

South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities Focus on Abilities

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Seeking Nominations

The Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Statewide Independent Living Council need your help in identifying knowledgeable individuals who are committed to improving employment and independent living services and opportunities for individuals with disabilities in South Dakota.

These three groups are currently seeking nominations for pending vacancies on their boards/council, as well as checking with current members who are eligible and have interest in being re-nominated. Upon receipt of all nominations, they will be forwarded to the Governor for his review, consideration and selection.

Individuals are selected based on their qualifications and experience, as well as on the specific composition requirements of each board/council. Members are typically appointed to serve three-year terms, unless they are filling the remainder of a term vacated by someone who left prior to their term ending. Nominations are due March 25th. For a copy of the nomination packet click on this link [Nomination Packet for BVR SILC BSBVI.pdf](#) or contact BVR/SILC staff at 1.800.210.0143 or BSBVI staff at 1.800.265.9684.

South Dakota Employment Rate for People with Disabilities Highest in the Nation

According to the recently released 2015 Disability Statistics Annual Report, South Dakota has the highest employment rate for people with disabilities at 50.1 percent.

Department of Human Services Secretary Gloria Pearson said, "Employment for people with disabilities is one of the prime initiatives of the department and we are pleased to see these statistics."

In 2014, 34.4% of U.S. civilians with disabilities ages 18—64 living in the community were employed, compared to 75.4% for people without disabilities - a gap of 41 percentage points. There is a state variation in the rates of employment for persons with disabilities from South Dakota's high of 50.1% to a low of 25.6%. For people without disabilities, state rates ranged from 83.9% to 70.4%.

The [2015 Disability Statistics Annual Report](#) is a companion volume to the 2015 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium.

22nd Annual Disability Awareness Day at the Capital A Success

February 10th was the date of the 22nd Annual Disability Awareness Day at South Dakota's State Capital Rotunda. From 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. a total of 18 disability organizations hosted information exhibits and served fresh fruit to all who stopped by. It was a time of saying "Thank You" to policymakers for their efforts on behalf of South Dakotans with disabilities, to learn about the legislative process underway and to network with each other and learn how each organization is working to support South Dakotans with disabilities seeking to achieve their dreams.

Below are a few pictures from this year's event.

The night before, preparing fruit, did we have a good crew or what? We were finished in an hour - a new record!

Miss Wheelchair South Dakota, Kristi Eisenbaum, stopped by after talking with leaders from the Departments of Tourism and Transportation. She's working with them on making rest areas on the Interstate more accessible to all and more!

Some South Dakota Advocates for Change had an opportunity to meet the drug dog and his officer. Thanks for taking a break and giving us a photo op with both of you!

2016 Legislative Session

Disability Related Bills

Following are some of the bills we've been tracking during session, which speak specifically to topics affecting people with disabilities. To learn more about them e.g., their status, actual language, go to www.sd-ccd.org/home/advocacy/disabilityadvocacynetworkinformation/sessionupdates/

HB1081 - An Act to appropriate for tax refunds for elderly and persons with disabilities - Signed by Governor.

SB1141 - An Act to license persons offering applied behavior analysis services to the public - Signed by Governor

HB1198 - An Act to recognize dyslexia as learning disability - Deferred to the 41st Legislative Day

HB1224 - An Act to authorize the Investment Council to enter into an agreement to allow South Dakota residents to participate in ABLE savings program to support individuals with disabilities - Signed by Governor

SB19 - An Act to revise certain mandatory reporting requirements for elder and disabled adult abuse and neglect - Delivered to Governor

SB20 - An Act to revise certain provisions related to behavioral health - Signed by Governor

SB54 - An Act to adopt the Elder Abuse Task Force statutory recommendations in order to protect South Dakota seniors and adults with disabilities from abuse, neglect and exploitation - Delivered to Governor

SB66 - An Act to permit the issuance of special plates to parents of certain individuals - Signed by Governor

SB142 - An Act to authorize certain disclosures of mental health information to law enforcement - Delivered to Governor

SB171 - An Act to permit and regulate the compassionate use of Cannabis and provide penalties therefor - Do Pass Amended Failed

**"Blessed are the flexible,
for they shall not be bent out of shape."**

Michael McGriffy, M.D.

From the Executive Director

Dear Members & Friends,

"The ultimate measure of a man" (person or organization) "is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." These words from Martin Luther King, Jr. resonate with me. Each of us experiences various challenges during our life journeys. Some we share with others. Others we keep to ourselves. Organizations - public/private, non-profit/for-profit, religious/non-religious - face challenges. Often they are visible, but not always.

