

Contemporary Rehab

The Newsletter of the National Rehabilitation Association

June 2023, Volume 79, No 2

SERNA Conference Highlights

By Paul Barnes, NRA President

The Southeast Region of the National Rehabilitation Association has sponsored this issue of our CR Newsletter. Most of you know that for many years, they have been a great anchor for our association. They always have amaz-

ing conferences and other activities on a regular basis that build our profession and support their members at a personal level.

I was honored to be invited to their conference this March and I want to express my appreciation to Mary

Browning, Nick Derzis, Dr. Courtney Dotson, and the rest of the planning committee. Their support enabled me to have a successful and amazing experience.

I arrived on Sunday and was able to greet many of the attendees as they arrived.

Unfortunately, it was a chilly day, so we were not able to enjoy that beautiful Orange Beach, Alabama area. So, I used the time to visit with some amazing professionals. It is always a wonderful experience to get different perspectives on our profession, and the great work that we do. I found that the challenges in the Southeast are similar, if not the same, as it is in other parts of the country. We discussed the fact that the state VR program is having trouble recruiting and retaining valuable professionals to provide services to their



NRA President Paul Barnes speaks at the SERNA Conference

Continued on page 2

Membership Committee Update

By Russ Thelin, NRA President-Elect

The Association's Membership Committee has had some real activity thus far this year. We are excited to share that feedback provided in the All-Membership Call within the Disability Employment Summit that was held virtually in March, is driving targeted enhancements to being a Member of the National Rehabilitation Association. Here is a quick summary of each:

Continued on page 4

2023 Annual Disability Employment Summit

The Annual Disability Education Summit was held Wednesday, March 15 – Thursday, March 16, 2023, through Zoom. This year's theme was "Celebrating our Accomplishments and Building for the Future."

The National Rehabilitation Association expresses its sincere appreciation to our Platinum Sponsors, Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SVRI) and the International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals (IARP).

We have been fostering relationships with Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute at University of Wis-

consin (SVRI) and the International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals (IARP). They are supporting our conferences and helping us build our profession. Brief commercials for these partners were seen during the breaks in between the conference sessions. Our goal is to build upon this and have more partners/sponsors for future events.

Kyle Walker, Director of SVRI at the University of Wisconsin was our keynote speaker. He spoke with us about the reality of our profession and membership organizations in the cur-

Continued on page 3

SERNA Conference Highlights

Continued from page 1

cliente. It is inspiring to hear of how they are getting creative in their ability to tackle these challenges. I was especially inspired to learn that Alabama serves vulnerable populations, from prenatal to death. This approach of meeting needs throughout the lifetime of an individual is something I hope we can see replicated throughout the country.

During the opening session, I was deeply honored to present alongside Jane Burdeshaw, commissioner of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, and Steve Wooderson, Chief Executive Officer of CSAVR. They both did an amazing job of covering what the challenges are and rallying our professionals to be part of the solution. I spoke briefly about the National Rehabilitation Association being accountable for not providing the quality and level of services that are so needed. I let them know that the current board and leadership take this very seriously and are doing everything we can to meet the needs, cur-

rently, and for the future. I asked for them to be part of the solution, and I was pleased with the response. Several attendees approached me afterward, and gave me great ideas, and appreciated the fact that we are owning up to our responsibility at the national level. As I have stated to our members several times, we are in a unique position at this time. If we take serious action and become the organization that is needed, there are several partners in the Rehab community that will step up and join with us in this quest. If we choose to do nothing, or continue as we have been, I have serious concerns about our organization.

I was extremely impressed to see that Southeast Region had concurrent sessions, so that professionals could choose what best fit their needs. These included topics from all levels of our profession. I chose to attend the session that was presented by Cassie Shropshire, who is on our national JPD Board. I was so impressed, I asked her to share her PowerPoint with me. Her presentation was on "Hiring and Supporting Neurodiversity in the Workplace." Time does not permit me to cover every session, but I had a hard time choosing which one to attend, because they were all top quality.

Sessions covered everything from service, animals, augmentative and alternative communication, professional identity of rehabilitation counselor's, burn out and compassion fatigue, and even oral health. I feel like the planners of this conference insured that the attendees had a broad and energizing experience.

