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Mental health professionals, advocates and lawmakers gathered on the morning of June 14th at the offices of the National Alliance of Mental Illness to witness Governor Sununu's signing of House Bill 400 into law.

NH Takes Action on Its Mental Health System



Many Gathered to Celebrate Governor Sununu's Signing of HB 400

"This HB 400 represents progress on two major pieces of my legislative agenda: beginning to address New Hampshire's mental health crisis and reforming the Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF)," said the Governor

The Governor's passion was clear as he affirmed that the State must address these issues or lives will continue to be endangered. The bill is intended as a foundation to address severe shortages and gaps in the State's mental health system. A significant investment of dollars is required to bring to life and put into action the plans and policies.

What does HB 400 require, in part?

- Develop a new, comprehensive 10 year plan for the mental health system.

- Prioritize needs and include recommendations to reduce the number of individuals waiting in emergency rooms for inpatient psychiatric services.
- Ensure the rights of individuals when they are subject to involuntary admissions and awaiting transition to NH Hospital or a designated receiving facility with a plan.
- Develop a plan to safely remove the 24 youths from NH Hospital and ensure they receive care.

HB 400 is also about numbers:

- Up to 20 designated receiving facility beds for individuals, meeting criteria, experiencing a mental health crisis
- Up to 40 beds of supported housing and community residences for those transitioning from

NH Hospital and designated receiving facilities to the community

- Additional mobile crisis unit and apartments
- A new system to triage inpatient psychiatric bed availability

HB 400 begins the reform of DCYF.

There are specific requirements for a founded report of abuse and neglect, insertion of a definition of "unfounded but with reasonable concern" and a requirement that in any case with two or more previous unfounded cases, DCYF will conduct an administrative review of all prior reports. In addition, the bill permits the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to issue a confidential letter of concern under specific circumstances. Lastly, the bill authorizes DHHS to keep records of "unfounded but with reasonable concerns" for a period of 7 years.

The Governor thanked all, naming NAMI's Executive Director Ken Norton, as chief among those who have called attention to this crisis.

While progress is being made, the Governor's mental health work group, which includes GCD Charles J. Saia as a member, will continue to meet.

A Message from the Executive Director



Charles J. Saia, GCD Executive Director

What's the GCD been doing lately? We are going forward.

Partnering with a sister agency, the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED), through its Division of Parks and Recreation, has been an exciting opportunity to bring accessible features to the places where people with disabilities want to go, and that includes beaches.

SMILE Mass, through the initial fundraising efforts of Franklin Pierce University students, has decided to donate five floating accessible beach

wheelchairs to NH. This is all in an effort to allow families and groups the simple pleasure of enjoying summer fun together when at the beach. While still finishing up some details, we are working with DRED so that these special wheelchairs will hopefully be on our beaches soon.

We also commend the State of NH as it moves forward to address the Mental Health crisis. We applaud the efforts of Rep-

resentative David Danielson for sponsoring the bill and Senator Jeb Bradley, who introduced an Amendment to HB 400.

We would like to give a special thanks to the Governor, the House and the Senate for putting this bill into law and endorsing the Amendment.

NH to Change Direction with Governor's Proclamation



John Broderick and Change Direction Receive a Proclamation of Appreciation.

On May 4, 2017 Governor Sununu, along with Chuck Morse, President of the Senate and Shawn Jasper,

Speaker of the House issued a proclamation of appreciation and support to The Campaign to Change Direction.

As New Hampshire looks to raise awareness around the subject of mental illness, the GCD joined with the Department of Administrative Services Division of Personnel to host a discussion about The Campaign to Change Direction to the State's Human Resources staff.

On March 16, 2017 John Broderick, former NH Supreme Court Justice presented the importance of Change Direction at the monthly Human Resources

Meeting. He was joined by Charles J. Saia, Executive Director for the GCD; Paula Booth, Director of the Employee Assistance Program; Sara Willingham, the Director of Personnel; Mike Loomis from the Department of Administrative services, and Lisa Marzoli from Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield and Rik Cornell, Vice President of Community Relations for the Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester.

Submit a Nominee for the 2017 Governor's Accessibility Awards

The Governor's Accessibility Awards celebrates the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into law. It gives special recognition to organizations or individuals that go above and beyond the requirements of the law in order to enhance the lives of people with disabilities. Accessibility Award nomina-

tions are open through June 30, 2017. If you know of a business or an individual that actively supports independence, inclusiveness, accessible environments, or services for individuals with disabilities, click to [nominate them now](#), or visit the GCD website at www.nh.gov/disability to fill out a nomination form. Whether they are advocating

for their community, or coordinating a project that implements universal design, if they embody accessibility and the essence of the ADA, nominate them for the recognition they deserve.



2017 GAA is in September.

How Do You CAP?

