



## Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals

# Division of Developmental Disabilities Community Newsletter

October 2016

### Developmental Disabilities Director Search Update

The search for a new Director for the Division of Developmental Disabilities is ongoing. The [position](#) was posted in September and is scheduled to remain open until November 9th. As part of the search process, members of the search committee have attended forums organized by the Developmental Disabilities Council, the Rhode Island Parent Information Network and the Community Provider Network of Rhode Island to hear directly from community members about the qualities they would most like to see in a new Director.

We invite community members to provide additional feedback to [BHDDH.AskDD@bhdh.ri.gov](mailto:BHDDH.AskDD@bhdh.ri.gov). That email box is monitored daily.

### The Director's Corner



Hi folks,  
It's been a busy time for our Developmental Disabilities Division, with a number of initiatives underway in our work to improve services for Rhode Islanders living with developmental disabilities and their families. This edition of our community newsletter provides some updates on several of these initiatives, including our search for a permanent Division Director (see article at left).

In the months ahead, our work to strengthen the Division, achieve the goals of the Consent Decree and expand opportunity for individuals with developmental disabilities will continue to be a key focus for my department and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. We look forward to partnering with you in this work.

FYI— Simpson Hall is undergoing renovations and our RICLAS staff are in the process of a move to a different building on the Pastore Campus. The staff has the same contact information; email and phone numbers have not changed.

### Recognizing Direct Support Professionals Week

On September 8th, Governor Raimondo proclaimed September 11 - September 17 National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week. To deliver the proclamation, the BHDDH leadership team attended a recognition event with the Community Provider Network of RI (CNPRI) to recognize Rhode Island's dedicated workforce. Senator Louis DiPalma also attended and gave

thanks to the dedicated DSPs. Below are two photos from the event.



Sincerely,  
*Becky*  
Rebecca Boss  
Acting Director

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## BHDDH Consent Decree Update

On September 16, U.S. District Court Judge John J. McConnell, Jr. held a status hearing on the progress Rhode Island has made on the 2014 consent decree. Judge McConnell, the Department of Justice, and the Court Monitor, Charles Moseley, acknowledged that Rhode Island is moving in the right direction based on the progress made over the past six months.

Please see our recent [newsletter](#) for more information on Rhode Island's work to achieve the goals of the federal consent decree. Court filings for this status hearing are available on the BHDDH [website](#). The next status hearing will be held in January 2017.

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## *New Program Launches to Expand Access to Employment Opportunities*

As part of our work to improve services for individuals living with developmental disabilities, we have launched a new program to increase access to integrated, community-based employment opportunities. This program will provide additional funding for supported employment services for target populations covered by the 2014 federal consent decree.

The program includes several conditions in order to ensure that funds are being used to support high-quality services. First, funding awarded through the program will be performance-based, which means it will be linked to the achievement of established quality targets and timelines. Services supported by this new funding must also be person-centered, or designed to meet individuals' unique needs. Agencies or self-directed individuals can apply to participate. The application and instructions can be found on the BHDDH [website](#).

For more information, please contact BHDDH's Employment Specialist, Tracey Cunningham. She can be reached at 401.462.3857 or by email at [Tracey.cunningham@bhddh.ri.gov](mailto:Tracey.cunningham@bhddh.ri.gov).

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## *Supporting Raises for Frontline Workers*

During the week of September 26th, BHDDH adjusted the rates paid to Developmental Disability Organizations to support wage increases for frontline workers employed by those agencies. Governor Raimondo requested, and the General Assembly approved, \$5 million in the fiscal year 2017 state budget to support this increase.

Direct Support Professionals play a critical role in the ability of the individuals they support to reach their goals and be successful. They deserve competitive wages and benefits, but have not received a wage increase in many years. The rate increase will support wage increases for these dedicated frontline workers and help ensure high-quality services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Read some of the Frequently Asked Questions we have received on the topic [here](#).

## Save the Dates!

**Thursday, October 27th** is *Advocates in Action's Annual Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference* and BHDDH Acting Director Rebecca Boss and Chief Employment Specialist Tracey Cunningham, will be there. The conference will be held at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick. For more information, please go to the website for Advocates in Action [here](#).

Our next DD Community Forum is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 9, 2016** at a new location. We will be holding the Forum **at Cherry Hill Manor Nursing and Rehab Center, 2 Cherry Hill Road in Johnston from 4:00 - 6:00 pm**. Directions are [here](#).

We invite you to provide feedback on topics you would like to see covered during this forum. Please email your suggestions to [BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov](mailto:BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov).

Hope you will join us on the 9th!



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