The next morning, I attended most of the morning session, but had to participate in the national board meeting, which excluded me from the rest of the morning sessions. The organizers had three concurrent sessions to choose from, which covered excellent subject matter. I then attended the awards luncheon, which included, honoring those who are currently do-

ing amazing work in this profession, and paying tribute to those professionals who have passed away during this past year. I was deeply moved by the professional and sensitive way this was presented.

I had to get back to my job, so I excused myself at this time and unfortunately missed the rest of the conference. I was so impressed with the content and presenters at this conference and inspired by the relationships I built with the attendees. Several of our national board members were in attendance, and it was nice to see them in person. The two nights I was there I was up until 1:00 AM, visiting with professionals, discussing their challenges and their successes. It made me even more committed to ensure that we build the National Association to be the destination for professions to receive support, resources and mentoring to face the current and future needs of this amazing profession, vocational rehabilitation.

I want to thank the Southeast Region again for inviting me, and for energizing me to be a better professional.

NRA LEADERSHIP

President
Paul Barnes
Utah

President-Elect
Russ Thelin
Utah

Past-President
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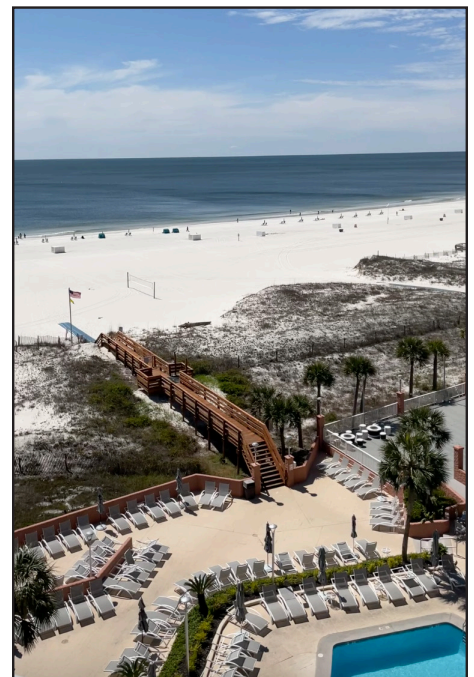


Photo by Paul Barnes

When not attending conference sessions the beach beckoned attendees.

2023 Annual Disability Employment Summit

Continued from page 1

rent climate. He gave us some serious things to ponder and challenged us to be part of the solution. This is key to building our profession, both now and for the future. I challenge you all to listen to his presentation and make a difference at the local level and expand that through our national association.

Our Public Policy Committee did a masterful job of covering our 100-year history and pointed out some crucial highlights and challenges we have faced in the past and where we are today. This is an excellent presentation for our Chapters, Regions, and Divisions to use as context for building membership and better opportunities to effect change.

These are just two examples of our complete list of high-quality presentations. We had the following sessions, which were well attended, and we thank our presenters for taking the time to share the latest research and education with our attendees. **These recordings will be available on our national website for viewing and submitting for CRCC CEU credits until September 2023.**

Employment First: A Public Policy Roadmap to Achieving Competitive Integrated Employment

- Julie Christensen, MSW, Ph.D., Executive Director of National APSE (Association of People Supporting Employment First)

Beyond “Folding, Flipping, Filth, and Filing”— More than the Minimum for Workers with Disabilities

- Ollegario (Ollie) Cantos VII, JD, Councilman, City of West Covina, Chairman, RespectAbility Board of Directors, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education
- Matan Koch, JD, Senior Policy Advisor, RespectAbility

Reforming Federal Disability Benefit Systems to Make them Work-Friendly

- Andy Imparato, Executive Director of Disability Rights California

100 Years of Rehabilitation Advocacy – Then and Now

Part I – 100 Years of National Rehabilitation Associations’ Rehabilitation Advocacy, 1923 to the Present- The Highlights

- Harold Wasner, M.A., LPC, Co-Chair, of the National Rehabilitation Association, Public Policy Team
- Barbara Schoen, Ph.D., CRC, Co-Chair of the National Rehabilitation Association, Public Policy Team

- Sameerah Davenport, Ph.D., CRC, LPC, NCC, Wayne University

Part II – Rehabilitation and Disability Advocacy in the 118th Congress

- Tonia Ferguson, Esq., Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, Director of Legislative Affairs

Commemorative PowerPoint Presentation by the EB Whitten Family

We proudly honored EB Whitten and the contributions he made to the National Rehabilitation Association and the rehabilitation profession throughout the world.

