ADVOCACY ALERT!
Home Help Chore Services Will End September 30!

As part of balancing the State budget for 2011-2012, chore provider services for people with disabilities and seniors has been cut. These services enable many people with disabilities and seniors to live independently. They are also the services many people rely on to stay out of nursing facilities.

Starting October 1, 2011: If you currently receive home help chore provider* services such as cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping, and doing laundry through DHS, you will lose that service!

*These services are also known as instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs).

Tell your elected officials what losing home help services will mean to you.

Your Senator’s name
State Senator
PO Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Your Representative’s name
State Representative
PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Find your legislator’s phone number or email address at: www.housedems.com (Democrats) or www.gophouse.com (Republicans).

Note: People who receive personal care services through DHS (also called Activities of Daily Living, like bathing, toileting, dressing and eating) will keep home help services.
Disability Pride Workshops: Proud & Powerful

For people with disabilities only! Disability Pride is about accepting and honoring our uniqueness and seeing it as a natural and beautiful part of human diversity. Pride comes from celebrating our own heritage, culture, unique experiences and contributions.

Space is limited to 35 people per workshop. Call now and join the movement!

Kalamazoo: August 12, 2011 from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Kalamazoo Public Library – Central in Kalamazoo
Register by August 5th with Michele 345-1516 x116

Berrien: September 23, 2011 from 11:00 am – 3:00 pm
Michigan WORKS! in Benton Harbor
Register by Sept 12th with Joanne 972-7761

Calhoun: October 7, 2011 from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Burnham Brook Community Center—Battle Creek
Register by Sept 30th with Michele 345-1516 x116

Van Buren: October 21, 2011 from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Van Buren ISD Conference Center—Lawrence
Register by Oct 14th with Michele 345-1516 x116

These workshops are a collaboration between Disability Network Southwest Michigan and the RICCs of Kalamazoo, Berrien, Calhoun & Van Buren Counties. Partner support is also provided by the ARC of Calhoun County, Summit Pointe & VBCMH.

1ST MICHIGAN VISION EXPO

The Michigan Vision Expo will showcase the latest in assistive technology, resources, and other services which can benefit the lives of those who are blind, visually impaired, or losing their vision.

Try out the latest portable magnifiers or talking computers, learn about local organizations serving the visually impaired, and meet successful blind and visually impaired adults.

Saturday, October 1, 2011
10 A.M. - 4 P.M.
Kalamazoo Public Library
Downtown Kalamazoo

The location is ADA accessible and convenient to public transportation.
For more information: http://www.michiganvisionexpo.org

Disability Network will have an information table at this event!

GET TO KNOW US!

Curious about the range of services we provide? Unsure how to make a referral?

Join us on Wednesday October 5, 2011 from 12:00 – 1:00 pm at our Berrien County office location for the first of our Get to Know Us lunches!

Come meet our staff, learn more about Disability Network, and learn how we can assist you and the people you serve. Our office is at 2900 Lakeview Avenue in St. Joseph co-located with the Area Agency on Aging. RSVP to Joanne at (269) 982-7761. We look forward to meeting you!

STATE BUDGET IMPACT UPDATE

State Disability Assistance (SDA) payments will be reduced from $269 to $200 per month for new enrollees starting October 1, 2011. People currently receiving $269 will continue to be eligible for that amount.
**Question:** I am receiving Social Security disability benefits (SSDI). Will my benefits be affected if I work and earn money?

**Answer:** It depends. Social Security has special rules called "work incentives" that help you keep your monthly payments and Medicare coverage while you test your ability to work.

*Every person’s situation is different.* Call us at (269) 345-1516 to find out how working can be an option for you.

---

**Telling Our Stories: The Capitol Connection**

While the majority of the work we do happens here in Southwest Michigan, we cannot overlook the importance of meeting with our State Representatives and Senators at the Capitol Building in Lansing.

Much of the work of the disability rights movement is about systems advocacy – changing laws and policies that directly affect people with disabilities. This past winter and spring, Disability Network staff, volunteers, advocates, and community partners traveled to Lansing to tell our story. The first trip involved testifying before the Appropriations Committee about the valuable work of Disability Network. The second trip involved advocating for funding for public transportation services.

Elected officials make decisions based on the information they have available. Hearing directly from people with disabilities in Southwest Michigan is something each of our legislators welcome and value.

The next time we travel to Lansing, will you be there with us?

---

**We are Celebrating 30 Years!**

Join us for dinner and drinks as we celebrate 30 years of changing lives and communities in Southwest Michigan.

**Date:** Monday October 24, 2011

**Location:**
Radisson Plaza Hotel
Kalamazoo, MI

**Honored Guests:**
Tom & Char Williams

Contact Kristen at 345-1516 x119 for more information.

---

**Sign up to receive this newsletter by e-mail! Contact Michele at mcgowenm@dnswm.org or (877) 674-5209.**
Member Spotlight

Disability Network Southwest Michigan is a membership organization. Hear what Pi Kappa Phi has to say about being a member:

We are Pi Kappa Phi and we are members of Disability Network because we wanted to do more.

As a social fraternity on the campus of Western Michigan University, we are committed to building an organization of leaders. Our fraternity is the only in the nation to establish and maintain a non-profit organization, Push America, which encourages leadership development through service to people with disabilities.

Becoming a member of Disability Network has created many opportunities for our fraternity to work collaboratively with Disability Network and the people they serve. We have also become more involved in the disability community.

Learn more about the benefits of membership: Contact Kristen at 345-1516 or visit our website www.dnswm.org and click on the membership tab.