

Northern Highlights

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Center For Independent Living of NE MN
Spring 2008

Plenty of Work to Do

(Taken from Access Press Volume 19, Number 2 Feb. 2, 1008)

Fifty-four million Americans – roughly 1 in 6 – personally experience some form of disability. Yet, seventeen years after Congress enacted the Americans with Disabilities Act, people with disabilities still do not have equal opportunity to fulfill the key tenet that America was built upon—**independence.**

Real economic barriers still exist. **In 2006, people with disabilities were almost three times more likely to live below the poverty line than those without disabilities.** The average annual household income for individuals without disabilities was \$65,400 in 2006, while the average for people with disabilities was \$36,300.

In addition, the employment rate for people with disabilities in 2006 was at least forty percent lower than the employment rate of working-age individuals without disabilities. These dismal statistics offer evidence of severe shortcomings in efforts to break down the barriers that exclude people with disabilities and deprive them of opportunities.

With that in mind, there is plenty of work to do as the 2008 legislative session begins this week. One of the key groups leading the drive for change is the Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (MN-CCD), a unique coalition of more than 100 organizations founded in the mid-90s. It includes providers, advocates and support organizations all dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities.

Co-chaired by Joel Ulland from the Multiple Sclerosis Society, Minnesota Chapter and Steve Larson from Arc Minnesota, MN-CCD supports policies that provide the most cost-effective delivery of services and helps individuals with disabilities maintain their health and gain independence in their daily living.

Many of CCD's accomplishments have come through collaborating, advocating, educating, influencing change and creating awareness for understanding. Since its founding, this 'together we're stronger' approach has been vital to rolling back barriers in Minnesota.

So, what is in store for us all in 2008? The November 2007 state economic forecast predicted a general fund deficit of \$373 million. This deficit comes at a time when the legislature is tackling important issues such as transportation and balancing predictions of very tight funding for disability services and needs.

Despite these barriers, the disability community has three high profile legislative priorities: universal health care coverage, transportation, and a caregiver tax credit.

Health Care

Health care is high on the radar screen of everyone in 2008. Last spring, the legislature convened the Health Care Access Commission, a group of legislators as well as private sector experts in health care.

Their charge was to make recommendations on how to achieve universal health coverage in Minnesota.

The commission had subgroups such as the Bridging the Continuum

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Contact Your Legislators

We encourage you to let your legislators &/or Senators know how much you appreciate what they've done for you throughout the year(s). Below you'll find a list of contact details to all of Minnesota's Representatives & Senators.

Our Minnesota Representatives - <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/>

Irv Anderson (DFL) 03A 321 State Office Building, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155
Phone: (651)296-4936 909 13th St., International Falls, MN 56649
E-mail: rep.irv.anderson@house.mn

David Dill (DFL) 06A 315 State Office Building, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155
Phone: (651)296-2190 423 Bear Island, Crand Lake, MN 55725
E-mail: rep.david.dill@house.mn

Bill Hilty (DFL) 08A 207 State Office Building, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155
Phone: (651)296-4308 64105 Norway Spruce Road, Finlayson, MN 55735
E-mail: rep.bill.hilty@house.mn

Mike Jaros (DFL) 07B 291 State Office Building, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155
Phone: (651)296-4246 3108 Minnesota Ave., Duluth, MN 55802
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Mary Murphy (DFL) 06B 357 State Office Building, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155
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E-mail: rep.tom.rukavina@house.mn

Tony Sertich (DFL) 05B 373 State Office Building, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155
Phone: (651)296-0172 P.O. Box 3, Chisholm, MN 55719
E-mail: rep.tony.sertich@house.mn

Loren Solberg (DFL) 03B 349 State Office Building, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155
Phone: (651) 296-2365 2114 S.W. Third Ave., Grand Rapids, MN 55744
E-mail: rep.loren.solberg@house.mn

Tim Faust (DFL) 08B

Thomas Huntley (DFL) 07A 335 State Office Building, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155
Phone: (651)296-22281924 Wallace Ave., Duluth, MN 55803
E-mail: rep.thomas.huntley@house.mn

John Wood (DFL) 12A

Larry Howes (R) 04B 451 State Office Building, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155
Phone: (651) 296-2451 5340 Ladyslipper Lane, Walker, MN 56484
E-mail: rep.larry.howes@house.mn

