



DAWN AWAKENINGS

Awaken to Independence

DAWN AWAKENINGS

FALL 2016

THE RACE TO ROLL BACK MEDICARE DME REIMBURSEMENT CUTS

Getting funding for durable medical equipment (DME) is not easy. This is a problem for people who require the use of expensive, customized power wheelchairs. It is also a problem for smaller purchases like repairs, replacement parts, canes, walkers, CPAP machines — in short, for every piece of equipment that people with disabilities need in their daily lives.

On July 1st, cuts went into effect to reduce Medicare reimbursement for DME in non-competitive bidding areas. This has made it even harder for people with disabilities, especially those living in rural areas, to obtain the equipment they need.

DME industry associations and lobbying groups spent months trying to delay the cuts. Then, they tried to get Congress to reverse the cuts while they were in session in September. Those efforts failed. Now, a last-ditch effort is underway to get Congress to roll back the cuts during November. House Speaker Paul Ryan recently stated that “if we don’t get a bill passed by the end of the year, prospects for legislative action on this issue will almost certainly be more challenging when the new Congress convenes in January.”

Now is a critical time to advocate for a return to previous Medicare reimbursement levels for DME. Contact your representatives and tell them why you need durable medical equipment and the means to pay for it.

Visit <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/> to find your representative and <http://www.senate.gov/senators/contact/> to find your senator.

The Patient Access to Durable Medical Equipment Act of 2016, which would roll back the cuts, is currently under consideration in the Senate. This means that writing to your senator is the most effective way to advocate to roll back the cuts. A sample letter can be found at <http://www.homecaremag.com/stakeholder-padme-support-letter>.

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**Don’t forget to vote!
Election day is Tuesday, November 8th.**



From the Executive Director's Desk

As summer comes to a close, DAWN also brings to a close another very busy and productive fiscal year and we are looking forward to an exciting year ahead. As you will see in this edition of our newsletter, DAWN will be celebrating our 20th anniversary serving individuals with disabilities in the northwest part of NJ. We have experienced significant growth over the past two decades and are proud of the work we are doing to ensure people with disabilities are well informed of their rights and the services available to them in order to make informed choices. I hope you will join us as we celebrate this milestone on December 1st, 2016, at The Mansion in Mountain Lakes. Details are included in this edition.

Also, in this edition is information that will assist you in making an informed choice on Election Day. Voting is a Constitutional right and I encourage you to exercise that right.

Finally, we are in the midst of our annual membership drive. Please review the letter from our Board President and if you have not already done so, please show your support of the work we do here at DAWN and become a member.

I wish you all a wonderful holiday season. I hope to see you at our annual meeting and wish you all the best.

Carmela

Annual Meeting and Holiday Gala

DAWNcil's Annual Membership Meeting will take place on Thursday, December 1, 2016, from 6 to 9 pm, at "The Mansion," 90 Rt. 46E, Mountain Lakes. The event will include a buffet dinner, induction of new board members and reappointments of existing board members. There will be a presentation on DAWNcil's history and the future of DAWNcil. Keynote speaker will be Ruben Fuentes, devoted husband, father, community leader, volunteer and disability advocate. Awards will be presented to DAWN's outstanding volunteers in recognition of their longtime service and dedication. The meeting will also provide an opportunity for members to share their ideas. 2016 is DAWNcil's twentieth anniversary year, so this year's annual meeting will be more exciting than ever! The cost to attend the annual meeting is \$40 for dues-paid members and \$50 for all other guests.

DAWNcil's annual Holiday Gala will be held on Saturday, December 17th, from noon-4 pm, also at The Mansion. DAWN members, friends, family and staff will enjoy good food and good company. There will be music, dancing and fun! The cost for the holiday gala will be \$30 for dues-paid members and \$40 for all other guests.

Transportation is available for both events if requested 2 weeks in advance. To RSVP call 973-625-1940 ext. 211 or email info@dawncil.org.



Annual Membership Drive Letter from Board President Elizabeth Lehmann

Dear DAWN Members, Consumers, and Friends,

After our long, hot summer, it will be good to feel cooler breezes, see the kids go back to school, and renew our memberships with DAWN Center for Independent Living. For those of you, who are not yet members, please join us. Your dues will help to support the many programs and services in which you are involved. If you are currently a member and have not done so already, please renew your membership now. For your convenience, an online membership form is available at <http://dawncil.org/membership/dawncilmembership-application/>. Hard copy forms can be requested by calling 973-625-1940.

