

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 33  
AUGUST 21, 2006

## ACTION ALERTS

ACTION ALERTS are URGENT messages for you to send to elected officials and need your IMMEDIATE RESPONSE. The coding below indicates the status of the alert:

- **New alerts are noted in red with the \* \* \* symbol.**
- **Ongoing alerts are noted in green with the === symbol.**

Use the link(s) below to visit the UCP online Action Center today and take action:

- **REMINDER FOR AFFILIATES – DON'T FORGET TO CONTACT YOUR SENATORS AND HOUSE MEMBER(S) ABOUT THE ISSUES IN THE 2006 AUGUST RECESS ALERT – YOUR HELP IS APPRECIATED**

## NEWS & INFORMATION BULLETINS

Use the link below to review the update(s) on important issues and events:

- NONE THIS WEEK

## MAJOR EVENTS LAST WEEK

### Medicare

- The Centers on Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) prepared two tip sheets – *How the Coverage Gap Works for People with Medicare Prescription Drug Plans* and *Bridging the Coverage Gap* – related to the coverage gap (sometimes called the “donut hole”). The first tip sheet is for partners who work with people who are Medicare beneficiaries and contains questions and answers related to the coverage gap. The second is written for distribution to Medicare beneficiaries and includes information on ways they can avoid or delay entering the gap, and continue to save money on drug costs while in the gap.
  - Download the first tip at:  
<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/partnerships/downloads/PartneTipSheetExplCovGap080206.pdf>

- Download the second tip sheet at:  
<http://www.medicare.gov/Publications/Pubs/pdf/11213.pdf>.

## Education

- **The Disability Policy Collaboration (DPC) staff met with the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) Assistant Secretary John Hager and OSERS staff to recommend strategies for reaching out to parents, advocates and providers as the agency plans eight regional informational and training meetings related to the new IDEA regulations.** More details about these meetings is expected soon.
- **OSERS has just released a new brochure, *Disability Employment 101 For Your Business*, targeted to small- and medium-sized businesses to help those that may or may not have thought of increasing their hiring pool by hiring employees with disabilities.** The brochure serves as a companion to the newly revised Disability Employment 101 guide.
  - To download a PDF version, visit:  
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/products/employmentguide/eg101-brochure.pdf>
  - To download a TEXT version, visit:  
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/products/employmentguide/eg101-brochure.txt>

## Employment

- **The DPC staff participated in a panel that presented recommendations on enhancing the employment of people with disabilities to the Ticket To Work Advisory Panel.** The DPC's recommendations emphasized the need for improvements to Social Security and SSI policy as well as increasing employment opportunities for students exiting public schools.

## Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- **The U.S. Department of Justice reached a settlement agreement with the Madonna Inn Inc., located off California's central coast, that will require the inn to be more accessible to people with disabilities.** Under the Title III settlement, the Inn has agreed to remove barriers in each of the designated accessible rooms. The settlement requires additional accessible rooms to be added as the facility grows as well as additional modifications to the Inn and restaurant. For more information, go to <http://www.ada.gov>.

## Voting Rights

- **At its meeting in Chicago last week, the Democratic National Committee adopted the party's Delegate Selection Rules for the 2008 Convention, including an important provision for people with disabilities.** The new Delegate Selection Rules require state parties to adopt and implement Inclusion Plans for people with disabilities as well as presidential candidates to report on their plans to encourage the full participation of people with disabilities.

## Pensions Bill – Charitable Giving Provisions

- **President Bush signed into law the pension reform bill (H.R. 4) with charitable giving incentives and safeguard measures.** The new law includes incentives for non-profits to help attract needed resources and a series of reforms designed to deter individuals who use charitable organizations for personal benefit. The law also includes an IRA rollover provision, allowing individuals age 70 ½ and older to make charitable donations up to \$100,000 from an IRA without having to count the donation as taxable income and expands tax deductions for contributions of books and food. Unfortunately, the bill signed by the President does not include the non-itemizer deduction.

## **MAJOR EVENTS AHEAD**

### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- **On Wednesday, Senator Tom Harkin's (D-IA) staff will host a meeting to review latest developments regarding the ADA Restoration Act.** The DPC and other disability advocacy groups will be participating.

### Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

- **With August 22 marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1996 welfare reform law, the DPC will be submitting comments on interim final regulations for changes to the TANF program that were included in the Deficit Reduction Act.** Comments to the interim final rules are due August 28.

## Education

- **Next Monday, August 28, the House Education Reform Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Mike Castle (R-DE), will hold a field hearing titled, *No Child Left Behind: Successes and Challenges of Implementation in Urban and Suburban Schools*. The hearing will be held in Chicago, IL at the Dirksen Federal Building, Room 2525.**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **The Disability Policy Collaboration bi-weekly conference is this week, Wednesday, August 23 at 4:00 p.m. (Eastern Time).** An agenda and call-in information will be sent out to chapters and affiliates today.