**Dateline: April 20, 2012**

**PARF Legislative Day on May 8**

PARF members and other supporters of services to people with disabilities will be in Harrisburg on Tuesday, May 8 in the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg to call on legislators to support funding for services for people with intellectual disabilities, including the lack of funding to meet emergency needs of people with intellectual disabilities waiting for services. PARF, PCPA, The Arc of PA, Visions for Equality, and the PA Waiting List campaign are co-sponsors of the event. The rally is one of a round of rallies that are being held to call on the legislature to provide adequate funding for health and human services for people with disabilities. On May 2 at 12 Noon Vision for Equality and other self advocate and family organizations will be holding a rally in the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg. On Monday, May 7 at 11:00 a.m. the statewide coalition *PA Cares for All* will be and hosting a lobby day in Harrisburg at the Capitol. On May 2 at 12 Noon Vision for Equality and other self advocate and family organizations will be holding a rally in the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg. FMI: Contact PARF at parfmail@parf.org.

**Rally for PA Brain Injury Services on May 2**

The PA Brain injury Coalition, including PARF, will hold its *3rd Annual PA Brain Injury Rally* in Harrisburg on Wednesday, May 2 at 10 a.m. in the Rotunda of the Capitol Building. The rally is supported by PARF, Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania, the Acquired Brain Injury Network of Pennsylvania, and the PA Disability Rights Network. PARF members offering brain injury services will be participating. PARF members offering brain injury services are urged to contact their legislators to make appointments to meet with them on May 2. FMI: Contact PARF at parfmail@parf.org.

**PCIL Invites Sign-On to Petition on Cuts to PA Human Services**

The Pennsylvania Council on Independent Living is seeking signatures for an on-line petition to Governor Corbett objecting to proposed budget cuts that will negatively impact persons with disabilities. The petition calls on the Governor and the legislature to roll back proposed budget cuts for FY 2012=2013 and ensure independent living for all people. The petition protests cuts to Centers for Independent Living (CIL), services to seniors, key programs of the Department of Health (Diabetes programs, Epilepsy, Lupus, Poison Control, Adult Cystic Fibrosis, Sickle Cell, and Hemophilia), attendant care and the Act 150 program, community mental health, behavioral health, intellectual disabilities base services, Medical Assistance out-patient (including Drug and Alcohol and Human Services Fund), county child welfare, and homelessness programs consolidated into county block grants. The petition says that since counties will have a 20% cut in their funding for health and human services under the newly proposed block there will be an increase in admissions to emergency rooms and corrections system and more people will be homeless. See the petition at [http://www.change.org/petitions/the-governor-of-pa-roll-back-the-cuts-ensure-independent-living-for-all](http://www.change.org/petitions/the-governor-of-pa-roll-back-the-cuts-ensure-independent-living-for-all). For more information, contact Barbara Orstein, Executive Director, PA Council on Independent Living, 200 Locust Street, Suite 200, Harrisburg, PA 17101. Phone (717) 920-0530.
Disability Services Hearing on May 3

On May 3 the PA Human Services Committee of the PA House of Representatives, led by Chairman Gene DiGirolamo (R-Bucks), will hear from advocates, consumers, providers, and statewide associations on the impact of the policy and systems changes in services administered by the PA DPW Office of Long Term Living (OLTL). The changes are related to the FY 2012-13 state budget and implementation of regulations recently released by the Department of Public Welfare under Act 22. The issues that will be covered include the financial impact of recent rate and policy changes, the need for adequate rates for community services, the time needed to adjust to planned changes, the value of stakeholder input into systems changes, and the need for consumer choice and control over services in support of independent living. Speakers will emphasize the urgent need for the Administration to enact the interim rate agreement under discussion for one year, and for adequate service rates to support community services in the future. Personal stories will highlight the impact of certain policy changes. The House Human Services Committee hearing will take place on May 3, 2012 at 9:30 in Room 60 East Wing at the Capitol. An overflow area will be available outside the hearing room so that additional people can hear the testimony. All of the testimony will be available to view on the homepage of the PA Providers Coalition Association at www.pa-pca.org following the hearing. Immediately following the hearing a press conference is scheduled in the Capitol Rotunda at noon where advocates, consumers and providers will speak about the impact that the Governor’s proposed cuts to disability services will have on people and organizations. The Disability Budget Coalition will review their Agenda for FY 12-13 funding, and individuals who use home and community based services will offer their advocacy messages in person and through video. FMI: See www.pa-pca.org Contact PARF at parfmail@parf.org.

