

THE DISABILITY COALITION

What is the Coalition?

The Disability Coalition is an open and informal cross-disability coalition of individuals with disabilities, family members and advocates, along with organizations and agencies that represent and advocate for the needs and interests of persons with disabilities. Although agencies and organizations that provide direct services often share common interests, the Coalition intentionally reflects only the perspective of persons with disabilities.

Purpose and Focus of the Coalition

The purpose of the Coalition is to promote a collaborative and coordinated approach to public policy issues affecting persons with disabilities, with a primary emphasis on Medicaid programs such as the community-based waiver programs and the Personal Care Option. This allows Coalition participants with a common interest and perspective to communicate a consistent message to policy-makers. However, the Coalition's efforts do not and are not intended to replace or override any separate or additional efforts by members of the Coalition.

Efforts of the Coalition are coordinated through a Steering Committee representing organizations and agencies with past experience and an on-going component of public policy work, including legislative and administrative liaison activities related to Medicaid-funded disability programs. Meetings of the Steering Committee are open to Coalition participants.

Sponsored Events

The Disability Coalition sponsors or coordinates training and action-oriented events, including:

- Pre-Legislative-Session Forum: Held just before each regular legislative session to provide information about the disability-related issues to be addressed in the legislature
- Disability Rights Awareness Day – A two-day event during the legislative session with trainings on how the legislative process works and what the current issues are, and an opportunity for networking and for visiting with legislators

Communication and Outreach

The Coalition provides information regarding Medicaid programs and other issues of importance to the disability community, and developments in policy or practice in these programs and plans or recommendations that would affect them.

The Coalition advises its participants and others of opportunities to influence public policy related to Medicaid programs or other critical issues affecting persons with disabilities, and encourages input and testimony that reflects the "consumer" perspective on such matters. This includes outreach and community organizing through a grassroots organizing project funded by the DDPC. The Coalition encourages the dissemination of such information throughout all parts of the disability community.

Public Policy Work

The Coalition attempts to influence public policy by developing educational materials, analyzing legislative or administrative proposals, developing its own proposals, and educating policy-makers with respect to current programs as well as options or proposals being considered. This may be done through Coalition participants as well as Coalition staff.

Administration

The Coalition is administered by Disability Rights New Mexico (DRNM), with funding from the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC), DRNM and others.