Frank Moe (DFL) 04A 369 State Office Building, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155
Phone: (651)296-5516 16266 Wilkey Loop Rd NE, Bemidji, MN 56601
E-mail: rep.frank.moe@house.mn



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Our Minnesota Senators - <http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/>

Tom Bakk (DFL) 675 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Room 226, St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone: (651) 296-8881 2361 Retreat Road Cook, MN 55723
E-mail: sen.tom.bakk@senate.mn

Yvonne Prettner-Solon (DFL) 775 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Room 303, St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone: (651) 296-4188 3800 London Road, #409 Duluth, MN 55804
E-mail: sen.yvonne.prettner_solon@senate.mn

Tom Saxhaug (DFL) 375 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Room 124, St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone: (651) 296-4136 1032 1st Avenue N.W. Grand Rapids MN 55744
E-mail: sen.tom.saxhaug@senate.mn

David Tomassoni (DFL) 575 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Room 321, St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone: (651) 296-8017 412 2nd Street N.W. Chisholm, 55719
E-mail: sen.david.tomassoni@senate.mn

Tony Lourey (DFL) 875 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Room G-24, St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone: (651) 296-0293 51752 Oak Leaf Road Kerrick, MN 55756

Paul E. Koering (R) District 12 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Room 131, St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone: (651)296.4875 4625 County Road 121 Fort Rippley MN, 56449
E-mail: sen.paul.koering@senate.mn

Mary Olson (DFL) District 04

Contact your U.S. Legislators on U.S. Issues

Senator Amy Klobuchar

Senator Norm Coleman (202) 224-5641 - <http://coleman.senate.gov/>

Representative Jim Oberstar - <http://www.oberstar.house.gov/>

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Men's Group

The group will meet beginning in **March on the 1st Thursday from 6-7:30pm** at the Center for Independent Living, 2104 6 Ave. E in Hibbing. Dwight will be the leader for this group, but If you questions or are interested or have questions please contact Anita at 218-262-6675.

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I Still Stand Tall



They look and they wonder
This man in his chair
Their thought is to ask him
What fate put him there.

I don't miss the look
It's seen all the time
My eyes never miss it
Their stare is no crime.

For someone to see me
The person I am
Like a breath of fresh air
Do they see that I can.

They look & they wonder
This man in his chair
To some it might feel that
Is life always fair.

I see in their eyes
How sad they might feel
Do they understand
Beyond what is real.

The chair always with me
It's how I live now
Should it really matter
They why or the how.

Children look & are curious
Parents say not to stare,
But their questions I will answer
Them to learn is only fair.

It is what it is
Beyond they should see
Don't look at my wheelchair
Take time – look at me.

What makes me a person
The fact I can't stand
With much more to offer
My abilities at hand.

My legs were just legs
Certain jobs they could do
Like run, walk & stand
Wear a right & left shoe.

The rest of me though
I consider my all
Because of the rest of me
I still stand tall.

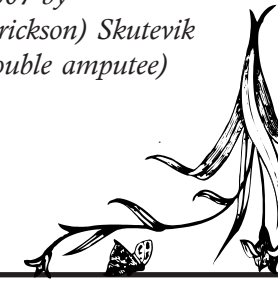
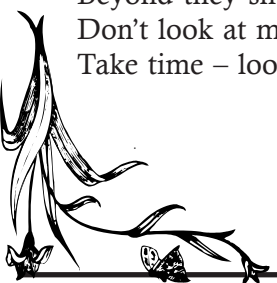
My legs did not make me
The man from my birth
The chair that I live in
Does not make my worth.

There are so many things
Which may surprise you
Without having legs
The things I can do.

Please look again
See past the chair
I don't feel made fun of
I know that you care.

To say this so you
Well really to all
Take another look
Because I still stand tall.

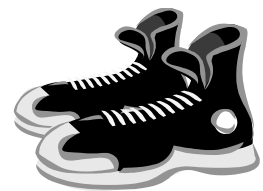
*Written in 2007 by
Katherine (Erickson) Skutevik
(Wife of a double amputee)*



Walk MS 2008 registration is open

You'll move. You'll be moved.
Joining the movement with
hundreds of thousands of
people across the country is
an experience like no other.
We walk together during Walk
MS to make a powerful
statement and to keep us
moving toward a cure. Join a
team, raise funds and walk to
help people affected by MS.

