

THE Colorado Independent

March/April 2008

This newsletter is published by the Provider Relations Unit of the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and edited by Judy Neal, Independent Living Program Coordinator. The goal is to share information among the ten Colorado Centers for Independent Living, the Statewide Independent Living Council, and DVR staff. The submission of information or articles from all affiliated with these organizations is both encouraged and welcomed. Please e-mail any articles of interest to judy.neal@state.co.us If you have questions, please phone me at (303) 866-4645.

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Report from the

2008 SILC Congress

By Judy Neal

The first thing I learned at the SILC Congress was that there are as many ways for a SILC to operate as there are states. The range of configurations included autonomous 501c3 non-profits with staffs large enough to include grant writers, "parallel" 501c3 fiscal agents, and state employees serving as Executive Directors of SILCs. The relevant factors in most cases were state constitutions and the SILC's relationship with the Designated State Unit (DSU). SILCs in states with separate state blind agencies had to coordinate with two DSUs.

There was much talk about the reauthorization of the Rehab Act and the inclusion of the SILC Standards and Indicators adopted by the 2004 SILC Congress. Faith Gross, Acting SILC Chair, reported that our SILC had never laid eyes on this document until the pre-conference survey. This realization has sparked a new level of accountability for SILC conference attendance. Written reports and shared materials will now be required, not just requested.



From the Director

**By
Nancy Smith**

March is officially Brain Injury Awareness month, and a number of collaborative events have been taking place. At the beginning of the month, I attended a meeting of the four major entities and their boards that provide various segments of service to the TBI population. The groups, Brain Injury Association of Colorado (BIAC), our TBI Program, the Brain Injury Advisory Board, and Denver Options, agreed that together we can do much more. We also agreed to form what is being called the Brain Injury Collaborative. This group will provide much clearer communication among the entities and make it possible for us to get the word out about matters requiring everyone's attention. It will also allow joint planning for the future service needs of this group of consumers.

Two other events that are pointing us in the right direction for this growing disability population include the BIAC Legislative Luncheon with Karen Beye as the keynote speaker, and an April 8th meeting with a number of division directors and office directors to discuss the ways in which services for people with TBI, notably

veterans, will impact many areas within CDHS. This meeting gives CDHS a chance to get organized and focused internally on serving people with TBI. We know that its not just Voc Rehab services that are needed. This disability affects people's family life, how their children are raised, housing, mental health for everyone involved, and more. Instead of creating "silos " of individual division effort, we'd like to get one collective effort going. An Executive Order regarding TBI is also being rewritten.

BIAC 26th Annual Conference

Save the Date for the
26th Annual Conference
October 15th - 18th, 2008
at the Vail Marriott Mountain Resort.
Mark Your Calendars Now!

**Brain Injury Association
of Colorado**

www.biacolorado.org

**SILC Congress,
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After discussion of the reauthorization, and some folks who are calling for an “Independent Living Act,” a workgroup was organized to develop a strategy to get the reauthorization back on track.

For me, the most interesting segment of the Congress was the “cracker barrel” which gave someone from each state the opportunity to report on their SILC activities. Faith and I both felt validated as many SILCs are headed in the same direction as Colorado’s – taking an active role in creating a collaborative network that brings all the players to the table. Another bright note was discovering that we had much less trouble getting our SPIL passed than many other states. Although some claimed that the mention of “advocacy” kept them from approval, the Colorado SPIL includes advocacy, systems change, and community organizing.

I wasn’t able to attend the Saturday break out sessions because my workshop “Crossing Over – Bridging the Gap between IL and VR” was scheduled for both morning and afternoon. However, I have some of the materials for other sessions in digital format, and I can distribute them with permission.

Overall, I think attending the SILC Congress was a valuable experience. I picked up a lot of information about

what a SILC should be and could be, and I feel encouraged that the Colorado SILC is on the right track.



The morning session of “Crossing Over” filled up quickly with representatives from IL, VR, and SILCs, which lead to some great discussion.

The More Things Change. . . .

Prior to the first SILC Congress, held in 1998, the following issues were identified as those most relevant and in need of addressing:

- SILC's relationship with independent living centers,
- SILC's relationship with the designated state unit,
- SILC autonomy
- SILC as a systems' advocate

I’m sure it is no surprise that the 2008 SILC Congress discussed the same issues. SILCs, like all other councils, have a constant flow of new members. State and Federal offices undergo frequent change. We will always be a “Work in Progress.”



DBTAC Rocky Mountain ADA CENTER

History of the ADA

By Cindy Powell

The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** is the most comprehensive civil rights law protecting people with disabilities. Prior to the passage of the **ADA**, several civil rights laws provided limited protection for people with disabilities.

1968: Architectural Barriers Act was the first federal law addressing civil rights for people with disabilities. This law requires that buildings constructed by the federal government or with federal funding be accessible to people with disabilities. This law also resulted in the first set of standards for the removal of architectural barriers: The Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS).

1973: Rehabilitation Act was the first federal law to prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities. This law requires that federally funded programs be accessible to people with disabilities and that federal employers provide reasonable accommodations for their employees with disabilities. Much of

the terminology in the Rehabilitation Act was used in the **ADA**.