MHAPA Opposes Block Grant, Calls for a Stop to Cuts in Funding

The Mental Health Association of Pennsylvania (MHAPA) reports that despite strong opposition to from the public, mental health advocates, media, and legislators, Governor Corbett and his administration remain committed to enacting drastic and devastating cuts to the community behavioral health system. MHAPA is calling on all engaged in the mental health service and their supporters to contact state Representatives and Senators to stop the Governor’s proposed cuts to the community behavioral health system. MHAPA says that the message is simple: Stop the 20% cuts. Stop the Block Grant. Stop cuts to General Assistance. MHAPA is making available a pre-printed postcard to share these messages with members of the PA House of Representatives and Senate and the Chairs of the Pennsylvania House and Senate Appropriations Committees. To order free postcards, contact Sue Walther, MHAPA Executive Director, at 717-346-0549, extension 1, or swalther@mhapa.org. Please provide mailing address and the number of postcards requested. MHAPA also urges supporters to send letters and make phone calls to legislative offices. MHAPA is also urging attendance at the rally on May 7 (Save PA’s Bridge to Stability & Self-Sufficiency Rally and Lobby Day in Harrisburg with PA Cares for All) and the legislative day on June 5 (Capitol Day.) The June 5 event is being supported by PARF, Pennsylvania Community Providers Association, The Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania, The Mental Health Association of Westmoreland County, NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania. FMI: Contact Sue Walther at 717-346-0549, extension 1, or swalther@mhapa.org.
OLTL Issues Notice on Preliminary HCBS Rates, Services and Procedure Codes

On April 20 the PA Office of Long Term Living issued a Memorandum to Providers with a Preliminary Rate Chart, Regional Chart, and Crosswalk of Preliminary Services and Procedure Codes. The documents included preliminary rates and preliminary changes in services and procedure codes related to the Long-Term Living Home and Community-Based Services regulation. The notice from the Deputy Secretary of the Office of Long-Term Living Bonnie Rose issued on April 20 concerning implementation of regulation for long-term living home and community based services was sent to Area Agencies on Aging, service coordination agencies, and direct service providers. The notice indicated a regulation will soon be promulgated for Long-Term Living Home and Community-Based Services. The Act 150 Program, Aging Waiver, Attendant Care Waiver, COMMcare Waiver, Independence Waiver and OBRA Waiver will be covered by the regulation. OLTL said that although the regulation has not been promulgated yet, the Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) realizes that business decisions must be made by agencies in preparation of the regulation. Therefore, it is sending the chart of preliminary MA Fee Schedule Rates. OLTL emphasized that the preliminary rates are contingent upon CMS approval of waiver amendments. Final rates will be published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin. OLTL said it will inform providers when the MA Fee Schedule Rates are final. OLTL said that in the process of preparing for implementation, some changes in HCSIS and SAMS should be noted. OLTL said that changes to the service definitions and rates will appear in HCSIS on April 21, 2012. OLTL said that while these changes will appear in HCSIS, the service definitions and rates are not effective until CMS approval of waiver amendments. Service definitions and rates in SAMS will be updated at a later date. OLTL said it will provide additional information related to the updates in SAMS at a later date. The crosswalk includes services that will be end-dated effective May 31, 2012 as well as those that will be added to HCSIS and SAMS with an effective date of June 1, 2012. OLTL repeated that these changes are not effective until CMS approval of the waiver amendments. OLTL says that as of April 23, 2012, service coordinators may see these automatic changes reflected in the FY 2011-12 plan. OLTL stressed that it is important that agencies not make any updates or changes to service plans until further detailed guidance is provided by OLTL. OLTL said that communication and collaboration by all partners is essential to prepare for the implementation of the Long-Term Living Home and Community-Based Services regulation and to ensure those individuals that are served experience a seamless transition throughout this process. The documents are available in alternate format upon request by calling the Bureau of Provider Support's Call Center at 1-800-932-0939. The attached information is at http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/information_for_providers/19328.

