

The LINK

A publication of Disability Network Southwest Michigan

Advocacy Academy 2015

Advocacy Academy is Disability Network's eight-week summer internship program for young adults. Participants choose a disability advocacy issue to learn about and create an advocacy campaign around that issue.

Advocacy Academy is an opportunity to get involved in the Disability Rights Movement and learn the skills of advocacy by planning and implementing a disability advocacy project. Other skills acquired during the internship are personal leadership, workplace skills, and working cooperatively in a group.

Twelve individuals will be selected to participate in this year's Advocacy Academy—six in Kalamazoo and six in St. Joseph. A stipend will be paid upon the successful completion of the internship.

For more information about Advocacy Academy and to download an application, visit our website: www.dnswm.org or call Miranda at (269) 345-1516 x120.



Join Us in Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the ADA!

Mark your calendars and join us for a celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act on Friday, July 24th from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. We will host a community-wide event at our Kalamazoo office including a free lunch, awards, and a keynote speech from Sharon Ellis, the State ADA Compliance Director.

We encourage all community members and organizations to join us!



Changing Lives.
Changing Communities.

Two Office Locations

2900 Lakeview Avenue
St. Joseph, MI 49085
(269) 985-0111

517 E. Crosstown Pkwy
Kalamazoo, MI 49001
(269) 345-1516

*This issue is available
in alternative format
upon request.*

www.dnswm.org

MI Health Link

A new health care option with built-in care coordination for Medicare and Medicaid Services

MI Health Link offers the following:

- Medical, dental and vision services
- Mental health services
- Home and community based long-term care services
- Nursing facility care
- Medications
- Equipment to help with activities of daily living

Eligibility for MI Health Link

You may be eligible if you meet the following criteria:

- Live in the county of Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, or Van Buren
- Are 21 years of age or older
- Have full Medicaid and full Medicare
- Are not enrolled in hospice

Benefits of enrollment in MI Health Link

Benefits of enrollment include not paying co-payments or deductibles for in-network services including prescriptions, and having just one plan with one card for all your Medicare and Medicaid benefits. You will also have a care coordinator who will connect you to supports and services based on your goals.

Two MI Health Link Plan Choices

In Southwest MI there are two plans available:

- Aetna Better Health Premier Plan (www.aetnabetterhealth.com/michigan)
- Meridian Complete (www.medicaremeridian.com/complete/mi)

Is MI Health Link right for you?

You will want to check if your doctor(s) participate in the plan and if the medications you currently take are covered. Medicare Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP) can assist in determining what plan will best cover your health care needs. MMAP can be reached toll-free at 1-800-803-7174.

Enrolling in MI Health Link

Persons eligible for MI Health Link will receive a letter in the mail stating the plan they are being assigned to and a date when MI Health Link services will start. Persons who are MI Choice Home and Community Based Waiver recipients, PACE recipients, have an employer retirement insurance plan or are Native American will not be auto-enrolled in MI Health Link.

If a person wants to select a different plan or opt out of participation in MI Health Link they need to contact Michigan Enrolls at 1-800-975-7630.



We're Social. Are you?

Like us on [Facebook](#) or Follow us on [Twitter](#)



Disability Network Day at the Growlers!

SAVE THE DATE: JULY 16

Have fun at a Growlers baseball game and support Disability Network at the same time! Buy tickets from us for the Growlers' July 16th home game in Kalamazoo and \$5 from each ticket goes to Disability Network! To purchase tickets, contact Kristen at (269) 345-1516 x119 (email: pottsk@dnswm.org).

Nursing Facility Transition Program

Do you have a loved one, friend or neighbor currently residing in a nursing facility? Have they ever thought about leaving but don't know how? The Nursing Facility Transition (NFT) program may be able to help.

The goal of the NFT program is to provide individuals, regardless of their disability or age, the opportunity to choose community-based living as a viable alternative to nursing facility residency.

Some of the support services that may be available through the NFT Program are:

- Exploring in-home care options and connecting with personal care chore provider services.
- Providing information on housing options and assisting with applications.
- Assisting with one-time moving expenses such as a security or utility deposit, housekeeping supplies and furniture.
- Connecting with community resources such as transportation and home delivered meals.

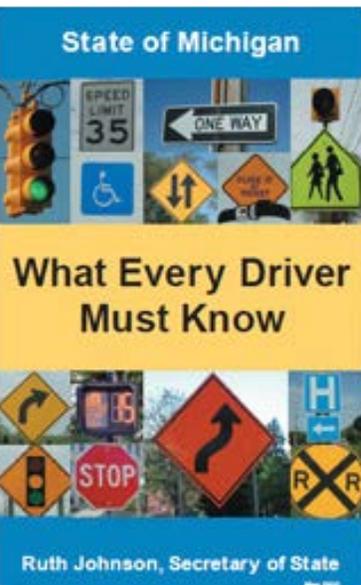


- Improving safety in the home by purchasing a personal emergency response system, bath bench or other assistive device not covered by insurance.
- Increasing home accessibility by building a ramp or installing grab bars.

We can assist with Nursing Facility Transition throughout our eight-county service area. Contact Lisa Hansen in our Kalamazoo office for more information about the NFT program: (269) 345-1516 (email hansenl@dnswm.org).

ADVOCACY UPDATE: Audio Link to Drivers Study Guide now available Online

In September 2013, Disability Network Southwest Michigan began working to get the Michigan drivers guide "What Every Driver Must Know" available in audio format on the Secretary of State's website. We became involved with this following a complaint from one of our customers with a learning disability who needed the study guide in audio format.



At the time, he was told the guide was only available as a text file, and he would have to have someone read it to him – the guide is 148 pages! That was not only unreasonable, it was a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In June 2014 we celebrated the first step of victory. Disability Network had worked with the State ADA Compliance Director and the Office of Communications to get the drivers guide recorded in an audio format and available through the Braille & Talking Book Library. This was a giant step in the right direction, but still not the end-goal we had in mind. To utilize files from the Braille & Talking Book Library, one must register and be sent equipment which greatly reduces the accessibility of the information.

We are now celebrating complete success! Working in partnership with Michigan Braille & Talking Book Library and Michigan Department of State, the guide has been converted to an audio file and is now available online directly from the [Secretary of State](http://www.michigan.gov) website for anyone who wants to listen.

Membership - Join Us!

Are you a member of Disability Network Southwest Michigan? If you're not, consider joining now! Membership is a great way to stay connected to the Disability Rights Movement and Disability Network.

In addition to receiving our quarterly LINK newsletter, you will also receive a monthly members-only e-newsletter, be invited to participate in our members-only book club, vote for our board of directors, and be invited to member trainings and events as they occur.

We offer three types of membership—individual, household, and organization. Pick the one that fits you best and join today! To learn more about membership, contact Dale at (269) 345-1516 x123 (email: abbottd@dnswm.org) or visit our website: www.dnswm.org

Have a disability-related question? We can help!

In Berrien or Cass counties: (269) 985-0111

All other counties: (269) 345-1516

BARRY • BERRIEN • BRANCH • CALHOUN • CASS • KALAMAZOO • ST. JOSEPH • VAN BUREN



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