check the MDS website or sign up for email updates.

Contact Sue Walthour, SueW@mds-nh.org.



Looking for rewarding part-time work?

Are you dedicated, creative, committed, team-oriented, with a good sense of humor?

MDS is hiring part-time Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) for children and adults in Keene and Peterborough.

You could make a huge difference in someone's life!

Call 603-352-1304 or send an email to us at employment@mds-nh.org for more information.



Inclusion • Participation • Mutual Relationships

MDS is hiring! Email employment@mds-nh.org

Medicaid False Claims Act

False claims are not claims with innocent billing mistakes. False claims include services that are:

- ♦ Not rendered
- ♦ Not supported by patient's medical record
- ♦ Part of a previously submitted claim
- ♦ Upcoded

Watch a brief video on the False Claims Act to help you understand and comply with this law:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbZ78QTLztQ&feature=youtu.be>

Want to file a complaint?

Call 1-855-450-3593

To file a complaint with the Bureau of Developmental Services (BDS), call 1-855-450-3593. After you file a complaint, an investigator will contact you directly.

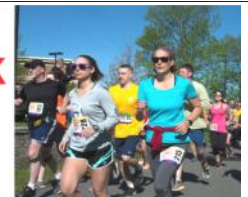
Respite Providers Needed

Part time hours with flexibility.

Contact hr@mds-nh.org



**Chapman Challenge 10K
5K/1-Mile/10K
11.5.2022**



CLIPBOARD Fall 2022



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What's in this issue? Fall 2022

- Legislative Update
- BDS Systems Work Impacts You - Stay Informed!
- Photo Galleries

What's coming up? For upcoming events, visit the MDS Events Calendar at www.mds-nh.org.

Join the MDS email list!

Receive MDS updates and news electronically. To sign up, contact your Service Coordinator or email Lurleen@mds-nh.org.

