

# SUNCOAST REGION NEWS

Mission: The Agency Supports Persons with Developmental Disabilities in Living, Learning & Working in their  
Communities.

Volume 1 Issue 9

March 2008

## Legislative Session Begins

Legislators convene for the next several days to resolve daunting issues regarding Florida's future. Budget issues are at the top of the list. Lawmakers have the overwhelming task of eliminating over \$500 million from the current budget and \$2 billion from next year's budget. "When you start a session with four prayers from two ministers, a rabbi and a priest, you know you're expecting a tough year," said House Speaker Marco Rubio, R- West Miami. In addition to balancing the budget, legislators must review hundreds of bills and determine which will become law. One such bill is Senate Bill 2278. If approved, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities will be housed within the Agency for Health Care Administration... for administrative purposes only. What we do and fail to do over the next 60 days will help define the next 60 years, said Rubio.

## Government Concedes Vaccine Injury Case

Government health officials concede in the case regarding a nine-year old Georgia girl who developed autism-like symptoms after receiving vaccinations. Government officials state the child had a pre-existing condition, which may have been aggravated by her vaccinations. The family will receive compensation from a federal vaccine injury fund. The amount the family will receive has not been determined at this time. Many are viewing the government's concession as an admission that vaccines cause autism, however, Linda Renzi, lawyer representing federal officials states that the government "has not conceded that vaccines cause autism." Julie Gerberding, head of the Center for Disease Control, states "this is a complete mischaracterization of the findings of a very simple situation of one child with an unusual disorder, and it would be completely wrong to say that this has bearing to the vast majority of children with autism." Still parents and advocates for autistic children are viewing the case as a victory that will aid the other 4,900 autism cases currently pending in Federal Court.

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*"The only way to find the limits of the possible is by going beyond them to the impossible..."*

*Arthur C. Clarke*

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## Developmental Disabilities Waiver Handbook

A rule hearing was held by AHCA and APD on the Developmental Disability Medicaid Waiver Handbook. The administrative hearing provided an opportunity for interested parties to offer feedback regarding the new DD Medicaid Waiver Handbook. The hearing was chaired by AHCA Bureau Chief Darcy Abbot and included APD Director Jane Johnson, Linda Mabile, and John Newton. Individuals in attendance were able to voice their concern and offer suggestions regarding the DD Waiver Handbook. Residential habilitation rates, Personal Care Assistance and support coordination for children were a few of the topics presented.

## QSI Informational Brochure

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities has published a new brochure entitled "The QSI and You." The Questionnaire for Situational Information is a new assessment tool utilized by the agency to identify supports and services for individuals on the waiver. The brochure details the four areas of the QSI: Life Changes and Community Inclusion, Functional Status, Behavioral Status and Physical Status. The brochure also explains the purpose, function and implementation of the QSI. The QSI is one of several methods used by APD to evaluate the needs and supports of persons on the waiver. The brochure is available in English and Spanish and can be accessed at the following link <http://apd.myflorida.com/waiver/qsi/>

# Medical Case Management News

## Highlights:

Medical Emergencies

Medication Administration Policy Directive 01-01

Behavioral Medication corner

Hospitalizations

Review the current edition of the [Medical Case Management News](#) here.



## **From the Desk of Carl Littlefield**

Let me use this organizational restructuring announcement to express my appreciation to each of you who continue to exemplify the best in public service. I mean that.

I am announcing the creation of two new organizational units, a newly formed leadership team, an executive management team, some changes in certain personnel roles, the change of scope within certain supervised units and the shifting of certain personnel to accommodate changing emphases and/or assignments. The need for these changes was conceptualized some time ago . . . but it has taken awhile and some intermediate steps for the plans to mature and reach the level where we are now ready for implementation.

First of all the two new supervised units . . . they are a provider development unit led by Jude Redding and a special projects unit led by Cheryl Blackwell-Cox. Both Jude and Cheryl possess great skill sets needed for their new leadership positions. Denise Oetinger is equally adept at assuming a leadership role and will now head the waiver services unit as Rick Robertson returns to his previous responsibilities in the residential services unit. Jude, Cheryl, Denise and Glorie Singleton will join Diane Dudgeon, Elena Stewart, Rick Robertson, Laurie Harlow and me on the Regional APD leadership team. All requests for regulatory action and accompanying recommendations will flow through the leadership team to the executive management team comprised of Rick Robertson, Elena Stewart, Diane Dudgeon, Laurie Harlow and me.