Awards Ceremony – Historical background for the “Lead On Award”

The National Rehabilitation Association, established in 1923, is a professional organization that provides advocacy for persons with disabilities and the professionals that provide services to them. Past “Lead On” award recipients include Hillary Clinton, Steny Hoyer, the late Bob Dole, Tom Harkin, Bobby Scott and Bob Casey, Jr. and many more who have led efforts to secure a more accessible America for those with disabilities. It is named in honor of Justin Dart, the “Father of the Americans with Disabilities Act” who gave us that call to “Lead On” and we continue to be inspired by this call for equality.

- Award Recipient: US Congressional Representative, Debbie Dingell, MI-6th District.
- Award Recipient: US Senator, Tammy Duckworth, Illinois.

Membership Meeting

- Russell J. Thelin, M.S., LVRC, CRC, CRL, 2023 President-Elect of the National Rehabilitation Association

Keynote Presentation: A Tipping Point: Honoring our past, acknowledging our present, and collectively reshaping our future.

- Kyle Walker, CRC, CRL, CRM, Executive Director of the University of Wisconsin-Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SVRI)



Membership Committee Update

Continued from page 1

- **Prominent Association Calendar**

- A master calendar concept is under initial development with intent for eventual launch in coordination with the Website Committee. The purpose of the calendar is to share all Association activities to help plan, reference and coordinate events taking place between National Office, State Chapters and Divisions. To start with, the calendar will be a prototype that can be modified and developed until ready for full launch. Stay tuned on this exciting addition.

- **Mentoring Portal**

- A concept in development that will be coordinated with the Website Committee, is the Mentoring Portal. This will be a place where Association members can both identify themselves on a roster of mentors with specific mentoring specialties they offer as well as seek mentoring in areas specific to being a rehabilitation professional. Initial concepts of this portal also include a discussion and messaging board, as well as an eventual mentoring resource library.

- **Association Lunch-N-Learns**

- Drawing from the success of Lunch-N-Learn events popular to members of

the Texas Rehabilitation Association, the Membership Committee is hoping to establish similar events on a national level where professionals can join while “breaking bread” to learn and professionally develop together from suggested topics of importance to the field. Topics for Lunch-N-Learns may come from articles, books, presentation and more.

As we get these value-added enhancements to your membership underway, we want to hear from you – the Association member!

- Tell us what you think of these? What about them can meet a need you have?
- What are important elements of each you want us to make sure to incorporate?

We want these to be useful to you when in place. Meeting those needs as these are in development is effective, to give us input.

Please feel free to reach out to any of the Membership Committee members: Russ Thelin (Chair), Giovanne Turincio, Cheryl Andrews, Kara Bhakuni, or James Liin.

Delegate Assembly Update

By Bonnie T. Henn, CRC

Mid Atlantic Regional Representative to the National Rehabilitation Association Board

Constitution and Bylaws Committee Conference Planning Committee

Plans are underway for our virtual Annual Training Conference to be held on September 18th, 19th and 20th. As with last year, we will be having a virtual Delegate Assembly in conjunction with the Annual Training Conference. The Delegate Assembly is comprised of those members selected by their State Chapters to serve as Delegates, along with Past Presidents of the Association and current of-

ficers. All members are invited to attend the Delegate Assembly session and there is no requirement for those in attendance to be registered for the event and there is no cost to attend.

Within 30 days before the Delegate Assembly, any changes to the Constitution will be put before the Delegate Assembly for consideration after being published in the

Contemporary Rehabilitation and/or an email blast to the membership. Additionally, business topics including approval of the minutes of the previous Delegate Assembly will be on the agenda as well as an updated Treasurer's report and fiscal standing of the Association will be presented by the Treasurer. There will be presentations by our President, Paul Barnes, Association Officers, and Committee Chairper-

Continued on page 6

President's Message

This has been a busy and challenging year. I want to express my appreciation to those who have stepped up to help us with the challenges by coming up with valuable solutions, for current and future success of this association. In this article, I will attempt to summarize much of what we are doing and foster accountability of the leadership to you as members.

