



The News

January 1988

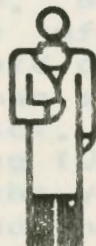
WHERE THERE'S A WILL-THERE'S A WAY

There is a rumor spreading throughout Washington D.C. and now filtering out to the hinterlands that Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) of the Department of Education Madelaine C. Will wants to consolidate and restructure OSERS to eliminate what she sees as "...fragmentation of the adult service system and the lack of effective coordination with elementary and secondary education programs".

In testimony before the subcommittee on the Handicapped of the U.S. Senate on October 8, 1987 Assistant Secretary Will spoke of her difficulty in supervising "...discrete and relatively uncoordinated agencies and programs." She was referring to her three areas of responsibility, the Bureau for the Education of the Handicapped, (now OSEP), the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and the National Institute for the Handicapped Research (now NIDRR). She spoke of a report which will be prepared over the next six months "...recommending specific changes in the present arrangements designed to support continuous and effective program integration at the service delivery level." She has asked for the cooperation from the council of Chief State School Officers (CCSS) in preparing of this report. Noticeably

For more information and to pre-register, contact G. K. Sprinkle, TCONR, 5405 Chevy Circle, Austin, TX 78723 or call 512/926-7748.

* Editor's note. Although these trainings are designed for environmental advocates, the process is the same for everyone.



MEDICAL MALPRACTICE/PHYSICIAN DISCIPLINE

Legislative changes during the recent session mandated that the State Board of Medical Examiners (SBME) establish a 1-800 number for consumers. The toll-free line is intended to provide easier and quicker access to information about doctors. Now a consumer can find out whether disciplinary action has been taken against a doctor. The SBME also will be providing a quarterly summary of disciplinary actions against doctors to public libraries. Co-workers and medical students who complain about a doctor now receive better protection against retaliation through "whistle-blower" legislation approved this past session. The toll-free line has been activated. To call the SBME, the toll-free number is 1-800-248-4062. If you are located in the Austin area, call 467-8142.

COMBINING OF STATE AGENCIES STILL AN ISSUE!

The Health and Human Services Coordinating Council (HHSCC) has been charged to study the organization and structure of the health and human service delivery system in the state of Texas.

It is alarming to note, but not surprising, that the tone of this committee reflects the age-old concept of combining health and human service agencies. As a matter of fact, at the first organizational meeting (January 13, 1988) of the HHSCC, the various programs for the deaf and hearing impaired were used as an example of programs which are duplicated across state agencies and generally unorganized. It was specifically pointed to the HHSCC by staff that interpreter services are provided by the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, the Texas Commission for the Deaf, and the Texas Commission for the Blind. The staff exhibited an extreme lack of understanding as to why these agencies all provide interpreter services. Consequently, the staff report to the HHSCC was very shallow and misleading.

The following agencies fall within the scope of the Councils study: Department on Aging, Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Texas Commission for the Blind, Texas Commission for the Deaf, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, Texas Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Texas Cancer Council, Interagency Council on Early Childhood Intervention, Texas Health and Human



SUNSET COMMISSION REVIEWS PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITIES

The Sunset Commission is currently reviewing the Corpus Christi Regional Transit Authority and the Metropolitan Rapid Transit Authority of Harris County (Houston).

Ms. Ginny McKay, the Sunset Staff Contact for the Transit Authorities under review, stated that the Sunset Commission is looking at the issue of accessibility. The recent action of ADAPT and advocates of the disability rights movement at the APTA (Association of Public Transit Authorities) convention in San Francisco brought the issue of accessible public transit to the attention of the Sunset Commission.

A public meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 28, 1988 in Houston at the Metro Board Room (located at 500 Jefferson Street) at 6:30 p.m. The purpose of this meeting is to receive input on the Houston Transit Authority.

The Sunset Commission staff plans to make a report to the Sunset Commission at the end of March or beginning the beginning of April.

The following recommendations on how to increase and improve MHMR services for deaf and hearing impaired individuals were made:

- TDMHMR needs to conduct an "accessibility review" of all programs and services to ensure equal access to disabled persons in need of MHMR services.

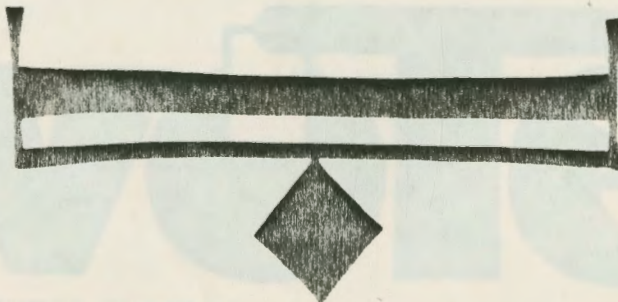
- TDMHMR needs to provide for interpreters at all public meetings and hearings.

- TDMHMR should hire a program specialist to monitor the TDMHMR service delivery system and to make recommendations for increasing and improving services for deaf and hearing impaired persons.

- TDMHMR should work cooperatively with the Texas Commission for the Deaf, the Councils for the Deaf and other agencies and organizations which provide services to the deaf and hearing impaired communities.

- TDMHMR needs to install T.D.D.'s (telecommunication device for the deaf) in all clinics, community care centers, etc...

If you want to know how you can make a difference, contact C.T.D.!