The COALITION has a challenge in front of us! It is a challenge of our own making in more ways than one. At the last several Board of Director meetings, we have had difficult conversations about the health of our organization, specifically the financial health. As a result, we shared with you several months back, we reduced staff from three full-time to two and a fourth full-time. We've taken steps to reduce operating expenses as much as possible, while having adequate resources to carry out work important to us and to those with whom we have contracts and agreements. And yet, we still need to address a financial reality that weighs heavy on us, as we look ahead.

Fundraising has never been easy. These days it's even more difficult. Combine that with people who truly believe in our work, yet find it difficult to "ask for money" - well, it is not a good mix for raising needed funds. So at their last meeting, the Board passed a couple of motions to begin addressing these challenges.

The first was a motion to set a goal of raising \$75,000 in one year to support the work of the COALITION - work not paid for through current funding streams. The other motion passed was to direct \$5,000 donated by two members and work with others who are in the fundraising business to support us in growing our skills and funds. A lofty goal - Yes! Yet, they felt to set it low is to expect less of ourselves. So lofty it is, and we need your help!

How can you help? First, if you're able, we ask that you consider donating to help us meet our goal. Any amount is appreciated... every gift helps! If you know friends and family who you feel would be able to give, and you believe our work needs to continue, ask them to donate! It isn't easy for any of us to ask, yet if we don't ask, we'll never

give them an opportunity to give. If you have an idea for a local fundraising effort and you're willing to work with others to make it happen, go for it! Every effort does not have to come out of Pierre! Please just keep us informed of your efforts!

Over the past 25+ years, much has changed for people with disabilities! The COALITION has been a part of that change. There is more change needed! There are still portions of the disability community who do not have access to needed supports and services that lead to their success in living independently and being successfully employed. Even though progress has been made in the employment of people with disabilities, they are still more likely to be unemployed or underemployed, more likely to live in poverty and more often faced with fewer choices of where to live than those without disabilities. More work is needed to be done!

Please help us rise to the challenges before us, so we might continue to work for change that supports **all** people with disabilities being successful in pursuing their dreams!

Shelly

**2016 Election
Calendar**

April 22nd

Absentee voting begins

May 23rd

Voter registration deadline for June primary election

June 7th

Primary Election Polls open 7:00 am to 7:00 pm - local time

September 23rd

Absentee voting begins

October 24th

Voter registration deadline for the general election

November 8th

General Election Polls open 7:00 am - 7:00 pm - local time

2016 Dare to Dream One-day Event July 9th Watertown Event Center

**Learn more at
Sdparent.org**

Make The Most Of Save Your Vision Month

(Source: HealthStatus.com)

Save Your Vision month is held every March and aims to increase awareness regarding good eye care. Organized by the American Optometric Association, the main focus of this event is to encourage more people to go for regular eye exams. With computers becoming an everyday part of people's lives, the risk of eye strain and damage is higher than before. Apart from ordinary eye care, this month specially focuses on eye care in the work place with an emphasis on employers to take eye care and health seriously.

Save Your Vision Month reminds many people of a rather shocking thing, that most of us take our vision for granted. Seeing is one of the easiest things to do in the world - you just have to open your eyes. Apart from that, so much of our lives are based on visual stimulation. From work to entertainment, our eyes form a large part of our everyday lives. Unfortunately, most of us don't think about actual eye care until something goes wrong. It's important to note that just like visiting the dentist regularly is important, regular eye checks are also important.

Some of the benefits of regular eye exams are very apparent. For instance, if the power of your eyesight is decreasing or faulty, corrective measures can be taken immediately. This is much healthier compared to putting up with eye strain until it becomes a real problem to see. Eye checks can also tell you a lot about your general state of health. For example, diabetes is very often diagnosed via an eye exam. Other diseases like glaucoma can be quickly detected and treated by going for regular eye tests.

Today, almost every work place is fitted with computers, whether it's a corporate officer or a small library. One of the biggest problems of continued and persistent computer use is eye strain. Many people who use computers for long stretches of time tend to complain about symptoms like dry eyes, blurry vision and eye strain. While it might not be feasible to cut down on computer use, there are a number of ways to maintain good eye care and health while you work. First of all, regular eye exams are a must and it's important to tell your doctor how much computer work you do each day. When using your computer, make sure that you stop for breaks at regular intervals. It's a good idea to just get up and walk to a window and just have a look outside. Allowing the eyes to look away from the screen, particularly at something soothing can be very resting for the eyes.

One problem many computer users face is a problem they probably aren't even aware of - that is the fact that they don't blink. When staring continuously at your monitor, you will blink a lot less than normal - this is what causes the problem of dry eye. When working at your computer, make a conscious effort to blink as much as possible. In fact, closing your eyes for a few seconds can really help as well. If you still face a problem, consider buying artificial tears and applying them to keep your eyes moist. If possible, install a humidifier in your work area.