First, I will discuss the progress of our various committees, and then finish up with some of the key issues that are facing this organization.

Finance: Courtney Johnson and her committee have made amazing strides in creating better systems and moving us in a better direction overall. They meet on a regular basis, and many of you will note that rebates are being paid and other financial matters are being handled in a professional manner. This committee is a vital part of us moving to a business model, and they are doing an amazing job.

Membership: Russ Thelin and his committee solicited input at the Disability Employment Summit and are taking action on those items, as we speak. Some highlights include creating an event calendar on the website so that we can plan events more effectively and efficiently. We are also teaming up with Chapters, who are doing amazing things and can help us to move in the right direction. Because of this committee, we are hearing from Chapters, who have not been active and are asking for assistance to get up and running again. Russ and James Liin are scheduling meetings with these members and are talking them through how to make the most of their membership experience.

Constitution and Bylaws: Pat Bienfang and her team review our constitution and bylaws to ensure we are in compliance, and any updates that are appropriate are initiated. You will note that templates for creating Chapter, Region, and Division bylaws will be posted on the website as tools to help you. This committee will also be helping us to hold our annual delegate assembly during the fall conference.

Conference Planning: This committee has been very active in looking at various tools that will help us to have the best conference experience possible. Please stay tuned for these options and for an amazing conference September 18-20, 2023. This will be virtual only, as we are in process of securing sponsors to hold events in person again as soon as possible.

As a final note, RFPs are circulating currently to present at the fall training conference.

Public Policy: This committee is chaired by three professionals in our field, Harold Wasner, Judy Smith, and Barbara Schoen. This valuable committee provided amazing content for the Disability Employment Summit in March. It

was well received, and we appreciate the legislative updates they provide to our members, directly through email and in the CR newsletter.

Awards: Kim Nortz and her team are working steadily to have this process be as efficient as possible. You will note the article in this newsletter about nominations being open on the national website. Please respond to this request, as this is an opportunity for us to recognize valued professionals in our field.

Journal of Rehabilitation: Evan Jones is working closely with the key players involved in this publication. Many members may not realize that this publication is recognized and valued worldwide. We have subscriptions in Asia, Europe, and several other countries. In recent years, some challenges have arisen that threaten this valuable resource. This committee is dedicated to ensuring the publication is not only functional and professional, but it also becomes an income stream for this association.

Contemporary Rehab Newsletter: Keisha G. Rogers has stepped forward to be chair of this committee. You will note that we had an issue come out in March. We are in the final stages of getting the issue ready to be released in June. To help this publication look more professional, we have contracted with Leon Russ, who also helps with the Journal of Rehabilitation. We did not want the additional cost to be passed along to the membership, so we initiated sponsorships for each of the quarterly issues. Currently we have sponsorships for the next year, and we are excited about this building for the future. This newsletter is the way that our members are kept informed, and we as a leadership see that as a top priority.

Website: Stephanie Kruger and her committee are looking at how the website can be more professional looking and more functional. She will be providing updates in the near future but let me give this committee full credit for making a significant difference and moving us to much better place in the public eye.

Management Ad Hoc: Since the departure of Dr. Fred Schroeder, we have not had a director over this organization. This was noted in the presentation by the public policy committee, during our Disability Employment Summit. This forces the board to be much more involved in the day to day workings of the Association and not focus so much on their true purpose of building membership and creating

Continued on page 6



President Paul Barnes

President's Message

Continued from page 5

new opportunities for our members. For this purpose, this committee has been formed. We are looking at management organizations that have the expertise to help us move into a brighter future. We appreciate our contracted staff and all that they do, but the organizational structure of the Association does not foster a business model. This will be the purpose of this ad hoc committee over the next few months. Please stay tuned.

RCEA: Several members have contacted the leadership about this division and their future with the National Association, so I felt it was appropriate for me to comment on this subject. Many of you know that the RCEA board has sought public opinion on whether they remain a division of the National Rehabilitation Association or not. I have been in correspondence with their leadership and asked them to approach this, looking at all the many aspects that are involved. As far as the national leadership is concerned, we need counselors and educators as part of this organization. Some of the rehabilitation organizations have decided to consolidate in one body, we have elected not to go that direction. Our approach is one of unification of purpose with these various organizations, while celebrating the diversity

that each of them bring to the table. If we as an association work toward a better business model and step forward with cutting edge ideas, we can be a critical piece in the future of the rehabilitation profession. Many members are affiliated with various organizations, and we encourage this. In fact, we are building relationships with these various organizations. In short, we do not see a benefit for this valued division to separate themselves from us at this time. Please stay tuned for further developments.