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 5th - Director Association of
the Centers of Independent Living
(DATCIL) Dallas, Texas

February 6th - Texas Commission for
the Blind, Consumer Advisory
Committee, Austin, Texas

February 16th-19th - Respite Care
Conference, San Antonio, Texas

February 20th - United Cerebral Palsy
of Texas Annual Meeting, Dallas, Texas

February 23rd - CTD Attendant Services
Task Force, Austin, Texas

February 19th-20th - Deaf/Blind
Conference, Austin, Texas

February 19th - RSA Public Forum
Supportive Employment, Dallas, Texas

March 11-12th - Deaf Symposium,
Austin, Texas

REMEMBER TO

Register AND

VOTE

SUPER TUESDAY , , , MARCH 8TH

FEDERAL NOTES

- Lex Frieden, Executive Director National Council on the Handicapped has resigned his position effective summer 1988.

- Three major grants studying Attendant Services were given to the World Institute on Disability, Independent Living Research Utilization and United Cerebral Palsy of America.

- Bills To Follow:

Civil Rights Restoration Act, H.R. 1214/S. 1557 - A bill to reverse Grove City Supreme Court Decision and restore full civil rights protection of Section 504 for persons with disabilities.

Medicaid Home and Community Quality Act, H.R. 3454/S. 1673 - A bill to reform Medicaid Title XIX to direct funds to support persons at home in the community and reverse institutional bias of current system.

Fair Housing Amendments, H.R. 1158/S. 558 - Legislation to protect persons with disabilities against housing discrimination and requires new construction of multi-family housing units to include accessible design features.

Traffic Safety For Handicapped Individuals Act S.550/H.R. 1442 - Establish uniform parking access for individuals with disabilities.

Medicare Long-Term Home Care Catastrophic Protection Act H.R. 3436 Provides home care to children with disabilities through Medicare.

cont. from p.3 "Combining..."

Services Coordinating Council,
Juvenile Probation Commission, and the
Texas Youth Commission.

Remember the Stiles Committee?
The Stiles Committee is also charged
with studying the organization and
structure of state government. While
the Stiles Committee has agreed to
relinquish the responsibility of
studying how to reorganize health and
human service agencies to the HHSCC,
the Committee will still be looking at
public education, including the Texas
School for the Deaf and the Texas
School for the Blind.

The HHSCC and the Stiles Committee
will be working cooperatively. At
this point, the Stiles Committee is
planning to incorporate the HHSCC
recommendations into their report to
the 71st legislature. The result will
be a two-pronged report made to the
71st legislature regarding the
combining of state agencies.

Contact C.T.D. to find out how you
can help in preventing the combining
of state agencies!



EQUAL ACCESS TO MHMR SERVICES!

Once again, public testimony pays off! Congratulations to Mr. Jack Hensley (President of the Texas Association of the Deaf), Ms. Carol Christ (Outreach Worker for Travis County Services for the Deaf), and Mr. Jerry Hassell (representative of the Texas School for the Deaf Alumni Association). Your action made a difference!

Tired and frustrated about the extreme lack of mental health services for deaf and hearing impaired persons, representatives of the deaf community requested that the Board of the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (TDMHMR) take action to rectify the current dismal situation!

The TDMHMR Board met January 21, 1988 and heard public comments about services provided.

The Board's response to public testimony was very positive. Rodger Bateman, Board Chairman, directed Dr. Gary Miller, Commissioner of TDMHMR, to:

- Appoint a person to look at the overall MHMR service delivery system to identify how to improve the accessibility of TDMHMR.
- Collect data and statistics on the deaf and hearing impaired population.
- Develop a first step response to begin to make an impact upon the system and report back to the Board in one month.

POLITICAL CAUCUS TRAININGS

The Texas Committee on Natural Resources (TCNR) is planning a series of free training programs and workshops in five Texas cities to help environmental activists participate in the Texas caucus process of both the Democratic and Republican parties. The training programs and workshops will be held in Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio during January and February to prepare participants for the precinct conventions, the start of delegate selection, on March 8, 1988.

The bipartisan training programs/workshops will cover: becoming a state delegate for each party; organizing at the grassroots level; and helping get environmental issues on the platforms. Presenters will include local Democratic and Republican party activists. Preregistration is recommended.

The training program/workshop schedule is:

Fort Worth: January 30, 1988, Main library downtown, 300 Taylor, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

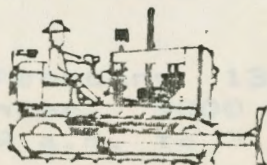
San Antonio, February 6, 1988, Institute of Texan Cultures, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Please park in the back lot. There is a small charge for parking.

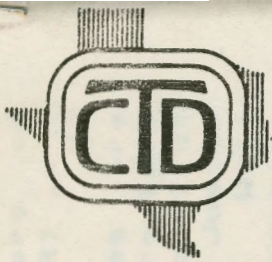
Dallas, February 13, 1988, Wadley Research Center, 9000 Harry Hines Blvd., from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

absent is the involvement of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) .

At issue are the way services are provided, what services are provided and who is in control. The conflict between former RSA Commissioner Justin Dart and Asst. Secretary Will illustrates the differing philosophies on these issues within the disability and professional communities. There are those who believe that Asst. Secretary Will would like to see the vocational rehabilitation agencies come under the authority of the State Education Agency. This, to some, would be a solution to the transition services dilemma many states are facing. To others, it would be the demise of the independent living/consumer control model.

It is obvious that these on-going battles will continue among the bureaucrats who design programs for disabled people. The position of the consumer movement as represented by the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) is still unknown. The next few months will be critical as Asst. Secretary Will must fill the positions of RSA Commissioner and Director of NIDRR. Her choice of who fills these positions could further the growing split between disabled consumers and professionals/parents. The outcome of her study and the steps taken to implement its recommendations should make people line up and commit to their views on restructuring.





Coalition of Texans with Disabilities

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