ODP Posts FY 2010-11 Report on IM4Q

On April 20 the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) issued ODP Announcement 031-12 on Fiscal Year 2010-2011 IM4Q Report ODP. The announcement informs all stakeholders that the Fiscal Year 2010-2011 IM4Q Statewide Summary has been added to the IM4Q section of the website of the ODP Consulting System. The path to find this report is as follows: ODP Consulting System > ODP Topic Information > Independent Monitoring for Quality (IM4Q) > Independent Monitoring for Quality (IM4Q) Reports and Summaries > 2010-2011 > IM4Q 2010-2011. See www.odpconsulting.net.
Governor Corbett Signs Small Games of Chance Bill

On April 16 PA Governor Tom Corbett ceremonially signed House Bill 169, a bill to help eligible organizations to raise money for charitable causes by increasing prize limits for small games of chance. The new Act 2 of 2012 updated several measures within the Local Option Small Games of Chance Act, including prize payout limits. The new law applies only to registered eligible organizations, including a charitable, religious, fraternal, or veterans’ organizations, clubs, or civic and service associations. The bill, originally signed by Governor Corbett on February 2 and effective on March 3, increases the individual prize limit from $500 to $1,000, and a group may award up to $25,000 in prizes a week. Club licensees are also now permitted to use up to 30 percent of proceeds from small games of chance for operational expenses. The act also requires that each license application include the results of a Pennsylvania State Police criminal history record information check on the executive officer and secretary of the eligible organization making the application. For more information visit the PA Department of Revenue online at www.revenue.state.pa.us/SGOC.

DPW Issues New Listing of MA Copayments

On April 16 the PA Department of Public Welfare Office of Medical Assistance Programs (OMAP) issued Medical Assistance (MA) Bulletin 99-12-03 updating its policy on Medical Assistance Copayments. The bulletin is effective on May 15, 2012. The bulletin notifies providers of changes to Medical Assistance (MA) Program sliding scale copayment amounts for MA services. The sliding scale copayment amounts for all categories of assistance are listed. The bulletin applies to all providers enrolled in the MA Program who render services to recipients enrolled in MA Fee-for-Service (FFS), including ACCESS Plus, and to providers rendering services under the MA managed care delivery. The bulletin implements the final-omitted regulations published by DPW in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on April 14 updating the MA sliding scale copayment amounts for MA recipients, other than GA recipients, to reflect the current CPI-U adjustments, and the MA sliding scale copayment amounts for GA recipients to reflect twice the amounts established for MA recipients other than GA recipients. In the bulletin DPW also noted that the amended regulation also allows it to update the sliding scale copayment amounts on a recurring basis to account for future CPI-U adjustments, based upon the annual percentage increase in the medical care component of the CPI-U. FMI: See www.dpw.state.pa.us.

11th Annual PA Workers’ Compensation Conference on June 11-12

On June 11-12, 2012 the 11th annual Workers’ Compensation Conference will be held at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey PA. This year’s conference offers updates on the Pennsylvania workers’ compensation program from experts in their field. The agenda includes detailed information on the sessions to help you get the most out of the conference. Attendees will have a choice between four sessions during each breakout period. Continuing education credits are offered. Conference registration is $200 per person and includes admission to conference workshops, exhibits, lunches, morning/afternoon breaks (on June 11–12), as well as dinner June 12. Reservations for overnight accommodations at the Hershey Lodge must be made by contacting the Lodge at 717-533-3311 or 800-533-3131 or visit: www.hersheypa.com/accommodations/hershey_lodge/. To register, see the L&I website at http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/annual_conference/12991.
Pennsylvania’s Employment Situation Improves in March

On April 19 the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry (L&I) reported that Pennsylvania’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 7.5 percent in March, down one-tenth of a percentage point from the 7.6 percent February rate. The state’s unemployment rate was down 0.4 percentage points from a year earlier: March 2011. Pennsylvania’s seasonally adjusted civilian labor force – the number of people working or looking for work – was up 16,000 in March to 6,406,000. Resident employment was up 21,000 to 5,927,000, and the number of unemployed residents fell 5,000 to 479,000. Pennsylvania’s labor force was 3,000 above its March 2011 level. Seasonally adjusted total nonfarm jobs in Pennsylvania were up 7,800 in March to 5,728,400. The March gain was the third increase in the last four months. L&I said that most of the increase was within service-providing industries, which increased by 8,200 jobs. Leisure & hospitality had the largest increase of any super-sector in March, up 7,000 to a record high of 522,000. Mining & logging, up 500 to 38,500 jobs, reached its highest level since the series began in 1990. The largest decline in March was in construction, down 3,000 to 226,700. Pennsylvania’s job count was up 45,700 (0.8 percent) over the year while national total nonfarm jobs were up 1,899,000 (1.5 percent) over the past 12 months. Pennsylvania’s unemployment rate was below the U.S. rate of 8.2 percent, and has been below the U.S. rate for 47 consecutive months, and at or below the U.S. rate for 65 consecutive months. FMI: See www.dli.state.pa.us and http://www.dli.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/l_i_home/5278.