You will see from this article that the current leadership is very proactive on the various issues that are facing this organization. I am encouraged by the correspondence I receive and invite you to continue to give us feedback. I am very open to emails and phone calls. This profession is too important to allow us to go silently into the night. I am energized as I speak to you valued professionals in this amazing field of work that we are blessed to function within on a daily basis. Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment.

Paul Barnes
NRA President

Delegate Assembly Update

Continued from page 4

sons. The Delegate Assembly is the culmination of the year's activities of the National Rehabilitation Association and every member of the Association is encouraged to attend.

State Delegates are chosen by the State Chapter, based on the membership of the State Chapter six months prior to the Delegate Assembly. One Delegate for every 50 members is allowed. Each State Chapter may appoint or elect a Delegate in accordance with their state Bylaws. Additionally, if there is no existing state chapter, members of a state lacking an elected Board may register to be considered as a delegate for that state to allow for representation of their state. The bylaw allowing this was approved

by the National Rehabilitation Association Board of Directors last year to encourage participation and representation at the Delegate Assembly by those members who reside in inactive states.

For those State Chapters with elected Boards, an annual report MUST be on file to elect or appoint a Delegate. An annual report is also required to receive their annual rebate for dues. State Chapter leadership is encouraged to visit the National Rehabilitation Association website and submit an annual report if they have not done so already. Simply go to <https://nationalrehab.org/>, scroll down to Annual Report and complete the online form and submit. The person com-

pleting the form will need to have the names and contact information for each officer and a knowledge of the Chapters activities for the past year, website address and program information if available. Most importantly, the names and contact information are needed so that the National Rehabilitation Association may stay in contact with the leadership of each State Chapter.

Should you have questions regarding the Delegate Assembly, please contact Bonnie Henn at MAR of NRA@gmail.com subject line, Delegate Assembly.

Thank you for your membership in the National Rehabilitation Association!

3 Reasons to Join the National Rehabilitation Association Board



1) You get a valuable seat at the table of the Nation's oldest professional member organization in the United States that advocates for the rights of individuals with disabilities and you play a key role in strategizing for the next chapter of the Association's history.

Board members' work ranges from financials to operations to board governance to recreating or revitalizing the mission work to marketing to education programs to access opportunities. The multi-disciplinary nature of the National Rehabilitation Association is valuable because it is contradictory to the siloed way many associations have of focusing on one field rather than the broader mission of vocational rehabilitation and kindred professions. When you serve on the board, you have the honor, challenge, and responsibility of understanding how everything needs to work together for an organization to accomplish its goals. It is invigorating.

2) Becoming a leader in your field feels good – and can teach you more about leadership than most courses in graduate school on nonprofit management.

It takes leadership to create improvements in our field, things do not happen on their own or in a vacuum. As the famous quote of Margret Mead points out:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Being on the Board of the National Rehabilitation Association provides that opportunity. Members learn to operate as a leader among leaders following the constitution and bylaws of the association in creating board policies and actions from budget management to professional development, to conference planning and the multiple committee opportunities such as Public Policy, Finance, Social Media, Membership and Constitution and Bylaws to name a few. It creates new contacts and networking opportunities in the field and provides new skills and experiences for your professional profile.

There are many things to improve in the field of Vocational Rehabilitation and within the National Rehabilitation Association. It is time to consider if you want to be a bystander, a cynic, a complainer, or if you want to be part of the solution.

3) Your voice will be heard – and it has an impact. Your voice will blend with the impactful voices of others, too.

A young Board member will have the same voice as a more experienced board member. A Rehabilitation Technician on the Board has the same say as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or State Director of VR. The National Rehabilitation Association is multi-disciplinary, multicultural, and inclusive--it is best for its Board to represent that cross section of the field of professionals.