1975: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) established the rights of students with disabilities to a free, appropriate public education in the most integrated setting possible. This law mandated that parents and schools work together to design individualized education plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities.

1986: Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) was passed to ensure access to air travel by people with disabilities. The **ACAA** was passed in response to a Supreme Court decision that found that the Rehabilitation Act did not apply to air travel.

The **ADA** prohibits discrimination in:

- Title I: Employment
- Title II: State and local government
- Title III: Privately owned businesses

- Title IV: Telecommunications
- Title V: Miscellaneous Provisions

Since the **ADA**'s passage in **1990**, people with disabilities have gained access to a wider variety of services, programs and activities across America. A 1996 poll of 1,330 individuals from 48 states conducted by the United Cerebral Palsy Association found that:

- 96 percent of the respondents said that the **ADA** has made a difference in the lives of people with disabilities;
- 81 percent said that the **ADA** had made a difference in their own lives;
- 57 percent stated the **ADA** has resulted in better access to buildings; and
- 46 percent reported greater inclusion of people with disabilities in the community.

However, 75 percent of respondents identified employment as the area where they have observed the least change. Over a decade later, in 2007, unemployment rates for working-age adults with disabilities remained near 70 percent, significantly higher than unemployment among working-age adults without disabilities. Title I, the employment section of the **Americans Disability Act (ADA)**, will be featured in the next newsletter.

Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC) - Rocky Mountain ADA Center is one of ten regional "one-stop" comprehensive Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) resource centers. Located in Colorado Springs, DBTAC - Rocky Mountain ADA Center serves a six state region: Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming.

DBTAC - Rocky Mountain ADA Center provides

- *technical assistance,*
- *education and training,*
- *public awareness,*
- *materials dissemination, and*
- *information and referral*

to employers, businesses, state and local government agencies, disability and rehabilitation programs, people with disabilities, architects, code officials, schools and many other entities with rights and responsibilities under the ADA.



Cindy Powell is on staff at DBTAC, and she will be a regular contributor to the Colorado Independent.

Rocky Mountain ADA Center

(800)949-4232 www.adainformation.org

Statewide Independent Living Council

New Members

The SILC expects to welcome three new members to the March 20th meeting in Denver. They are:

Carol Hunter (Granby)

Linda LaPointe (Rye)

Linda Taylor, ACCIL (Grand Junction)

Still Searching

The SILC is still looking for members to round out our statewide and cross-disability perspective. We are looking for representatives of the blind or visually impaired community, the mental health community, and people with physical disabilities other than mobility. Ideally candidates would reside outside the Denver Metro area, represent racial minorities, and be familiar with the independent living philosophy.

The SILC must always have a voting majority of people with disabilities who do not work for the state or a CIL. Maintaining that balance is important, but applications that do not fit our current needs can still be submitted, and considered when the SILC has filled the other vacant seats. For more information, contact: Judy.neal@state.co.us.



The SILC has a website under construction. We are currently having a logo designed and furnishing the web designer with content. We are still hoping for an April launch. Look for: www.coloradosilc.org.

SILC Meetings

The next SILC meeting will be held on **March 20** at the Legal Center for People with Disabilities and Older People, 455 Sherman St, Denver.

From 12:45 to 1:15, the floor is open to anyone who wishes to address the SILC about independent living issues whether they are on the agenda or not. A sign Language interpreter will be available.

Tentatively Scheduled Meetings –

May 15, 2008 in Grand Junction

June 12, 2008 in Denver

RESOURCES



THE SMALL BUSINESS AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (SBSES)

Phone: 800-526-7234 (V)

TTY: 877-781-9403

Fax: 304-293-5407

URL: <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/SBSES>

E-mail: kcording@wvu.edu

CTAT Training

**Networking: Telling Your Story,
how to frame your new life - April
11 *Free***

Registration Deadline - March 28
http://www.ctat-training.com/cgi-script/csCalendar/csCalendar_HYBRID.cgi?command=view&id=115&Division=disability

**Employment Panel: Success at
Work - April 17 *\$25 (Free to
Survivors and Family Members)***
Registration Deadline - April 3
http://www.ctat-training.com/cgi-script/csCalendar/csCalendar_HYBRID.cgi?command=view&id=119&Division=disability

**Introduction to Disabilities - April
22 *\$105****

(Registration after April 1 \$155)

Registration Deadline - April 8

http://www.ctat-training.com/cgi-script/csCalendar/csCalendar_HYBRID.cgi?command=view&id=126&Division=disability

All trainings held at

9900 E Iliff Ave Denver, CO 80231

For more information and to register
for a training visit www.ctat-training.com
or fax to 303-636-5606.

Colorado CIL Websites

www.atlantiscommunity.net

www.cfigj.org

www.cpwd-ilc.org

www.fortnet.org/drs

www.swcidur.org

**Articles and Announcements
for the May/June Colorado
Independent should be
submitted by April 15. For more
information, call Judy at 303
866-4645**