As a dues paying member of DAWN you can participate in our many wonderful DAWN events, be active in the DAWN activities that influence policy issues at the local, state, and national levels of government, find out what is going on within the disabilities community, and let your elected officers know your viewpoint on the many issues that affect people with disabilities. In addition, as a condition of our corporate charter, only dues paying members in good standing may vote in organizational elections. We value your opinions and hope you will become an active member by paying dues and exercising your membership rights with DAWN. Participate and be heard!

DAWN Center for Independent Living empowers people with disabilities to live independently, to strive for equality, and to take control of their lives. Consumers with disabilities and their families may benefit from a broad array of professional and recreational services and can participate in programs supporting this empowerment. Dues-paid members have a voice in selecting events, programs, and activities offered to the membership. Members show the value they hold for DAWN's programs and services by participating in meetings, advocacy and recreational events, and by voting in the organizational elections. Active members take part in the governance of DAWN Center for Independent Living. They vote. They make their voices heard. Responsible active members move DAWNCil beyond being a service provider to being a community of people working together to better the lives of those living with disabilities and their families in communities throughout Morris, Sussex, and Warren counties.

Members, please submit your renewal today. If you have not yet joined, please consider joining us. Should you have any questions, please contact me, call the office, or e-mail info@dawncil.org. Thank you and I look forward to you joining us for another successful year.

Very truly yours,

Elizabeth Lehmann

President, Board of Directors

Election 2016: Disability Issues

One sixth of U.S. voters — more than 34 million people — have disabilities. That's enough people to make a big difference at the polls. A few of the major issues at stake for people with disabilities in this year's election are employment, education, transportation, access to medical equipment, housing and accessibility in the community. Here's how you can help:

1) Educate Yourself

The best way to learn about the candidates' views on disability is to read about them on the Internet. The American Association of People with Disabilities has extensive information you can access at <http://www.aapd.com/our-focus/voting/> .

2) Know Your Rights

Everyone has the right to vote in an accessible way. On Election Day (November 8), you can contact Disability Rights NJ for questions and concerns related to voting with a disability. Call 800-922-7233 or 609-633-7106 (TTY) or email mcciccone@drnj.org 7:00am-8:00pm.

3) Vote!

Look up your polling place at <https://voter.njsvrs.com/elections/polling-lookup.html> .

Disability Pride Parade

The 6th Annual New Jersey Disability Pride Parade and Celebration took place on Friday, October 7th, 2016 in downtown Trenton. Hundreds of people representing a wide variety of disabilities and organizations marched and wheeled from the New Jersey State House to the celebration site at South Broad and East Lafayette Street.

The New Jersey Disability Pride Parade and Celebration brings people, organizations and community leaders together to celebrate the pride of people with disabilities and to raise awareness that disability is a natural and beautiful part of human diversity. It also reminds the nation that people with disabilities are an integral part of our communities and our identity as a country.



Personal Experience Obtaining DME

By Lindsay Tuman, IL Employment Specialist

As an individual with a physical disability, I rely heavily on Durable Medical Equipment (DME) that allows me to be independent both personally and professionally. A recent problem with a seat cushion I use on my wheelchair showed me not only the importance of this equipment, but also what it means to be your own self-advocate.

Two years after I started working full time, the seat cushion began to lose air. By 2014, it was three years old, and the warranty was only for two years. Until this time, I hadn't realized how difficult it would be to get a replacement. I tried calling my DME provider who I had been dealing with since 2011. They told me that I could order a new one through Medicare. It wasn't that simple. Medicare said it would not cover a replacement seat cushion because I had not obtained my wheelchair through them. The reason why? Medicare had denied me the kind of chair I needed in the first place, so I had to go back onto my parents insurance to get the chair I required.

By the time the seat cushion I needed broke, and after several unsuccessful attempts to get it fixed, I was desperate. I had gone through nearly a dozen providers to get help. My primary doctor even researched other providers for me, but it didn't help. I found that not knowing the correct information and how or where to obtain it was a challenge.

As an employee at a Center for Independent Living, I thought I had a handle on the ins and outs of insurance and the processes that should take place, but I was wrong. However, by going through the process, acquiring my own peer support and advice from colleagues, I successfully navigated the system. After two years, I eventually got the replacement seat cushion I needed.

There was a time, just two months before I received the seat cushion that I was about to give up – I had hit a wall. Then one day I decided to write an email directly to the company who makes the specific seat cushion I needed. After exchanging multiple emails, the company sponsored me and I was able to get the cushion. If I went any longer without it, I would have been in a precarious position both medically and physically.