Vocational Rehabilitation is at a cross-roads, so if you are interested in what is happening and have ideas about what needs to be improved, even if you do not yet have the answers, the first step is to enter the conversation and to have an impact. There are few better ways of doing that than becoming a Board Member of the National Rehabilitation Association,

For information on submitting a nomination for our current Board of Directors openings of President-elect or Board Member at Large contact the Nominations and Elections Chair, Lou Adams at past-president@nationalrehab.org

NRA AWARD COMMITTEE CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The National Rehabilitation Association (NRA) awards recognize and honor people and organizations that have created opportunities for people with disabilities or created advancements in the rehabilitation profession. NRA members, chapters, regions, and divisions are encouraged to make nominations.

The NRA Awards Committee is currently seeking nominations for the 2023 Awards. They will be announced at the Virtual Conference to be held in September 2023.

Each year we have the opportunity to honor and recognize those who go above and beyond on a regular basis. We all know these individuals and it is a pleasure to be around them. So, let's make sure we recognize them and share their stories with the other professionals in our field. The ceremony will be virtual as part of the conference. In the past three years, this has allowed not just the recipients to attend, but family members and friends as well.

Our Awards Committee looks forward to your nominations. Below you will see descriptions of each award and the criteria. Please note that all nominations require a letter of nomination from the nominator and two letters of support.

**Thursday June 15, 2023:
Award nominations open and Award descriptions
and criteria will be available on the website.**

Monday July 31, 2023: Nominations are closed

September 19, 2023 Awards Ceremony

If you have any questions or need help with nominations, you can reach me at knortz@wcf.com or 385-351-8093.

Thank you in advance for your nominations,

Kim Nortz
Awards Committee Chair

PS. Please encourage your chapters, regions, and divisions to nominate people!

NRA WEBSITE – NOMINATION AND ONLINE SUBMISSION PROCESS

The link below will refer you to the Awards page. Please view the link for more detailed information regarding the award categories to include descriptions, nomination overview, required documentation, and online submission procedure to help prepare your nomination packet.

Awards Overview Page:
<https://www.nationalrehab.org/awards>

NRA AWARD CATEGORIES

E. B. WHITTEN SILVER MEDALLION AWARD

The E. B. Whitten Silver Medallion Award was established in 1974 in honor of the Association's first Executive Director. The award is presented to an individual who has exercised notable leadership in removing environmental and legal barriers and in helping to overcome discrimination of persons with disabilities. He actively participated in groundbreaking legislation, advocacy, and improvements to the rehabilitation profession.

CRITERIA:

- Contribution may be national (regional, or local) but must have been of such importance to influence action on a regional or national basis.
- Actions must have contributed to the purpose of NRA mission of enhancing the lives of people with disabilities.
- Recipient must have exercised notable leadership: (a) in removing environmental and legal barriers, and/or (b) in overcoming discrimination which keeps people with disabilities from living normal lives and enjoying the rights and benefits due every American citizen.
- While not a requirement, preference given to members of the Association.

MAX T. PRINCE MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

Named for Max T. Prince, a member of the Missouri Rehabilitation Association. Max T. Prince was well known for his efforts on behalf of persons with disabilities. He was respected by the rehabilitation community both locally and nationally. He was an extremely generous man who was known to give of his time and resources to those in need. When he died unexpectedly in a car accident in 1998, the Max T. Prince Award was established in his honor. This award is given to an individual who has demonstrated years of faithful service and leadership to NRA.

CRITERIA:

- Current Member who has provided outstanding membership effort and demonstrated leadership at the national, regional, division, or state chapter level for a period of 10-15 years. This can be as a board member, on a committee, or any role that positively impacts the development of the National Rehabilitation Association and its mission.

NRA ORGANIZATIONAL AWARD

The NRA Organizational Award is presented to an organization with an outstanding record of service to persons with disabilities. The organization may be one whose principal objectives lie within the field of rehabilitation, or which has

demonstrated effective concern for the care, treatment, education rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

CRITERIA:

- How has the contribution directly affected persons with disabilities and what was the outcome?
- What are some of the methods that were used to assist people with disabilities?
- Do you have any success stories or testimonials that you could provide to show the direct result of the organizations contribution?

W. F. FAULKES AWARD

The W. F. Faulkes Award is presented for technical or professional achievement in the field of rehabilitation. It is awarded to a person or organization, which in the preceding years has made a contribution of national importance to the increase of knowledge in the field of rehabilitation, or of the development of techniques or methods in the application of such knowledge, or to the prevention of disability. It was established in 1954 in the name of the Association's founder and first president.

