
Cape Organization for Rights of the Disabled

NEWS UPDATE
March 2012

Annual Independent Living Education Day

Join CORD and people with disabilities from across Massachusetts on **April 4, 2012** at the State House as we meet with legislators to educate them on the importance of Centers for Independent Living (CILs).

Each year the 11 Centers in Massachusetts assist as many as 200 people to move back into the community from institutionalized settings such as nursing homes and state “schools.” This saves the Commonwealth an average of \$4,000,000! This past year the 11 CILs received over 10,000 Information and Referral calls from people with disabilities, family members and the general community. The Massachusetts CILs employ hundreds of staff, many of whom are people with disabilities, enhancing our state’s commitment to being a model employer of people with disabilities.

If you would like to go to the State House with CORD and educate our legislators on the importance of CORD and the other CILs or would like to share your story of how CORD has helped you, call CORD at 508-775-8300 or 1-800-541-0282 (both numbers V/TTY). Space on the bus is limited so call now to reserve your seat. A bagged lunch will be provided.



Pictures from past Independent Living Education Days at the State House

What's up with SSI?

If you receive SSI, you may have received a confusing letter from Social Security stating that your SSI payment is being reduced. Here's what is happening: many people who receive SSI also receive money from the Massachusetts SSI State Supplemental Program (SSP). Until now, Massachusetts has given the SSP money to Social Security who then paid it out to SSI recipients in one payment each month. In order to save money, Massachusetts has decided to pay people who receive money from the SSP directly instead of having Social Security pay it.

As of April 1, 2012:

- SSI recipients who get a state supplement will receive the same amount of money, but in two payments instead of one
- Total payment amounts are not changing
- Dates and methods of payments are not changing
- Eligibility requirements are not changing

Questions? Call the Massachusetts SSP Customer Service Call Center at 1-877-863-1128 or call CORD at 508-775-8300 (V/TTY).

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Cape Organization for Rights of the Disabled
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www.cilcapecod.org

Are you eligible for a Safelink wireless phone?

Safelink is a service of the federal Lifeline program that provides a free cell phone to people meeting certain criteria and if no one in their household has a Safelink phone or Lifeline discount on their home phone. To be eligible you must already participate in one of the following programs: EAEDC, SSI, LIHEAP, SNAP, MassHealth, TAFDC or fuel assistance.

For more information on the Safelink phone, go to www.safelink.com or call CORD at 508-775-8300 or 1-800-541-0282 (both numbers V/TTY).

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Constituents' Annual Day

On March 6, CORD's DHILS program joined the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Deaf, Inc. and people who are Deaf and hard of hearing from across the state to advocate for private insurance companies to cover the cost of hearing aids. Currently, hearing aids are only covered by MassHealth. People not on MassHealth must find the funding on their own (this can be thousands of dollars) or go without. If you would like more information on how to advocate for insurance coverage for hearing aids, contact CORD's DHILS Advocate June Barrett at 508-775-8300 or 1-800-541-0282 (both numbers V/TTY) or at cordinfo@cilcapecod.org.

ADAPT

ADAPT is a national grass-roots community that organizes disability rights activists to engage in nonviolent direct action to assure the civil and human rights of people with disabilities to live in freedom.

The next national ADAPT action is **April 21 through April 26** in Washington DC to fight the institutional bias and advocate to Defend Our Freedom! Join ADAPT to demand that our government fulfills its duty to aggressively protect the civil rights of Americans with disabilities and to enforce the ADA/Olmstead decision. More information on ADAPT events and campaigns can be found at www.adapt.org.

CORD Hosts Project Impact

On March 1 CORD hosted a workshop on returning to work while receiving Social Security benefits. Marilyn Reale, a benefits specialist with Project Impact of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), spoke about the ins and outs of SSI and SSDI. Over thirty people learned how SSI is calculated, about the Trial Work Period, Substantial Gainful Activity, Impairment Related Work Expenses and the Ticket to Work program. Attendees also learned how working may impact eligibility for Medicare and MassHealth. If you have any questions on SSI or SSDI, call CORD for more information.



Left: People gather at CORD to learn about returning to work while receiving Social Security benefits.

Right: Marilyn Reale, Project Impact Benefits Specialist explains how SSI benefits are determined.



CORD Needs You!

CORD invites you to become a dues-paying member. For over 25 years, CORD has been a leader in battles for fair housing, the ADA, communication access, expanded bus service for the Cape, accessible ferries, affordable health care, attendant services, and many other issues that enhance independent living.

Yes, I want to pay my annual \$20 dues Yes, I want to make an additional donation

I would like to become a CORD member and this is what I am able to give \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Send to: CORD, 106 Bassett Lane, Hyannis, MA 02601

CAPE COD REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY ADDING 2 NEW ROUTES

The Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority (CCRTA) has announced that they are adding 2 new routes in Bourne and Sandwich. This now means that CCRTA is providing fixed route service in all 15 Cape Cod towns.

CCRTA Administrator Tom Cahir said “We are proud to provide reliable, safe and affordable public transportation throughout Cape Cod. Our drivers are well trained professionals who emphasize great customer service. With gas prices going through the roof of late, the CCRTA is a great option for all residents and visitors of Cape Cod.”

A representative from the Town of Sandwich stated “Sandwich and Bourne have been the only Cape Cod communities without fixed route, public bus service. The creation of this new service fills a major gap in the Cape’s public transportation network and the way it is being funded – through a 3-year State grant – means we’ll be able to determine if the route is viable before having to expend any local funds. We are very grateful to the CCRTA for providing this service and for being successful in its grant efforts and we hope the public takes advantage of this new opportunity.”

Both routes will originate in the Sagamore Park & Ride and will have a connection to the Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) system. They will also connect at Mashpee Commons with the Sealine which travels between Falmouth and Hyannis.

For more information on the new routes contact the CCRTA at 1-800-352-7155, 1-800-439-0183 (TTY) or go to www.capecodtra.org.

CORD Store

The next time you’re at CORD, you can help support the organization by purchasing some cool gear. We have t-shirts for \$10, polo shirts for \$20, reusable shopping bags for \$3, and hats and water bottles for \$5 – all with CORD’s logo. Did you miss last year’s ADA Day in Gardner? Get the t-shirt from the event for just \$10! Your support is greatly appreciated.

**Cape Organization for
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106 Bassett Lane
Hyannis, MA 02601

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

General Membership Meeting

CORD will be having a general membership meeting on **Saturday, April 28 from 11– 1** at CORD's office at 106 Bassett Lane in Hyannis. We will be discussing proposed changes to CORD's by-laws. Don't miss this chance to learn about the changes before the annual meeting, meet new CORD staff and learn about upcoming events. Please contact CORD at 508-775-8300 or 1-800-541-0282 (both #'s V/TTY) or at cordinfo@cilcapecod.org by April 20th if you will be attending the meeting and need reasonable accommodations.

Please remember that CORD attempts to maintain a scent-free environment that is safe and comfortable for all. We request that you refrain from wearing perfume, cologne and other scented products whenever you visit CORD's office or attend a CORD event.