By the time I received the correct cushion in May 2015, my life improved overnight. Without the appropriate medical equipment, I had been struggling to live my daily life. My experience showed me the importance of researching, perseverance and self-advocacy to obtain specific outcomes.

Things are changing rapidly regarding DME equipment and Medicare. Change can only come if we advocate and work together to make ourselves heard. We have the right to obtain the medical equipment we need to maintain our independence.



Picnic



This year's DAWNcil Annual Picnic took place on September 10th from noon to 4 pm at Hedden Park in Randolph. The annual summer picnic is always one of the highlights of the year for the DAWN community. It's a great way for members and staff alike to get to know each other and share some quality time.

As usual, there was plenty of food: barbecued chicken, burgers, hot dogs, lots of side dishes, cookies, and, of course cake!

The weather was hot, but in the shade of the picnic pavilion it was comfortable. Everyone enjoyed playing bingo, and there were also outdoor sports and games to play.

If you missed out on this year's picnic, don't worry. We have them every summer, so just come to the next one!



DAWN in the Community

Back to School Fair

By Laura Dicker

On August 18th DAWNcil and many other local organizations had the pleasure of participating in the 14th Annual Back to School fair hosted by Project Self-Sufficiency of Sussex County and Coupons for the Community. Penelope Ream and I were there to represent DAWNcil. This successful event gave local families the opportunity to access services, information, backpacks filled with school supplies and haircuts just to name a few things.

We spoke with a lot of families who already receive our Early Intervention services who didn't know we were a full service agency. We also spoke with individuals who didn't know about DAWNcil.

FDU Volunteer Fair

By Janine Mellini

The Community Service and Volunteer Fair at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison held on Thursday, Sept. 8, 2016, in the student center on the campus. Sponsored by the Career Development Office, this annual event was attended by approximately a dozen local nonprofit organizations and some for-profit companies like Vineyard Vines. Some of the other attendees include Habitat for Humanity, Jersey Cares, St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center, SOAR Tutoring and others. It was an ideal opportunity for nonprofits to recruit volunteers and interns and to get the word out about the work DAWNcil does.

Kessler Stroll n' Roll

By Penelope Ream

On September 18th, the Kessler Foundation hosted its 15th annual Stroll n' Roll. Staff members Penelope Ream and Pamela Hamilton attended this very unique and exciting family fun event. Even though it was a bit of a dreary day, everyone was out and ready for the Stroll n' Roll to begin. People of all ages and disabilities participated in the event around beautiful Verona Park in Verona, NJ. Strolling and rolling were just the beginning of the activities available for participants of this event. There was face painting for children, and there were many informative vendors providing information for individuals with disabilities and their families on the different services provided in the community.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE
DONATE

Donate Online

Go to our donation page at <http://dawncil.org/donate-to-dawn/>.

Memorial Donations

Donate to DAWNcil to honor the memory of a loved one.

Matching Gifts

Find out if your company participates in a Matching Gift Program. Your donation may qualify for a matching gift.

AmazonSmile

If you shop on Amazon, please visit <http://dawncil.org/amazonsmile/> and click on the AmazonSmile logo to start giving DAWNcil some extra support, at no additional cost to you! You shop, and Amazon donates 0.5% to DAWNcil.

Goodsearch

Use Goodsearch.com for online searches, and they will donate to DAWNcil. Find out how at: <http://dawncil.org/goodsearch/>

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We are on the web!
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DAWN MISSION STATEMENT

DAWN Center for Independent Living empowers people with disabilities to strive for equality and to take control of their own lives by:

- Providing the tools that encourage independence and self-advocacy.
- Promoting public awareness of the needs, desires and rights of individuals living with disabilities.
- Offering community activities that create new experiences and opportunities.
- Creating informed communities that advance the Independent Living Philosophy.

DAWN PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING SERVICES AND MORE:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| - Independent Living Skills Training | - Advocacy |
| - DDD Support Coordination | - Peer Support |
| - Living Well with a Disability | - Recreation |
| - Skills for Independent Living (SkIL) | - Information and Referral |
| - Early Intervention Service Coordination | - Next Chapter Book Club |
| - Aktion Club (Morris County only) | - Care Management |
| - Brain Injury Alliance Support Group | - It's All About Work |
| - Working Well with a Disability | - Employment/EN Services |

For questions or comments about the newsletter, contact the Newsletter Coordinator Peter Gimbel at pgimbel@dawncil.org or 973-625-1940, ext. 219.