CRITERIA:

- What are your products (research articles, techniques)? Please list them.
- What is the impact of these products? (i.e., how many author and others have cited the produce(s), how may have used the technique(s)) – If you have more than one product, please list them individually.
- What are the outlets of the product(s)/where have the products been used (journals, presentations, rehabilitation counseling practices, etc.)?
- Please list outlets.
- Please include a letter detailing why the person is a good nominee.
- Please include two letters of recommendations.
- Please include supporting documents.

BELL GREVE MEMORIAL AWARD

The Bell Greve Memorial Award is presented to a person who has shown unusual initiative or creativity in developing and/or administering a service program for people with disabilities. The award is named for Bell Greve, founder of the Cleveland Rehabilitation Center. A pioneer in the development and provision of relief and rehabilitation services to the poor, sick, and people with disabilities. She gained international distinction for her work with local, state, and international social service agencies.

CRITERIA:

- Please provide the name of the service program and location (city, state).
- Offer a description of the program, and how it helps people with disabilities.
- Describe the unusual initiative and/or creativity efforts involved in developing and/or administering the service program.
- Describe why this individual would be the best nominee to receive the Bell Greve Memorial Award.
- Please include any supporting documents you deem appropriate.

EXCELLENCE IN MEDIA AWARD

The Excellence in Media Award is presented to an individual or organization whose media production has made a noticeable contribution towards the accurate and progressive portrayal of people with disabilities. It is presented in recognition of outstanding effort in any medium, including print, radio, television, film, and advertising.

CRITERIA:

- Individuals with disabilities should be portrayed in a realistic and positive manner.
- The media production should appeal to the public at large rather than targeting only a specialized or professional audience.
- The portrayal may exist within the context of a larger idea or subject matter, that is, not be a narrow disability-specific message.
- The portrayal should be informative rather than merely promotional.

GRADUATE LITERARY AWARD

"The Graduate Literary Award is presented annually in recognition of exceptional academic achievement by rehabilitation students at the graduate level (i.e., master's and doctoral level)

CRITERIA:

- Is the writer enrolled in college/university program that specializes in rehabilitation counseling, clinical rehabilitation, or a closely related field for the specific purpose of working with individuals with disabilities or preparing future professionals to work with individuals with disabilities?
- In what ways does the manuscript underscore principles of empowerment, social advocacy, and

cultural awareness and competence across various communities?

- What makes the manuscript original?
- In what ways does the writer demonstrate an outstanding submission/manuscript?

GRADUATE ROLE SUPPLEMENTAL REQUIREMENTS: In conjunction with nomination letters, manuscripts submitted for nomination will be assessed on written quality, theoretical framework, research methodology (if applicable), impact on the field, and importance of topic (topic can be on any aspect of rehabilitation). Manuscripts should use the American Psychological Association (APA) 6th edition format and not be previously submitted for publication. Manuscripts are to be uploaded as a Word document and submitted as part of the overall nomination packet using the electronic submission portal. NRA will publish the winning entry in the Journal of Rehabilitation and reserves the right for one year to publish any manuscript entered.”

YVONNE JOHNSON NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

Presented annually to an individual who is highly committed to issues concerning people with disabilities and to the professionals who serve them. This award was established in 2001 to honor an NRA Past President, who resolved critical issues within the national organization. She was also a director of public rehabilitation in Georgia. She was a natural leader and mentor, who was well respected by all who knew her.

CRITERIA:

- The nominee should demonstrate a leadership style that is creative and inspiring.
- Thinking “outside of the box” should be demonstrated.
- Examples of mentoring others to assume leadership positions should be included

SYLVIA WALKER NATIONAL MULTICULTURAL AWARD

The Sylvia Walker Award is named after a professor, researcher and director of the first federal Research and Training Center (RTC) focused on minority issues and disability, who served as a longtime advocate for multicultural issues in rehabilitation. Established in 2004, the award is intended to (a) honor/recognize an NRA member/group or organization in addressing multicultural issues at the local regional or national level, (b) maintain, and stimulate the Association’s (NRA) focus on diversity and multiculturalism as a part of society.

