

# AccessLetter

Cambridge Commission for  
Persons with Disabilities

## Disability Programs Face Romney's Budget Axe

Seeking to erase a \$600 million shortfall in the state's balance sheet, Governor Mitt Romney recently announced significant cuts in state agencies serving people with disabilities for the current fiscal year, which ends July 1st. According to figures released by the Romney administration in late January, the following cuts are planned:



- MassHealth (Medicaid) and CommonHealth programs are being cut over \$75,000,000, which will disproportionately affect people with disabilities. Additionally, healthcare advocates anticipate that the Romney administration will seek to block any new enrollees into some MassHealth and CommonHealth programs.
- Department of Mental Health was cut \$2,334,102, including cuts in child services and adult community services.
- Department of Mental Retardation was cut \$4,600,000, including cuts in residential programs, community day and work programs, and family support services.
- Department of Public Health was cut a whopping \$21,571,503, including cuts in AIDS prevention and treatment, smoking prevention and cessation programs, hepatitis C mitigation, and breast cancer research.

- Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, which investigates civil rights complaints, including disability discrimination complaints, was cut \$250,000.

- Massachusetts Commission for the Blind was cut \$195,028, with an additional cut of \$72,432 in "talking book" services for people who are blind or have print-related disabilities.

- Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was cut \$211,129, including cuts in sign language interpreter services.
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission was cut \$499,893, which included cuts in services for people with traumatic brain injury, cuts in employment services, home care services, and independent living services.

These reductions are taking place on top of the significant cuts already imposed earlier in the fiscal year.

Advocates are urged to contact their state legislators to voice opposition to cuts in disability services. Say, "Enough cuts!" Also, call Governor Romney's office at 617-727-6250 (voice) or 617-727-3666 (TTY) to demand he fulfill his campaign pledge to not cut essential services for people with disabilities.

## Heavy snowfall disables us all

by Bet MacArthur

No one in the region escapes the impact of heavy snowfall such as we have had recently. Suddenly, business is not as usual, for anyone. Our familiar ways of doing things, the ordinary availability of places and supplies, our ability to get around, and the time and ease of doing so, cannot be taken for granted. Many folks quickly start to feel uncomfortable, and may complain of how confined they feel by the weather. Overnight, everyone is confronted very personally by how it feels, in various circumstances, to become disabled.



Heavy snowfall requires a significant adjustment in how we all live our lives, an adjustment that takes thought and energy. Everything takes longer, and everyone's schedules become more unpredictable.

Most folks are not used to having to think ahead much to complete routine tasks like going to the supermarket. But after a heavy snowfall, or in extreme cold, shopping trips have to be planned carefully to be manageable, or even feasible.

When we do go out, it takes longer to get everyone dressed; it takes longer to get into the car. Travel time for routine trips increases 50 to 100 percent. What we ought to take with us for comfort, and for safety, becomes a crucial consideration. With a blizzard, our entire nondisabled population becomes at least partially disabled, all at once.

Can I carry all this and still make it, on lumpy, icy streets, where every corner is a barricade? Why don't people shovel out more promptly, and more thoroughly, so I can get down the street? Will I have to go an extra block, cross over, and come back down? Will I be able to get in the usual entrances? Will the rest rooms be open?

Where can we leave the car? Heavy snowfall is a disabling condition for everyone. Yet the adjustment we all face together during bad weather is just like "business as usual" for millions of active people with disabilities, regardless of the climate or the weather where they are.

No matter where we live, statistics show that at some time in all our lives, due to accident or illness, 95 percent of Americans will become eligible, temporarily or permanently, for the civil rights protections of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The next time you brave the snow-clogged urban outdoors---or, as you decide to skip that errand, stay at home, and make do without it---you might see that moment as training for your own future, or, at least, as a taste of the daily forethought and determination our society requires of over 50 million active, disabled Americans, so that all may contribute on the job and participate in public life.