The way you sit at your computer also plays a big role in the health of your eyes. Make sure the monitor is about 20 inches away from your eyes. The top of your monitor should be a little below your eye level. Also make sure that you keep your monitor free of dust and fingerprints, as these can greatly reduce clarity. Last, but definitely not least, remember that eating healthy can indeed improve the health of your eyes. Eating plenty of fresh vegetables and fruits as well as getting a good night's sleep are all important ways to preserve the health of your eyes. During this Save Your Vision Month, it's important to take the necessary steps towards better eye care.

Governor Declares March

Brain Injury Awareness Month

Via Executive Proclamation

For more information on brain injury, go to
www.braininjurysd.org

Teens with Disabilities Have the Right to Healthy Relationships

By Claire Barnett, J.D., Program Specialist, Administration for Community Living

National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month is a time to encourage healthy relationships and, in the words of President Obama, "reaffirm the basic human right to be free from violence and abuse."

For teens with disabilities, that basic right is no different.

Thanks to the work of advocates, youth advocates, and community educators, the conversation around social norms that can fuel abuse are changing. However, youth with disabilities are too often left out of the movement to end dating violence and programs to support survivors.

More than 1 in 10 high school students surveyed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported experiencing physical or sexual violence from a dating partner. Data from the Department of Justice suggests even greater risks for youth with disabilities.

- More than one in five young people with disabilities between the ages of 12 and 19 reports experiencing violence (including physical abuse, rape or sexual assault from a stranger or partner) - more than twice the rate of youth without a disability.
- People of all ages with disabilities are more likely to face violence from an intimate partner.
- Women and girls with any type of disability, as well as people with a cognitive disability, face the highest rates of violence.

Domestic violence and sexual assault programs must be accessible for survivors with disabilities; not only because it is the basic right of all survivors to receive support, but because there is such a need for these services.

Partnerships between advocates in the disability community and the domestic and sexual funds are essential. There are resources to help you make programs and services for dating and domestic violence survivors more inclusive.

The Access Initiative is a product of one such partnership, and offers a guide to help domestic violence agencies develop policies, practices, communication processes, and physical shelter environments that are accessible to survivors of all abilities. The initiative is a project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence and is supported by the HHS Family Violence Prevention & Services Program, part of the Administration for Children and Families.

As the Washington State Coalition against Domestic Violence explains with its guide to safety planning for people with disabilities, advocates can promote the self-determination of survivors by keeping in mind environmental and social barriers and not making assumptions about survivors' strengths, wishes and abilities.

The Safety and Sexual Violence Prevention Project, an initiative of Partners for Inclusive Communities at the University of Arkansas, promotes the safety of students with disabilities, and engages their leadership in working to prevent sexual assault. The project builds capacity, provides training and technical assistance, and develops a systems approach to dating violence experienced by students with disabilities. Their approach addresses all levels of the ecological model of interpersonal violence, including issues related to social norms. Partners for Inclusive Communities is one of the 67 University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities funded by the HHS Administration for Community Living.

All of us - domestic and sexual violence advocates, survivors with and without disabilities, families and caregivers, and allies - must insist on a response to violence and abuse that recognizes the right of all survivors to services and resources for prevention and response. Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month reminds us of the tremendous benefits of teaching every teen about healthy relationships.

Washington D.C. Leaders

Contact Information

President Barack Obama

The White House

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(202) 456-1111

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/president-obama>

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Senator Mike Rounds

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(844) 875-5268

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Washington D.C. 20515

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www.noem.house.gov

Your Voice Matters!

**Talk with "our" leaders about what is
important to you!**

Center for Disabilities
SYMPOSIUM 2016
April 17, 18 & 19
Sioux Falls, S.D.

“Connecting the Dots: Engaging People, Resources and Community” is the theme of the event. It will be held at the Sheraton Hotel and Sioux Falls Convention Center. Key highlights are:

- 19 breakout sessions
- 5 keynote addresses
- Award winning film premier
- Fashion show
- Dance
- Awards luncheon
- World Café community conversations
- Pre-conference workshop on supported decision-making

Keynote Speakers include:

- Ari Ne’eman - President of Autistic Self-Advocacy Network.
- Randy Lewis - Former VP of Walgreens, well-known for his universal design and hiring practices of people with disabilities.
- Jim Warne - President Warrior Society Development and award winning documentary filmmaker.
- Mindy Scheier - Founder of Runway of Dreams and maker of adaptive clothing.
- And more...

