



Newsletter!

ND Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

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Winter 2009

Special points of interest:

- Federation involvement in the 61st Legislative Assembly. Brought to you by our Executive Director, Carlotta McCleary.
- Carlotta spends a great deal of time at the Capital testifying, visiting, and advocating for the rights of children and families.
- We all owe her a debt of gratitude for her diligence and hard work!

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ND 61st Legislative Assembly 2009

Carlotta McCleary

The Federation is Active! Strong Belief in

Family Voice!

We believe families need to have a voice and choice in the policies that impact them. The legislative process is one of the ways in which families can have a voice in policies. I encourage all of us as family members to share our views on the policies that impact our children and our families. Now is the time for our voice to be heard.

Please consider joining your local Legislative Working Committee:

Legislative Working Committees are "the pipeline" for people with disabilities, family members, and advocates to network and receive information about disabilities-related legislation. Legislative Working Committees are not "owned" by any one group but are supported by many individuals and organizations that care about people with disabilities.

The goal of Legislative Working Committees is to educate people with disabilities, family members, and advocates about the Legislative process, disability-related Legislation, and the protocol for communicating with State Senators and Representatives. Please consider joining your local Legislative Working Committee. **Contact Protection and Advocacy** for details of when and where the local Legislative Working Committee is meeting. (www.panda.org)

Get Involved! Stay Involved!

Make sure you are getting the legislative grid: **Protection and Advocacy** created a legislative grid that tracks the legislation that impacts individuals with

disabilities. This is a very valuable tool. NDDFCMH forwards that grid each week to families that are interested in legislation. If you would like to get a copy of the grid let us

know and we will add you to the list. You can always ask Protection and Advocacy to add you to the list as well. This grid also contains Hyperlinks so you can see the actual bill of Interest.

**ND FEDERATION
OF FAMILIES
FOR CHILDREN'S
MENTAL
HEALTH**

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Freedom Rocks!



Families Helping Families

Talk to legislators:

I encourage you to attend the hearings on the bills that you are interested in. Testify on bills that impact your family. They need to hear from you. Families make the biggest impact on policy decisions at the legislature. Law makers want to know how their decisions impact you.

If you are testifying make enough copies of your testimony for the committee members plus a few extra. Have them three-hole punched so it will be easier for legislators to put them in their binders. Be sure to reference the bill number and indicate whether you support the bill or are opposed the bill.

If you aren't able to attend the hearings you can reach legislators by sending them a letter. Again I would recommend that you three-hole punch your letter and address a letter to each member of the committee.

Another option is to email legislators. Here are the links to the committee members and assignments:

House: <http://www.legis.nd.gov/assembly/61-2009/house/standing-comm/>

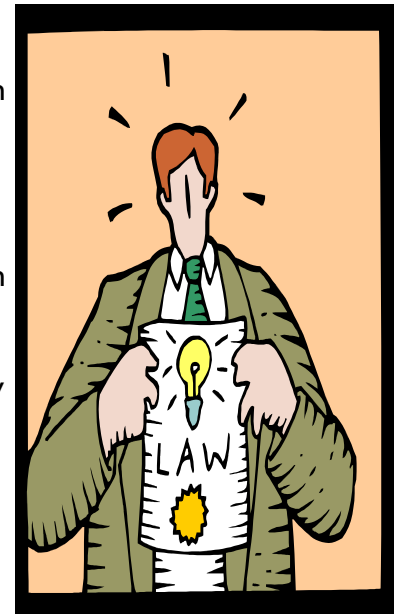
Senate: <http://www.legis.nd.gov/assembly/61-2009/senate/standing-comm/>

Need Help or Encouragement?

If you are in need of assistance with your testimony letters or emails contact Becky Severt: phone (701) 258-1628 or email bsvart@bis.midco.net or Deb Jendro: phone (701) 235-9923 or email [debjefederation@
yahoo.com](mailto:debjefederation@yahoo.com) and they will be more than happy to assist you.

**Please stay active
and let your voice
be heard.**

The legislative session has the ND Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health very busy. We have reached crossover which is the date when bills and resolutions except constitutional amendments and study resolutions must be reported out of committee in house of origin. I have included an update on some of the bills that we are tracking as of crossover.



Make it Happen!

Bills we are tracking:

HB 1012: Dept. of Human Services \$

NDFFCMH testified in support of this bill.

NDFFCMH supports:

Increasing the net income eligibility from 150% to 200% of the poverty line for the state children's health insurance program.

Autism waiver for children birth through five.

Increasing Family Foster Care payments to the nationally recommended level.

Funding for youth facilities in Bismarck and Fargo, each providing eight residential beds for youth in transition.

Peer-to-Peer Support Program enhanced to include funding for state-wide implementation.