DPW Highlights Safety and Care Regulations at Personal Care Homes

On April 17 the PA Department of Public Welfare (DPW) released its 2011 Adult Residential Care Licensing report, highlighting its licensing of personal care homes. DPW said that it currently licenses 1,326 personal care homes that provide care to 47,000 adults with physical or mental disabilities. DPW said that in 2011 the average number of violations per inspection dropped for the fourth consecutive year, well below the 2008 average. The annual Adult Residential Care Licensing report shows a decrease in emergency closures, with three (3) homes closed due to emergency conditions in 2011 while seven (7) emergency closures were required in 2010. DPW said that it remains concerned that unlicensed care facilities are operating and therefore asks the public to report any facility that it suspects is unlicensed. Please call toll-free at 1-877-401-8835. The complete 2011 Adult Residential Licensing Annual Report is online at http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/ucmprd/groups/webcontent/documents/report/p_012112.pdf For more information about the Department of Public Welfare, visit the department’s website at www.dpw.state.pa.us.

PA Department of State Announces 120 Disciplinary Actions

On April 17 the PA Department of State announced that it had taken disciplinary actions against 120 licensed or commissioned professionals and organizations during March. A comprehensive list of sanctions imposed by the Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs is available online at www.dos.state.pa.us; click on “Licensing” and then “Disciplinary Actions” from the left-hand side of the page. Each entry includes the name of the respondent, address, sanction imposed, a brief description of the basis for the disciplinary or corrective measure and the effective date. FMI: See http://www.dos.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/newsroom/12416
HHS Establishes Administration for Community Living

On April 16, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced a new organization within HHS called the Administration for Community Living (ACL). The ACL will include the efforts and achievements of the Administration on Aging, the Office on Disability and the Administration on Developmental Disabilities in a single agency with the goal of increasing access to community supports and full participation, while focusing attention and resources on the unique needs of older Americans and people with disabilities. For more information, please see www.hhs.gov/acl. DHHS says that the reorganization will strengthen its efforts to support community living, regardless of age. The new agency will work with CMS to develop, refine and strengthen policies that promote independent living among all populations, especially those served by Medicaid. ACL will also work with CMS to promote home and community based services and supports. The major components of the ACL will be the: Office of the Administrator, Administration on Aging (AoA), Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD), Center for Disability and Aging Policy (CDAP), and Center for Management and Budget (CMB). HHS said that Kathy Greenlee, the current Assistant Secretary for Aging, will also serve as the Administrator of the Administration for Community Living, and Henry Claypool, currently the Director of the Office on Disability will become principal deputy administrator of the ACL.

DOL Announces $20 million Available for Disability Employment Initiative Grants

On April 16 the U.S. Department of Labor announced the availability of approximately $20 million in grants to fund cooperative agreements that will improve educational, training and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The grants represent the third round of funding through the Disability Employment Initiative, a joint program of the Labor Department's Employment and Training Administration and its Office of Disability Employment Policy. Grants will be awarded to state workforce agencies to collaborate with local workforce investment boards. Programs supported by the grants will build upon the Labor Department's Disability Program Navigator Initiative and other models of service delivery strategies. The department anticipates awarding six to 10 grants, ranging from $1.5 to $6 million, to be spent over a three-year period. The complete solicitation for grant applications is available at http://www.doleta.gov/grants/find_grants.cfm. FMI: See http://www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/eta/ET2120611.htm See the online tutorial "Grant Applications 101: A Plain English Guide to ETA Competitive Grants" at http://www.workforce3one.org/page/grants_toolkit

EARN Webinar on Disability Focused Employee Resource Groups on April 26

On April 26 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. ET two representatives of major American businesses will present an EARN Webinar entitled “Disability Focused Employee Resource Groups (ERGs): Strategies and Best Practices.” This webinar will provide information on disability-focused ERGs and the value they bring to organizations. Presenters will highlight strategies and best practices and describe how utilizing these ERGs enhanced their recruitment, community relations, and other business initiatives. Webinar attendees will learn about successes and challenges and gain insight into ERGs. FMI: See http://askearn.org/webinar_registration_2012-04-26.cfm.