Iron Range Multiple Sclerosis
(MS) Walk to happen in
Chisholm starting at Jim's
Sports Club & Bar & walking
around Longyear Lake. Visit
mssociety.org to find any of
the 16 walks throughout MN
nearest you and join the
movement!



MS Awareness Week March 10-17

Join the movement to end this
devastating disease and stop
anybody from ever hearing
the words "You have MS"
again!

There are so many ways to
join the movement, to find out
how you can join the fight, visit
www.nationalmssociety.org

Hearing Aid Recycling



Don't Throw Them Away!

People who are deaf and hard of hearing must often pay out-of-pocket for aids and equipment that are not generally covered by insurance. This can create financial difficulties for people who need such aids to help them.

A family member who used a hearing aid passed away? Got a new cochlear implant? Just upgraded to digital from analog? Bought a hearing aid awhile ago but it did not work as well as you wanted and you're stuck with it? Don't throw out that old or unwanted hearing aid - it may still have some life in it yet, and be of use to someone who can't afford a hearing aid! Your old hearing aid could make the difference in someone's life. For an adult in need, a used hearing aid can mean the ability to get or hold a job; for a child, it can mean being able to learn better due to having access to sound at last.

Research shows that hearing loss can affect relationships, school performance, job productivity, and emotional well being. For the estimated 28 million children and adults in the United States who have a hearing loss, accessing hearing aids can be a critical factor to enjoying life to it's fullest.

How can you help?

- By dropping off used hearing aids at one of the seven location in Northeastern Minnesota or by mailing them to us.
- By donating funds to purchase hearing aids.
- If you're an audiologist - by donating some of your time for those who inadequate insurance coverage.

Drop off your old hearing aids at any of the following locations:

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services - Virginia
Olcott Plaza 820 N 9th Street, Suite 250 Virginia,
MN 55792 (218) 748-2253 (v) (218) 748-2252 (tty)
dhhs.virginia@state.mn.us

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services - Duluth
Government Services Center 320 W. 2nd Street,
Suite 710 Duluth, MN 55746 (218) 723-4962
(v) (218) 723-4961 (tty)
dhhs.duluth@state.mn.us
http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/disabilities/documents/pub/DHS_id_000081.hcsp

Center for Independent Living of Northeastern Minnesota - Hibbing (Main Office) *You may also mail your used hearing aids to this address.
2104 6th Ave. E, Hibbing MN 55746 V/TTY (218) 262-6675 Toll free (800) 390-3681
<http://accessnorth.net>

Center for Independent Living of Northeastern Minnesota - Duluth 118 E. Superior St, Duluth, MN 55802 V/TTY (218) 625-1400
Toll Free (888) 625-1401

Center for Independent Living of Northeastern Minnesota - Aitkin 210 2nd Street N.W. Aitkin, MN 56431 V/TTY (218) 927-3748 Toll free (800) 390-3681

Center for Independent Living of Northeastern Minnesota - International Falls (218) 286-3134

Center for Independent Living of Northeastern Minnesota - Cloquet (218) 879-0375

Without Your Help This Project Would Not Be Possible!

Please Send Your Contribution To:

Center for Independent Living of Northeastern Minnesota
2104 6th Avenue Hibbing MN 55746
(218) 262-6675 V/TTY -- (800) 390-3681 -- (218) 262-6677 FAX



Plenty of Work to Do

(continued from Page 1)

group which focused on many issues specific to disability, and investigated ways to bridge all sectors of health to create a seamless health delivery system. The group also recommended ideas such as a medical home, which focuses on patient-centered, physician-guided, cost efficient lifelong care. It is yet unclear if the commission's findings will be adopted, but dialogue is taking place, and the urgency for reform is palpable. The need for change has never been greater.

Transportation

In the wake of the I-35W bridge, much of the '08 legislative session will likely be devoted to transportation. For people with disabilities, access to transit affects employment, education and even health care. Therefore, the MN-CCD is again pursuing an aggressive transportation agenda. Change is long overdue: there are currently seven counties without any public transit, and District Three, covering central Minnesota, will meet only 19.4 percent of ridership needs by 2010 if current levels are maintained.

