



## In Virginia

### ✧ **Task Force Sends Olmstead Plan to Governor...**

on September 15<sup>th</sup>. In a memo announcing the submission of the Plan HHR Secretary Jane H. Woods noted, "We were given a challenge by the General Assembly to prepare a report to assist Virginia in complying with the requirements of the Olmstead Supreme Court decision, and I am very pleased to say, we met the challenge." Visit [www.olmsteadVA.com](http://www.olmsteadVA.com) for the full report.

### ✧ **Virginia's DD Council Weighs in on Priorities...**

in a survey of DD Councils throughout the U.S. The survey polled DD Councils in the two national DD organizations on their top legislative priorities for study by the new National Association on Councils of Developmental Disabilities (NACDD). Respondents were provided with a list of 12 federal legislative priority areas deemed important by NACDD and were asked to rank them in order of importance. The top five federal legislative priorities that emerged included: Appropriations for people with disabilities in FY '04 to support IDEA, Rehab. Act, etc.; "Money Follows the Person Act" (S. 1394); IDEA reauthorization; "Medicaid Community Attendant and Support Service Act" of 2003; and the "Family Opportunity Act." Next in order of priority were: "Lifespan Respite Care Act"; "Workforce Reinvestment and Adult Education Act of 2003"; "Medicare Homebound Modernization Act"; "National Housing Trust Fund Act"; and the "ADA Notification Act." (NADDC, September, 2003)

### ✧ **Homebuying Assistance Need...**

was reported by Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) in its report, "2001 Virginia Housing Needs Assessment." VHDA conducted this study jointly with the state's Department of Housing and Community Development. The report found that "the very low income, including the elderly, people with disabilities and single parents are greatest in need of homebuying assistance because they have few other resources in helping them to fulfill the American Dream. They can not pool their resources to qualify for VHDA's loans.

In other VHDA-related news, the department as established the Advisory Board of People with Disabilities in order to address the strategic goal of increasing affordable housing in the context of providing comprehensive supportive services. The group, which includes 22 disability stakeholders, met for the first time on August 8, 2003. Bill Fuller, VHDA's Housing Initiatives Team, chaired the meeting. (VHDA e-News, August 27, 2003)

# In the Nation

## ✈ **IDEA Part B Slated for Funding Increase...**

of about \$2.2 billion, which would bring the total IDEA budget up to \$11 billion. This increase, proposed in the Senate, represents a \$1.2 billion increase in the original \$1.0 billion increase approved in the House. Conference committee deliberations, however, may alter the total funding increase for IDEA in that round of negotiations. For the past several years the feds have made it a priority to increase the federal share of states' special education expenses to 40 percent under Part B, which was the original funding level specified in the mid-1970's IDEA legislation. Typically, the federal funding share has been around 20 percent. (Rept. On Disability Programs, September 81, 2003)

## ✈ **Cash and Counseling Programs Offer Freedom to Choose...**

in states where such programs have been tried. Medicaid recipients with disabilities report higher satisfaction with caregivers, less unmet service needs, and unchanged health and safety concerns when given a monthly allowance, equivalent to what would be spent under the traditional Medicaid payment for services processes. Known as Cash and Counseling Programs, this alternative form of Medicaid payment enables recipients to spend monies for authorized care for such things as purchasing assistive equipment, making home modifications, or hiring their own caregivers. Under these programs, recipients are provided with counseling to help them budget their monies appropriately and develop spending plans for services that best match their individual needs. The Cash and Counseling Program is being tested in Arkansas, New Jersey, and Florida. More information on these programs is available at [www.umd.edu/aging](http://www.umd.edu/aging). (Policy & Practice, Sept, '03)

"This approach gives people with disabilities more freedom and responsibility, in the same way that all of us want to be in charge of our lives and our choices."

-- Tommy G. Thompson, Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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