For more information, or if you have questions, call the Center for Disabilities at 605-357-1439.

To register go to:

www.regonline.com/cdsymposium2016

**You REALLY don't want
to miss this!**

Notes from the President...

Dear Fellow Members,

By the time you receive this newsletter, the 91st Legislative Session will be over or close to it. Hopefully, our leaders addressed your concerns one way or another, and they did what was needed for you and yours. If not, we have the rest of the year to tell them our stories and what we seek out of the 92nd legislative session.

I would like to thank our staff for the work they do during each session, beginning with the Fall Disability Advocacy Network (DAN) meeting and hosting bi-weekly DDN meetings throughout session. It also includes the daily dissemination of information regarding bills we, as an organization, and our members feel important to follow and act upon as appropriate. It is a huge job, demanding much time and energy, and they do it very well!

Our staff also continues to be busy acting as support to several other disability organizations. They answer a myriad of questions regarding disability issues, attend various disability committee meetings, as well as provide training to various groups across the state. With all of that, they are more than happy to help out when called upon by individuals and organizations who are seeking guidance, technical assistance and training.

If you have a need for any of these supports, I encourage you to contact our staff, ask for their assistance. They'll do their best to serve you, and if they are not the best resource, they will work with you to locate who is...

Something new is on the horizon, via your local TV station and other media outlets. Look for a new public service announcement about the COALITION that will be appearing as a result of us receiving an Avera KELOland Tradition of Caring Grant. We expect them to air this spring (April/May/June). Let us know what you think...

We're also busy working to keep new items coming to our website and Facebook page on a regular basis. Please be sure to check them out on a regular basis and let us know what you think... Ideas are welcome. We hope you'll like what you see!

And lastly, March is a march into spring! ENJOY!

Margot

Upcoming Events

March 17th

St. Patrick's Day

March 29th

Last day of Legislative Session

April 6th

Coalition Board Meeting in Oacoma

April 12th

Benefits & Employment Training - Chamberlain

April 17th - 19th

Center for Disabilities SYMPOSIUM 2016 - Sioux Falls

April 20th

Benefits & Employment Training - Watertown

April 26th

Benefits & Employment Training - Rapid City

May 3rd - 5th

CIL Staff Training in Ft. Pierre

May 10th

Benefits & Employment Training - Sioux Falls

May 11th

Benefits & Employment Training - Yankton

South Dakota Advocates for Change
Mobilize Organize Act

South Dakota Advocates for Change (SDAC) is a statewide leadership team for self-advocates who help teach other advocates the skills to speak up and advocate for themselves!

The SDAC Team has presentations on varying topics and of various lengths. If you would like them to visit your group, please contact SDAC staff at

1.800.210.0143 or faiethe@sd-ccd.org

March is Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

PIERRE, S.D. - Gov. Dennis Daugaard has signed a proclamation declaring March as Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in South Dakota.

Every March, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month is an opportunity to recognize the valuable contributions of citizens with disabilities in our communities.

"We encourage everyone to learn more about the individuals in this community who have developmental disabilities and to recognize that all of us have talents and abilities we can offer to make this a better place to live," said Arlene Poncelet, the director of the South Dakota Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Statewide and across the nation, organizations devoted to serving individuals with developmental disabilities are planning special events in March to raise public awareness.

Join The Coalition
Join with others to work towards equal
opportunity for all!

Name/Agency: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____

Email: _____ **Phone:** _____

_____ **New** _____ **Renewal**

_____ **Individual - \$20**

_____ **Organizational - \$100**

_____ **Donation - \$_____**

Join by completing this information and mailing it with a check to: The Coalition; 221 South Central Avenue, Suite 34A; Pierre, SD 57501 or by going to our website at www.sd-ccd.org

Physical presence does NOT equal inclusion!

Our Goal

\$75,000

We Need Your Help!

This publication is the official publication of the Coalition (South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities). We welcome letters, manuscripts, news items, articles and other items of interest, which will be considered for possible publication within future editions. This publication is mailed, electronically or in hard copy, to all Coalition members and other interested parties, as well as located on our website at www.sd-ccd.org.

Many of the articles in this publication are reprinted from other sources, as a way to share with our readers an example of the information being presented to leaders and other members of the general public locally and nationwide. The opinions expressed in these articles do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Coalition - its membership, board or staff. Its appearance in this publication does not constitute the Coalition's position in regard to any issue or item, unless expressly stated as such.

The Coalition is a strong supporter of "People First" language and supports its use in written and spoken communication. Some of the articles used in this publication may contain language that is not consistent with the "People First" concept. The language used by authors of articles that are not consistent with "People First" language is not a reflection of the Coalition's preference.