That was the question that sparked an idea that evolved into a regional meeting. On May 4, 2017, New Hampshire hosted a day of discus-

sion with fellow New England Client Assistance Program (CAP) representatives. Maine, Vermont, and Massachusetts all attended in person and

Connecticut joined by phone. The day's agenda was full of topics ranging from the finer details of how each CAP operates within its state, to more broad range ideas such as how to implement effective outreach. Areas of interest also included common client issues, case examples, hearings, systemic advocacy efforts and the important role the CAP holds on the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

It was discovered that some CAPs use a video during new client orientation, most are trying to build bridges with relevant service providers, and that all of us are faced with new scenarios regularly. Other topics of discussion were about Maine's recent federal monitoring visit, Vermont's budget's cuts, and Connecticut's restructuring in the approaching fiscal year.



New England Client Assistance Program (CAP) Representatives.

SMILE Mass to Donate Beach Wheelchairs

On May 2, 2017 Lotte Diomede, President and Co-Founder of Smile Mass, as well as Susan Brown, Vice President and Co-Founder presented their accessible beach wheelchairs to the GCD. SMILE Mass (Small Miracles in Life Exist) is a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization located in Sudbury Massachusetts.

Their mission is to help persons with disabilities enjoy recreation and vacation experiences through various

programs that include providing beaches with accessible beach wheelchairs.

The GCD has been working with SMILE Mass to assist them in expanding their beach wheelchair program beyond Massachusetts. SMILE Mass is willing to donate several beach wheelchairs to the GCD and the Granite State.

The Executive Director is working with the Governor's Office, Jeffrey Rose, Com-



Lotte Diomede and Susan Brown of SMILE Mass.

missioner of the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED); and Phil Bryce, Director of the Division of Parks and Recreation to review the logistics of the donation.

Find Answers with the GCD Information Form

Are you looking for answers to a disability-related question? The Governor's Commission on Disability is dedicated to serving as a resource for citizens with disabilities throughout New Hampshire. We focus on providing materials about the many programs and services available to those living with a disability. While awareness and education are the

foundation of the GCD, at its heart is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

In an effort to help people communicate any issues or questions they may have regarding the ADA, the GCD has developed an Information Form.

The form allows people to not only ask questions about the

ADA but to describe in full detail any events they would like to discuss.

To download the form, go to the Quick Links box [on the GCD website](#) and click on "Need Help?" or [download the form here](#).

Quick Links

- [NEW-GCD Winter Newsletter](#)
- [Service Dog Brochure](#)
- [Need Help?](#)
- [Parking Guidelines: Cities and Towns](#)
- [ABLE -Acheiving a Better Life Experience](#)

Service Dogs: Access to Fairgrounds and Festivals

As the weather gets warmer, the Governor’s Commission on Disability is frequently asked about the rules surrounding service dogs and their access to state fairs and festivals.

While many people enjoy bringing the entire family along to a state fair, there are always questions about bringing animals along for the outing. Most festivals and fairgrounds don’t allow pets, even if they are leashed. Service animals, however, are not considered pets and therefore

teams are welcomed at festivals and fairgrounds.

Per NH law 167-D:4 – It is lawful for any service animal to accompany its handler or trainer into any public facility, housing accommodation, or place of public accommodation to which the general public is invited.

The GCD encourages owners and their service dogs to get out and enjoy the many festivals and state fairs throughout the Granite State.

Do you have questions about Service Dog access? Visit the GCD website for our informative Service Animals webpage as well as our latest [Service Dog Brochure!](#)



“ A C C E S S F O R A L L ”

The Architectural Barrier-Free Design Committee

The Architectural Barrier-Free Design Committee (ABFDC) is a sub-committee of the Governor’s Commission on Disability per RSA 275-C: 11, and is comprised of citizens from various backgrounds and with various abilities.

One of the roles of the Committee is to review the accessibility of state-leased

and public buildings. In addition, the ABFDC establishes, publishes, and enforces the New Hampshire Code for Barrier-Free Design.

When reviewing the accessibility of state-leased buildings, the Committee considers the recommendations of the Governor’s Commission on Disability’s Accessibility Specialist. They review the

property and recommendations, and will consider issuing a Letter of Opinion to the state agency, which will contain recommendations for accessible improvements.

Overall, the committee’s goal is to promote Access for All in everything that New Hampshire has to offer.

The GCD is a statewide agency providing information that strengthens the rights of people living with disabilities.

We work closely with the public and private sectors to ensure those individuals with disabilities and their families have access to support, assistance and services that promote inclusion in all facets of community life.

We invite you to follow the GCD on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn where you will find timely updates as well as news regarding upcoming events.

To learn more scan the code below!



Charles J. Saia and ABFDC Chair Eric Brand at the monthly committee meeting.



GCD exhibits at the 34th Annual Brain Injury and Stroke Conference.



Nancy Rollins, Senator Hassan, Lisa Hinson-Hatz and Charles Saia while in D.C.