Last year the MN-CCD launched its '14 by 2010' bill which calls for all 87 counties in Minnesota having a minimum of 14 hours of transportation service per day by the year 2010. Unfortunately, the parties could not pass a transportation bill and the MN-CCD bill died. This year the MN-CCD will take a different approach to improve transportation—using the existing 2001 Department of Transportation Greater Minnesota Public Transportation plan as their vehicle. The DOT plan calls for 80 percent by 2010—so we have plenty of work ahead. Essentially, the MN-CCD bill will ask the legislature to fund its own transportation plan.

Caregiver Tax Credit

The final big initiative the MN-CCD is seeking is a caregiver tax credit. The simple fact is that the most cost-effective and many times most desirable way to provide needed care to older Minnesotans and those with disabilities is through informal caregivers—primarily family members. Eighty to ninety-five percent of all long-term care services are provided by informal caregivers, saving the nation an estimated \$196 billion; a figure that dwarfs national expenditure for home health care (\$32 billion) and nursing home care (\$83 billion). When caregivers are unable to provide the care needed because the other components of life's resources are no longer accessible, many are forced to make the decision to move a family member or friend to a nursing home. The caregiver tax credit seeks a \$100 maximum monthly tax credit for those requiring a level of formal or informal care that meets state PCA standards.

Introducing
the Newest
Members of
the CILNM
Team



Alex Cook: Hello, my name is Alex Cook and I am the new IT Manager in the Hibbing Office. I was born and raised in the Hibbing/Keewatin area. I have been into technology for around 14-15 years now; it has just always been a passion of mine. And I am glad this opportunity came along to work with AccessNorth.

Other New CILNM Team Members:

Deborah Bowman
International Falls Satellite

Judy Rupert
Grand Rapids Branch Office

Marie McNamara
Brainerd Branch Office

Cammy Robbins
Pine City Satellite

Steve Backholm
Walker Satellite

Audrey Mismash
Two Harbors Satellite

For a list of activities and groups in your area, contact your local CILNM Office.

Range Area Groups:

- Multiple Sclerosis Support
- Functional Fitness for Older Adults
- Coffee / Crafts Group
- Fibromyalgia and Chronic Pain Support Group
- Vision Loss Support Group
- Men's Group

Duluth Area Groups:

- Game of Life (Ages 14-22)
- Kids Group (Ages 10-13)
- Computer Basics
- DTA Bus Training
- Chronic Fatigue & Fibromyalgia For Women Only
- TBI Group
- Vision Loss Support Group For Women Only

Aitkin Area Groups:

- Hope for the Future
- MS Support Group
- Men's Group

If you have any needs and/or ideas for a support group, please contact the CILNM Office closest to you and ask them for assistance in setting them up!



Aitkin Office Has Moved!

In February the Aitkin office moved to a new location at 210 2nd St. NW, Aitkin, MN 56431

Phone numbers and the email address to reach them by are the same.

Our Offices

Hibbing

2104 6th Ave. E.
Hibbing, MN 55746
Phone/TTY (218)262-6675
(800)390-3681
FAX (218)262-6677

Branch Offices

Duluth

118 E. Superior St.
Duluth, MN 55802
Phone/TTY (218) 625-1400
(888)625-1401
FAX (218)625-1401

Aitkin

210 2nd St. NW
Aitkin, MN 56431
Phone/TTY (218)927-3748
(800)390-3681
FAX (218)927-3749

Brainerd

17025 Commercial Park Dr, Ste 2
Phone/Fax (218)829-9567

Coleraine

308 Roosevelt Ave, Box 520
Coleraine, MN 55722
Phone/Fax (218)245-0211

Satellite Offices

Cloquet

(218) 879-0375

International Falls

(218) 286-3134

Pine City

(320)629-8179

Walker

(218)547-3036

Two Harbors

(218)384-6461

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Hibbing, Minnesota 55746

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Center For Independent Living of NE MN

Serving people with disabilities in the
Minnesota counties of

St. Louis
Lake
Cook
Koochiching
Itasca
Aitkin
Carlton
Pine
Cass
Crow Wing

This publication is available in
alternate formats upon request.

OUR MISSION:

To assist individuals with disabilities to
live independently, pursue meaningful
goals, and have the same opportunities
and choices as all persons.

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