(A version of this article originally appeared in the *Cambridge Chronicle*—Ed.)

## Accessible Outdoor Winter Recreation

Through its Universal Access Program, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is working to integrate people of all abilities into



the fun recreation opportunities provided by the parks and forests in the state. You can enjoy winter recreation in a supportive program environment using adaptive equipment as needed. People with disabilities and their friends and families are all welcome. Many programs are free of charge; some sites, including skating rinks, have minimal fees. Activities vary depending on

the site and the weather conditions, but may include cross-country skiing, kick-sledding, ice skating, sled skating, snowshoeing, and sled hockey.

Events are scheduled for every weekend in February through early March at various locations: Wendell State Forest in Wendell, Great Brook Farms in Carlisle, Brockton Skating Rink, New Bedford Rink, Holyoke Rink, Mt. Tom State Reservation in Holyoke, and Borderland State Park in North Easton. For more information or to get a detailed schedule contact Gigi Ranno, Project Director for the Universal Access Program at 617-626-1294 voice, 617-626-1448 fax or <gigi.ranno@state.ma.us> or the program office at DEM Region IV Headquarters, PO Box 484, Amherst, MA 01004 where the phone is 413-545-5353 voice and 413-577-2200 TTY.

The *State Parks for Everyone* program is helping to expand these outdoor activities in eastern Massachusetts for people with disabilities in a fun, safe, inclusive and accessible environment. The project is funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education in collaboration with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, and Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Another project called Pathways to Participation gets funding from the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council.

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## "Don't Call Me; I Am Not Interested!"

By Paul J. Schlaver

In January 2003 the state Office of Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation (OCABR) launched a new *Do Not Call Registry*. Putting your name in this registry will allow you to significantly reduce you the number of telemarketing calls you receive.



This new service restricts all calls to the hours between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. You will still get calls from businesses such as your bank, credit card companies, the phone company and others that you already have a customer relationship with. So if you want to limit their marketing calls you can still say to them, "Please put me on your do not call list." The law does not prohibit consumer surveys or calls from charitable and political organizations.

Starting January 1 through March 1, consumers can register for the first list, which will go into effect on April 1. The list will be updated every quarter thereafter, but you do not have to renew your request for your phone number to stay on the *Do Not Call List* as long as you wish. There is no cost to consumers for this service. You can add your name to this Do Not Call Registry by one of three ways. It is permissible for someone else to sign up people unable to easily register themselves.

1. Register online at: <www.mass.gov/donotcall>
2. Call a 24-hour Toll-free number at 1-866-231-CALL (1-866-231-2255).
3. Use a mail-in registration form which can be printed out from a computer or obtained from OCABR and send the completed application to:

Massachusetts Do Not Call Program  
P.O. Box 1348  
Boston, MA 02117

The City of Cambridge Consumers' Council urges residents to take advantage of this helpful new state law. Individuals with mobility impairments or other conditions that make answering the telephone difficult or disruptive to their normal routine will especially benefit from the lessening of the frustration that comes from too many intrusive telemarketing calls. For anyone on a fixed or limited income with little money to spare it can be very helpful not to be pressured or even tempted by smooth talking marketers pushing new products or services.

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## CCPD Participates in Design Review for Harvard, Porter Squares

A pair of citizen advisory committees is currently reviewing the design of streets and sidewalks in Harvard Square and Porter Square, with the aim of making these locales more user-friendly, especially for pedestrians. The Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) is urging these committees to take universal design principles into account, in order to maximize usability for everyone, including pedestrians with disabilities. Ronald L. Mace, architect and founder of The Center for Universal Design, who originally coined the term, described universal design as “the process of designing products and environments that are usable, to the greatest extent possible, by everyone regardless of their age or ability.”

In Porter Square, the design project includes the reconfiguration of the main intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Somerville Avenue, reconstruction of the sidewalks, upgrading of lighting and the addition of new pedestrian crossings and bicycle facilities. As a result of the reconfiguration, a new pedestrian plaza and left-hand turn out of the Porter Square Shopping Center to Mass. Avenue southbound are planned.