All regulatory authority, as it pertains to service and residential providers will be vested in the executive management team. All executive management regulatory decisions will be processed through the quality and administrative processing unit.

I have included tables of organization which detail personnel changes and corresponding positions. As always . . . should you have specific question regarding the [organizational structure](#) . . . you may call me or your supervisor for additional information. Again . . . thank you for your commitment.

## Florida Diagnostic & Learning Research Center

**FREE\*FREE\*FREE**

INFANT, TODDLER, PRE-SCHOOL  
DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

AGES BIRTH TO FIVE BY APPOINTMENT  
ONLY

FDLRS will conduct free vision, hearing, motor, speech, language, and cognitive, behavioral and medical screenings from 8:30a.m. until 11:30a.m. at the **Calvary Lutheran Church** 5309 US 41, Apollo Beach 33572 (South Hillsborough County) Please call (813) 837-7723 to schedule an appointment.

## Employee Relations

As part of the organizational restructuring of the Suncoast Region, a new Employee Relations Operation has been designed. The Employee Relations Operation allows employees to submit suggestions, ideas, concerns and/or comments for presentation to the Executive Management team for review and follow-up. Anonymous submissions are accepted and all information is confidential. Please forward all submissions to Glorie Singleton by email, fax or interoffice mail.

[Employee Assistance Form](#)

## Family Care Council

**F**amilies often feel they will lose their dream of self-sufficiency and independence for their children, when they receive a diagnosis of a developmental disability (DD) for their child. However, with proper Support, both families and individuals with DD can thrive and achieve their chosen goals.

**C**aring people, that is what it takes! The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) and our State and Federal government support the principles of inclusion, self-determination, community living, successful transition to adult life and integrated employment. Families, individuals with developmental disabilities and their support workers must keep the dream of a full and rich life the goal at all times.

**C**ollaboration is a powerful tool. If this philosophy is to succeed, families must be the driving force. Barriers need to continually be identified and broken down and necessary programs and policies put into place. We must all work together for the benefit of all persons with developmental disabilities. Together - we can make this happen.

## **Families are the Driving Force**

# Agency Accomplishments

**\*April 2007 – February 2008  
(Highlights)**

## Good Stewardship

The agency has successfully implemented most of the provisions of SB 1124, the most far-reaching changes to the Medicaid waiver program in its history. The savings from SB 1124, along with additional funding provided by the Legislature, has brought the projected deficit for FY 2007-08 down to approximately \$20 million. This represents a substantial improvement over the \$153 million deficit projected prior to the 2007 Legislative session.

The agency has improved expenditure forecasting techniques for the waiver and developed routine procedures to closely monitor waiver expenditures and trends.

## Protecting Health and Safety

Since Director Johnson's appointment, major actions have been taken against 22 licensed residential providers whose service provision put the health and safety of APD clients at risk. These actions include administrative complaints, fines, suspensions, resident relocation, termination of service agreements, and revocation of licenses. Prior to Director Johnson's appointment, there were eight actions taken during the previous two years – a 164 percent increase.

A total of 54 contracted providers have had their waiver service agreements terminated due to concerns about the services provided to APD customers. During the same two-year period prior to the director's appointment, there were only 18 contracted providers who had their waiver agreements terminated – a 200 percent increase.

## Stakeholder Collaboration

APD has collaborated with the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Management Services to enhance recycling efforts in state buildings. As a pilot program, DEP headquarters has added recycling receptacles for collecting plastic and aluminum. After evaluating the pilot program, APD plans to add more state buildings to its recyclables collection route. The items collected are taken to the Sunland Center in Marianna where they are sorted, then sold. The money collected supports resident activities. Residents of Sunland Center work in the recycling plant and earn wages for their work.

