2014 New Mexico Legislative Session is Underway

The 51st Legislature of the State of New Mexico opened on January 21, 2014, for a thirty-day session. During the first half of the session, at least 20 bills and memorials related to disability issues were introduced. Subject matter included Medicaid, education, autism, and other developmental disabilities. Read in-depth status reports detailing legislative activity from Jim Jackson, Executive Director of Disability Rights New Mexico. Click here for Report #1, Report #2, and Report #3.

Two Action Alerts Issued

It’s time to act! During the second week of the legislative session, the PLAN issued two Action Alerts for bills concerning the DD waiver program and funding for autism services:

**DD waiver – SB 55 (Sen. Bill Soules)**

This bill would require the Department of Health and the Human Services Department to develop a 5-year plan to address the DD waiver waiting list, and would appropriate additional funding to serve individuals on the waitlist. (The bill originally called for $25 million in the upcoming fiscal year; it was amended to reduce the amount to $10 million.) The bill passed the Senate Public Affairs Committee and is pending in the Senate Finance Committee. Click here to contact Senate Finance Committee members and express your support for SB 55.

**Autism services –**

**HB 69 (Rep. Liz Thomson) and SB 109 (Sen. Lisa Torraco)**

These identical House and Senate bills would appropriate $350,000 for autism services. SB 109 has already passed the Senate Public Affairs Committee and is now pending in the Senate Finance Committee. Click here to contact Senate Finance Committee members to express your support for SB 109.

HB 69 passed the House Health, Government, and Indian Affairs Committee and is pending in the House Appropriations and Finance Committee (HAFC). Click here to contact HAFC members to show your support for HB 69.

Need a refresher on the legislative process?

You can review our Legislative Toolkit online for information on how bills become laws in NM, types of legislation, navigating the NM Legislature website, and talking with your elected officials about issues that are important to you.
Disability Rights Awareness Days, Feb. 17-18, 2014

Join us and partnering agencies for Disability Rights Awareness Days in Santa Fe on February 17-18, 2014. This year’s theme is “Access to Healthcare for All.” On Monday, February 17th, you can attend training and advocacy sessions and hear keynote speaker Congresswoman Michelle Lujan Grisham at the Courtyard Marriot, 3346 Cerrillos Rd., Santa Fe, 87507. (Click here for registration info).

Join us at the Roundhouse on Tuesday, February 18th, where there will be exhibits and guest speakers, including Hector Balderas, New Mexico State Auditor. (The program will be in the Rotunda from 11:30 – 1:00). For more information, contact the Arc of New Mexico at 1-800-358-6493.

Pre-Legislative Forum a Success!

Thank you to all who participated in the Pre-Legislative forum on January 11 in Albuquerque. We had 78 conference participants joining us for a day of advocacy training in the disability community. Many thanks to our guest speakers, including Sen. Bill O’Neill, Rep. Liz Thomson, Doris Husted, and Gay Finlayson, as well as DRNM and Disability Coalition staff: Jim Jackson, Ellen Pinnes, Nancy Koenigsberg, and Jason Gordon. As Sen. O’Neill and Rep. Thomson noted, we are the educators of our elected officials, and it’s our collective task to make our voices heard in the legislature. Thank you for joining us!