The Harvard Square Design Committee, which began meeting in April 2002, will be making recommendations for transportation, landscaping, and lighting improvements throughout the square. Extensive roadway, sidewalk and urban design improvements in Harvard Square were last performed as part of the MBTA Red Line extension project from 1978-1985. Currently some sections of the existing sidewalks and roadways in Harvard Square need to be repaired. The City is using this opportunity to address safety concerns and pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic patterns in the square. The goal is to design and construct appropriate infrastructure improvements that will benefit all users and improve safety.



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## Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community

February 5 **Health Disparities, Disability, and African Americans** – a forum from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Harvard School of Public Health, 677 Huntington Ave. in Boston (directly across from the Brigham Circle stop on the MBTA Green Line E). Presenters are Ethel Briggs, Executive Director of the National Council on Disability and Lisa Sinclair, Health-Science Policy Analyst at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This is cosponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. For questions contact Betty DaVeiga at 617-624-5956 (voice) or <betty.daviega@state.ma.us>.

February 5 **Women Maximizing Abilities Now**, a peer support group for women with physical or emotional disabilities and/or chronic conditions meets at The Women’s Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge, 2 to 3:30 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month. Wheelchair accessible; contact Mary Quinn at 617-354-8807 or <woman@braintrust.org> for more information.

- February 5 **Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Drop-in group** (information & support) on first Wednesday of each month, 6 to 8 p.m. at Barnes & Noble Bookstore, 5<sup>th</sup> floor conference room, Kenmore Square in Boston. Call 617-247-6827 for information.
- February 8 **Developing a Deaf Ministry in a Local Church**, workshop from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Bethany Church in Greenland, NH. Sponsored by Vision New England Deaf Ministry. For more information, registration and directions contact Anne Freeman at <annefreema@aol.com>.
- February 10 **Each Child According to His or Her Ability: Preparing for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah of a Child with Disabilities**, 7 to 9 p.m. at Temple Emanuel, 385 Ward Street in Newton. This panel discussion by parents and professionals is being presented by two organizations, Etgar L'Noar and Yesodot. Speakers include Rabbi Bernard Eisenman of Temple Emunah in Lexington; Cantor Scott Sokol, Director of the Jewish Special Education Certificate Program at Hebrew College and Cantor at Congregation Kehillath Israel in Brookline; and Marion Green, long-time Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor, teacher, and consultant to Hebrew Schools on teaching Hebrew reading to children with special learning needs. For more information and to RSVP, contact Arlene Remz with Etgar L'Noar (617) 630-9010 or <arlene@etgarlnoar.org> or Sue Wolf-Fordham with Yesodot, (617) 542-1993 x299 or <wolffordham@rcn.com>.
- Feb. 11-12 **When Existing Jobs Don't Fit** is a two-day seminar on what to do when "pre-existing" job openings often do not meet the needs of individuals with significant barriers to employment. Attendees will learn how to work with employers to restructure jobs and maximize creativity in the job development process. This workshop, presented by Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) of Boston, will be held at the Hogan Center on the Holy Cross campus in Worcester. Registration fee \$110. For more information contact Drew Glazier at 617-287-4337 voice, 617-287-4350 TTY or email <andrew.glazier@umb.edu>.
- February 11 **Boston Voice Users** is a group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software that meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Building 2, Room 143. There is often a guest speaker. Meeting time is 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Go to their website at <<http://harvee.billerica.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/boston-voice-users>> and click on Boston-voice-users Archives to find out more about meetings and discussions.
- February 13 **CCPD Monthly Meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. with opportunity for Public Comment.
- February 13 **Stroke Support Group** at the Cambridge Citywide Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Ave. in Cambridge, 6-7:30 p.m. For more information contact Melissa Terrien at 800-922-8290, x343
- February 18 **Disability Policy Consortium (DPC)** monthly meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of month, 1 to 3 p.m. at the State House, Room A-1, Boston. For more information contact Robert Snierson, Chair, <rsnierson@aol.com> or Mary Lou Maloney at 617-216-5181.
- February 19 **Women Maximizing Abilities Now**, (see Feb. 5 listing for details.)