[\\*View the complete report here.](#)

# \*SunCoast Region Training Calendar

**March '08**

**3**

**9:00am - 4:00pm**

**Writing Effective Behavioral Plans**

**St. Petersburg Office**

**4,12,13, 25,26**

**9:00am - 4:00pm**

**Personal Outcome Measures for Waiver Support  
Coordinators**

**St. Petersburg Office**

**6**

**9:00am - 4:00pm**

**Writing Effective Behavioral Plans**

**HARC**

**11**

**1:00pm - 5:00pm**

**Medication Administration Train the Trainer for RNs**

**St. Petersburg Office**

**14**

**9:00am - 4:00pm**

**Generalization and Maintenance, Fact or Fiction**

**St. Petersburg Office**

**17**

**10:00am - 12:00pm**

**Incident Report Training**

**St. Petersburg Office**

18

9:00am - 2:00pm

## Chronic Medical Conditions

HARC

19

9am - 12:00pm

## New Provider Orientation, Personal Outcome Measures

St. Petersburg Office

20

9:00am - 12:00pm

## AIDS/HIV

St. Petersburg Office

20

9:00am - 12:00pm

## Residential Licensure Orientation

Tampa Office

21

9:00am - 12:00pm

## Supported Employment, Documenting Services & Billing

St. Petersburg Office

27

9am - 12:00pm

## New Provider Orientation

St. Petersburg Office

27

1:30pm - 4:00pm

## New Provider Orientation

St. Petersburg Office

**\*Pre-Registration is Required for All Classes**

# Meetings

17

## Family Care Council West Meeting

6:30pm – 8:30pm

1501 N. Belcher Road  
Clearwater, FL

20

## Waiver Support Coordinator Meeting

9:00am – 12:00pm

Pinellas Park Performing Arts Center  
4951 78th Ave N, Pinellas Park

26

### **Joint Meeting**

## Family Care Council East & Area Steering Committee Meeting

10:00am – 1:00pm

1313 N. Tampa Street Suite 516  
Tampa, FL

# Announcements

**March 15**

## Grants to Help State Medicaid Agencies Support the Employment of People with Disabilities

The Demonstration to Maintain Independence and Employment program addresses the needs of people who have physical or mental impairments that may lead to a disability. This demonstration authority allows States to help working individuals by providing necessary benefits and services required for people to manage the progression of their conditions and stay employed. Proposals will be accepted until **March 15, 2008**. For additional information, visit <http://www.disabilityinfo.gov>

**March 15**

## Making the Connection Conference

A free conference for collaborating parents and teachers in achieving student success.

8:30am to 3:30pm at the Paul B. Stephens Exceptional School \* 2935 County Road 193 \*Clearwater, FL

Topics Include Transition: From School to Community \* Special Needs Trust \* From IEP to IPE \* Self Determination in the IEP \* Family and School \* Making your Case! \* Partnership for Student Achievement Act! And Many More! To register for this great and informative conference, Please contact Christine Stolz at Family Network on Disabilities of Florida: 727-523-1130 or email Christine @fndfl.org

**March 19 - April 8, 2008**

## APD-Approved Web Training in Supported Employment

The orientation course consists of two separate units and meets the APD 18-hour pre-service requirement.

A certificate of completion will be presented to participants who successfully complete course requirements and pass the post-test. Visit [www.flse.net/Entry/welcome.html](http://www.flse.net/Entry/welcome.html) for details.

# Positive Family Intervention Project

## University of South Florida St. Petersburg

Positive Family Intervention (PFI) Project at USF St. Petersburg may benefit you and your family. The PFI Project provides education in positive behavior support for parents of children age three to five with developmental disabilities and severe behavior problems. Parents participating in the PFI Project receive eight individualized sessions with a highly trained therapist to develop an effective behavior support plan that makes sense for their children and families.

The program is free of charge and is a research study funded by the Office of Special Education Programs. For more information, please contact: Dr. Meme Hieneman at (727) 873-4814 or [pbs@stpt.usf.edu](mailto:pbs@stpt.usf.edu).

## 2008 HIPAA Training

This course will inform APD/DCF employees, community partners, and other business associates of their responsibilities related to the implementation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) legislation. This course is mandatory for all Department employees, and business associates who use Protected Health Information. Please complete training by close of business on **March 28, 2008**.

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/training.shtml>

# Developmental Disabilities

## Awareness

### Day

March 18, 2008

**A special day to recognize the many  
accomplishments and contributions by family  
members, friends and neighbors who have a  
developmental disability**

Check your email for upcoming announcements