



In Virginia. . .



DD Network Partners Count Down Days....

... to MTARS visit. The Feds will visit Virginia's DD Network Partners the week of June 21-25, 2004 (see details in April PF, Vol. II, No. 4). All DD Councils in the U.S. routinely undergo MTARS site visits which involve interviews with agencies' staff and Board or Council members, review of agencies' by-laws, minutes, and other governing documents, and a systematic review of fiscal and HR practices. An important component of the MTARS visit will be a public hearing. Details of the public hearing will be available on the Board's website as soon as they are finalized (www.vaboard.org).




Governor's New Executive Order...

...created an Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and a Working Group on Budget Reform. According to Executive Order 67, issued on April 20, 2004, the new OIG will be located in the executive branch of state government and will report directly to the Governor. The OIG's powers and duties include: 1) operating and managing the Office of the State Inspector General...; 2) conducting independent evaluations of the efficiency and effectiveness of programs and activities of state agencies and services...; 3) preparing a report of each investigation or program evaluation including findings and recommendations for improving efficiency and effectiveness as well as needed corrective action... and; 4) documenting any waste, fraud, abuse or wrongful acts and provide timely notification to the State Police...whenever the State Inspector General has reasonable grounds to believe there has been a violation of state criminal law. Executive Order 67 prescribes other oversight and reporting responsibilities related to improving overall accountability of state government.

The purpose of the Working Group on Budget Reform is to "improve the transparency and accountability of the state budget... {by} making recommendations to improve accountability of the state budget and to make it easier for citizens to understand." Executive Order 67 specifies that the Working Group on Budget Reform shall "work in consultation with the Council on Virginia's Future and its interagency staff team" in order to improve both the executive budget process as well as citizen input into that process. The first report of the work group is due to the Governor by November 1, 2004.



Olmstead Integration Training on...

.... Olmstead Restructuring and Recovery was held on June 2nd at John Tyler Community College in Chester, Virginia. The training was jointly sponsored by the Virginia Dept. of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, the Office of the Attorney General, and the Office of Continuing Medical Education of the UVA School of Medicine. The purpose of the training was to provide an overview of the Olmstead decision, updates on implementation steps thus far (previous issues of Policy  Flash have covered these steps), a review of the ongoing restructuring of the service system, and the clinical and legal issues involved in the shift from state facility services to more integrated community services and supports. (Source: Governor Office e-mail notification, May 5, 2004)

In the Nation. . .



The Number of Individuals with Vision Impairments....

... is expected to skyrocket up to 70 percent among those in the over-40 age bracket in the next decade in what has been termed "a tidal wave of ocular disease." This jump in people with vision impairments will necessitate systemic responses in multiple service delivery systems to meet predicted needs. The increase in vision-related disabilities will be due to different risk factors among whites compared to blacks. Among whites, age-related macular degeneration is responsible for almost 55 percent of vision impairments; among blacks, cataracts and glaucoma account for more than 60 percent of vision impairment. (Source: RDP April, 2004)



Federal Legislation at a Glance...

Bill Number	Title	Status	Other Info
S.1248	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	Passed both houses in May, '04	Goes to Conference Committee
S.538/H.R.1083	Lifespan Respite Care Act	Passed Senate in May, '04	Both bills referred to House Energy & Commerce Committee
S.622/H.R.1811	Family Opportunity Act	Senate bill passed May, '04; House passage pending	Congressional Budget Office requires bill to include provisions for cost savings; action pending
H.R.4278	Improve Access to Assistive Technology for Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004	Goes to House floor for vote in early June	Reauthorizes the Assistive Technology Act with no sunset provision
S.486/H.R.953	Sen. Paul Wellstone Mental Health Equitable Treatment Act	Sponsor seeking unanimous consent	No action



Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waiver...

... initially created to enable adults with disabilities to remain at home, may become the next big thing to helping children with disabilities gain access to community-based mental health care. Indiana has recently become the fourth state to receive a HCBS waiver to improve mental health services for children for whom the issue is, often, not whether they will remain in the home but whether they will get any services at all. (Source: RDP, April, 2004)



Federal Funding Available to Improve Voting Access...

...for people with disabilities. Under the 2002 Help America Vote Act there is nearly \$10million available for allocation among states and territories depending on their proportion of voting age adults. Funds may be used to make polling places accessible using a diverse array of approaches. (Source, RDP, April, 2004)

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