- February 20 **LD/ADHD Consumer Group** for persons with Learning Disabilities/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is sponsored by Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and meets at MRC Somerville Area Office at 5 Middlesex Ave., Suite 302 in Somerville. Business meeting 10 am–12 noon; Support Group 12-1 pm. For more information contact Jim Fratolillo at 617-204-3854 (voice), 617-204-3847 fax or Angelica Sawyer at 617-661-3117 (voice).
- February 26 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA** meets from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Conference Room 4. Call 617-973-7507 voice or 617-973-7089 TTY for more information or to request interpreters. For problems with The RIDE service, call 617-222-5123 voice, or 617-222-5415 TTY.
- March 1 **Strong Families in a Changing World** – one day conference for parents and professionals who work to enhance educational, mental health, health and family support services for children with disabilities. Registration DEADLINE is Feb. 21 for \$55 fee, Feb. 7 for the early bird rate of \$45 or requesting accommodations. (Includes keynote speakers, 3 workshop sessions, breakfast and lunch.) This annual event, sponsored by the Federation for Children with Special Needs, Family TIES of Massachusetts, Mass. Families Organizing for Change, Parents for Residential Reform and the Parent Professional Advocacy League, is at the World Trade Center in Boston. For more information call 617-236-7210, ext.19, check the Federation’s website at <www.fcsn.org> or e-mail <conf2003@fcsn.org>.
- March 5 **Women Maximizing Abilities Now**, (see Feb. 5 listing for details.)
- March 11 **Job Accommodations for People with Disabilities** is a one-day workshop that provides an overview of accommodations from the no-cost simple solutions to the “high tech.” Legal and practical realities of requesting accommodations from employers will also be addressed. This will be presented at the Hogan Center on the Holy Cross campus in Worcester by Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) of Boston. Registration DEADLINE is 3 weeks prior to event; fee is \$75. For more information contact Drew Glazier at 617-287-4337 voice, 617-287-4350 TTY or <andrew.glazier@umb.edu>.
- March 11 **Boston Voice Users** is a group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software. Meeting time is 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. See February 11th listing above for details.
- March 12 **25<sup>th</sup> Annual Legislative Reception** hosted by Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council and Arc Massachusetts, 10:30 am–1 pm in the Grand Staircase Hall at the State House in Boston. Come to network with other disability advocates, hear about legislative, budget and policy priorities, and visit your legislators. For more information contact: Daniel Krueger at the UMass Donahue Institute, 617-723-0208 voice or <dkrueger@donahuee.umassp.edu>.
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March 19 **Forum on Accessibility at Harvest Co-Op Markets** – this is an opportunity to meet with key staff of the Harvest Co-Op Markets to discuss ways to make their cooperative markets in Cambridge and Jamaica Plain more welcoming for customers with disabilities. Forums will take place from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. and 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at the Wainwright Bank community room, 647 Massachusetts Avenue in Central Square, Cambridge. For more information, contact Chris Durkin, Member Services Coordinator, Harvest Co-Op Markets, 617-661-1580 x132 voice or <cdurkin@harvestcoop.com>.

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## Access Notice

The City of Cambridge does not discriminate on the basis of disability. This newsletter is available in electronic mail, large print and other alternative formats upon request. To add your name to our mailing list, to inquire about alternative formats, or for information about other auxiliary aids and services or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, contact CCPD.

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Robert W. Healy, *City Manager*

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**AccessLetter** is produced by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities,  
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We welcome your articles, comments, criticisms, and suggestions. Write us!

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