1 FTE for Partnership Program at SEHSC.

House Appropriations Committee voted do pass with amendments 17-6. Children's health insurance program has been amended to increase the net income eligibility to 160% of the poverty line. The Autism Waiver was maintained however, they removed the FTE from the budget. The increase in Family Foster Care payments was maintained. The funding for youth facilities in Bismarck and Fargo for youth in transition was removed. Peer-to-Peer Support program was not added. The FTE for Partnership Program at SEHSC was removed. HB 1012 passed 82-10 in the House.

HB 1014: Provide an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the committee on protection and advocacy.

NDFFCMH provided a letter of support for this bill. House Appropriations Committee passed with amendments 16-8 1 absent and not voting. The amendments reduce the appropriation and remove 1 FTE. HB 1014 passed 87-6 in the House.

HB 1044: Relating to the development of a program for services to transition-aged youth at risk; to provide for a pilot project; and to provide an appropriation.

NDFFCMH testified in support of this bill. House Bill 1044 is really a combination of two different proposals. The first proposal is contained in Section 1; it deals with a statewide systemic approach to coordination of transition services for youth transitioning to adulthood. It looks at coordination of needed services at the individual youth and family level. Section 1 also includes coordination of the services provided by different agencies at the regional and state level. This will help to address the systemic issues that impact youth transitioning to adulthood. Section 2 contains the second proposal which is a pilot program which will have a center in an urban community where youth can go to receive transition services. NDFFCMH focused our testimony on Section 1 of the bill or the statewide systemic approach to transition services.

The House Human Services Committee voted do pass with amendments 13-0. The amendments removed the pilot project. The amendments also removed the \$700,000 appropriation from the bill. (The appropriation was originally for the pilot project. When the pilot project felt they didn't need the full appropriation the Long Term Interim Committee decided to leave the appropriation in the bill in case the proposal in Section 1 needed any dollars to address the gaps in services.) The Department of Human Services attached a fiscal note for \$500,000. The bill was referred back to the House Human Services Committee. House Human Services Committee voted do pass with amendments 13-0. The amendments indicate that the program is implemented within the limits of current appropriations. HB 1044 passed 86-7 in the House.

HB 1385: Medicaid: Relating to the prior authorization program.

NDFFCMH testified in support of this bill. We believe medication to treat mental health issues should not be in a prior authorization program. House Human Services Committee voted do pass 13-0. HB 1385 passed 93-0 in the House.

HB 1478: Relating to eligibility under the state children's health insurance program.

NDFFCMH testified in support of this bill. This bill originally had a net income eligibility limit of 200% of the poverty line. House Human Services Committee voted do pass with amendments 11-2. The amendments changed the net income eligibility limit to 160% of the poverty line. The amendments also added coverage for children through the age of nineteen. House Appropriations Committee voted do pass with amendments 15-8. The amendments removed the added coverage for children through the age of nineteen. HB 1478 passed 90-2 in the House.

SB 2097: Definition of a person responsible for a child's welfare and who may receive confidential reports of child abuse and neglect.

NDFFCMH Testified in opposition of this bill. We were concerned with the changes that were proposed to remove public and private schools from the definition of a person responsible for a child's welfare. Senate Human Services Committee voted do pass with amendments 6-0. The amendments removed the section that defined a person responsible for a child's welfare. We are happy with the amendments. SB 2097 passed 46-0 in the Senate.

SB 2174: Creation of an autism spectrum disorder task force.

NDFFCMH testified in support of this bill. Senate Human Services voted do pass with amendments 6-0. The amendments change the chairman of the task force to the director of the Department of Human Services or their designee and the amendments change the appropriation to \$3,000. We are satisfied with the amendments. SB 2174 passed 45-0 in the Senate.

SB 2362: Create a children's health insurance buy-in program to be established by the department of human services and the creation of a children's health insurance program advisory committee a children's health insurance buy-in program to be established by the department of human services and the creation of a children's health insurance program advisory committee.

NDFFCMH testified in support of this bill. Senate Human Services voted do not pass 3-2. SB 2362 failed 19-27 in the Senate.

SB 2421: Emergency procedures for mental health commitments; and to provide for a legislative council study.

NDFFCMH testified in opposition of this bill. Senate Judiciary voted do pass with amendments 6-0. The amendments removed everything but the study. We are satisfied with the amendments. SB 2421 passed 43-4 in the Senate.

Helpful hints in building a relationship with your Legislators and Policymakers

Always be honest.

Gaining trust is critical in building a relationship with your legislators and public policymakers. Honesty is an essential component of creating that trusting relationship.

Example:

Speaking to a group of disability advocates, a state legislator described a situation in which someone was speaking to her regarding a bill that was being considered in the House of Representatives. She later learned that information given to her by this individual was false. She said that she will never be able to trust that person again.

Do not exaggerate to make your situation seem more critical than it is.

If you exaggerate in explaining a situation to a legislator or policymaker for the purpose of enlisting his or her support and later he or she learns the true circumstances, you will likely lose the legislator's trust and it may be impossible for you to regain a trusting relationship.

If you don't know, say so.

If you are asked a question and do not know the answer, tell the legislator that you don't know. But add that you would be happy to look into the issue and provide the answer as soon as possible.

Be polite when you're talking to legislators or policy-makers.

Sometimes, an issue may be so important to us that we are very passionate when discussing it. Passion for the topic is positive. However, do not cross the boundary of politeness by being too aggressive or not showing respect.

If you are unhappy with the legislator's or policymaker's response to an issue, express disagreement but do not become hostile or threatening.

Be a good listener.

Do not interrupt when the legislator or policymaker is speaking. Pay attention to the information being shared – it may prove to be very valuable.

Do not put down, criticize, or poke fun of people who may have a different point of view than yours. Focus on the issues.

A positive presentation of your ideas is best. Keep the issue foremost and avoid badmouthing other people or groups.

Express appreciation to the legislator or policymaker for taking the time to talk to you.

We are all busy persons and our legislators and policymakers are particularly busy and have limited time. They will appreciate, like we all do, acknowledgement of their time and attention. Write a follow-up postcard.

Send a postcard to thank the legislator for the opportunity to visit and talk to him or her. If there were questions asked during your meeting that you were not able to answer, you may want to write a letter or send an email.

Work on building a relationship with legislators' staff.

In order to make appointments with our legislators and policymakers, we often need to work through their secretaries or other staff. Use these opportunities to get to know these staff. When talking to them, be sure to thank them for their assistance. Show appreciation for the staff's helpfulness.

(fulfillthepromise.org)/Building a Relationship

Parent Support

Do you ever feel like you are alone on your journey in raising a child with a mental health need?

How about joining a support group where parents and caregivers gather and give each other strength, encouragement and validation of feelings! Friends are waiting for you!

In **Bismarck**, meetings are held at 7pm on the fourth Thursday of the month at: The Pride Inc. Building 1200 Missouri Ave. Call Becky: 258-1628 or Carlotta : 222-3310 for more information.

In **Fargo**, meetings are held at 7pm on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at : 1104 2nd Ave S, second floor, suite 333. Call Deb: 235-9923 for more information.

Announcements and Events!

March 14th: Come Dancing!

The Federation of Families will host the **Ogg Creek String Band** in an evening of family fun! An old fashioned barn dance will be held at The R.D. Johnson Activity Center 1104 2nd Ave S. Fargo from 7p-9p. It is open to all. (Suggested donation of \$5.00 with part of the proceeds going to the Federation)

Family Voices Leadership Institute-Family Voices of North Dakota will provide 2 Institutes in 2009- The purpose to develop a coalition of new Family Leaders from across the state. We are extremely fortunate to have Dave Pearce (Papa's Pumpkin Patch); Teresa Larson (Protection and Advocacy); and Patti Hackett, National Healthy and Ready to Work Project in May 2009 and Dave Pearce (Papa's Pumpkin Patch); Teresa Larson (Protection and Advocacy) Julie and Katie Beckett attending and assisting in teaching families new skills and leadership in August. **We will soon be hosting an additional Family Leadership Institute weekend in May and August 2009.** Please apply to attend the next institute at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=2bJACLhdYMe2bS9qABzDm3WQ3d3d>

Pathfinders' Annual Conference-April 16-17th, 2009 Bismarck Doublewood Inn. **"Building A Brighter Future" Pathfinder 2009 Parent Involvement Conference.** Free Registration for Parents. To obtain a registration form or for more information, call Pathfinder at 701-837-7500 or (ND) 1-800-245-5840, e-mail (dpage@srt.com), or go to our website at www.pathfinder-nd.org. **Limited REGISTRATION ONLY scholarships** are available for parents or family members of a child with a disability. Single day scholarships are available. Full day attendance is required if using a scholarship. We are sorry we can not offer lodging scholarships.

Registration is NOW OPEN for the 2009 Clinical Forum on Mental Health: Turning Knowledge into Practice! This year's dates are May 13-14 with Pre-Conference Workshops May 11-12. For more information and to register, go to our website at www.conted.und.edu/clinicalforum and use our secure online registration form.

Gym and Supper Club

The Federation of Families will hold it's monthly family social April 4th and the first Saturday of each month at 1104 2nd Ave S Fargo. A pot luck dinner will be served followed by parent connection and family play time. The gymnasium is available for fun and frolic! All are welcome! For more information, contact Deb at 235-9923

Save the dates for: **The 2nd Annual Children's Mental Health Fair and Information Series:** Thursday, May 7, 2009, Thursday May 14th 2009 and Thursday May 21st 2009.

TO REGISTER PLEASE CONTACT: Shawna Croaker, Coordinator **Children's Mental Health Initiative**. Email: rvcmhcc@rvccsc.org
Phone: 701-526-1565 Visit www.halfachild.com for topics and details.

ELIZABETH DOLE:

"What you always do before you make a decision is consult. The best public policy is made when you are listening to people who are going to be impacted. Then, once policy is determined, you call on them to help you sell it."