CRITERIA:

1. Is the nominee an active member of a state chapter, region, or division of the National Rehabilitation Association?
2. How does the nominee demonstrate leadership in advancing multicultural issues within his or her sphere of influence?
3. Provide examples of how the nominee addresses multicultural issues and how their efforts have had a positive impact on service planning and/or delivery.
4. Explain how the nominee’s actions enhance the profession and/or organization.

NRA CHAPTER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Outstanding achievement in the effort to advance the mission of the National Rehabilitation Association at the chapter level.

CRITERIA:

- To be considered for this award, the state chapter must be in good standing with the National Rehabilitation Association. In addition, the following questions must be addressed in your nomination of the state chapter.

HAS THE CHAPTER:

- Demonstrated exemplary activities in professional training (e.g., for VR professionals, other stakeholders, graduate VR students). What specifically did they do and in which of these areas?
- What did they participate in, and what activities related to public awareness of vocational rehabilitation services, membership in NRA, and employment of people with disabilities were carried out?
- What activities related to consumer advocacy (e.g., for consumers, employers, families, professionals, and other stakeholders)?
- How have they been actively working toward increasing chapter/National membership growth through media, social media, events, conferences, and other effective ways?
- In what ways have they consistently been viewed as innovative, creative and willing to respond to the changing needs of membership?

THE ROGER CARTER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE FOR A LARGE EMPLOYER

This award was created to honor an employer (national, regional and/or local) which has demonstrated exemplary achievement in the recruitment, hiring and retention of persons with disabilities throughout all levels within the company for a Large Employer (100+ employees).

Roger Carter was a Rehabilitation Counselor with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services. He understood and promoted the partnership with the rehabilitation agency, consumer, and employer as well.

CRITERIA:

- What agencies, partnerships, or networks were used to recruit and employ persons with disabilities?
- What specific guidance did they seek that made employment options successful?
- What services were utilized (On the Job Training, job shadowing, assessments, accommodations, etc.)
- How did they learn of your services and what processes were used to introduce and use your program?
- Describe their experience with employing persons with disabilities, outcomes, concerns and suggestions for improvement.

EMPLOYER AWARD FOR SMALL EMPLOYER

This award was created to honor an employer (national, regional and/or local) which has demonstrated exemplary achievement in the recruitment, hiring and retention of persons with disabilities throughout all levels within the company for a Small Employer (under 100 employees).

CRITERIA:

- What agencies, partnerships, or networks were used to recruit and employ persons with disabilities?
- What specific guidance did they seek that made employment options successful?
- What services were utilized (On the Job Training, job shadowing, assessments, accommodations, etc.)
- How did they learn of your services and what processes were used to introduce and use your program?
- Describe their experience with employing persons with disabilities, outcomes, concerns and suggestions for improvement.

NRA (2023-2024) Issue Statement

Support The Real Emergency Access for Aging and Disability Inclusion for Disasters (REAADI)

Committee(s) of Jurisdiction: (REAADI) Act S-1049, Senate - Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Sen. Casey, Co-sponsors: Senator Gillibrand, Senator Warren, Senator Duckworth, Senator Blumenthal, Senator Markey, Senator Wyden, Senator Sanders, Senator Welch, Senator Smith. (REAADI) Act H.R.2371 - House - Transportation and Infrastructure; Education and the Workforce; Energy and Commerce; Rep. Dingell, Co-sponsors: Rep. Fitzpatrick, Rep. Huffman, Rep. Panetta, Del. Norton, Rep. Bowman, Rep. Moskowitz, Rep. Carbajal

Statement of the Problem: Although the 54 million older adults and 61 million people with disabilities living in the U.S. are at higher risk of dying during disasters than others, they are often left behind and excluded from the complex planning needed to stay safe during and after emergency events. Inclusive disaster management depends on all levels of public and private life coming together across federal, tribal,

territorial, state, local and non-governmental agencies to address the diverse needs of all. Coordinated planning and response are necessary to explicitly address the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs— such as language barriers, limited financial resources, or lack of transportation—as the Nation prepares for, responds to, recovers from, and mitigates disasters.

Background: The REAADI for Disasters Act will improve the inclusion of individuals with disabilities and older adults in preparation for, response to, recovery from, and mitigation of disasters; ensure they are free from discrimination and protected during and included in all disaster related phases including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and other disability laws. The bill also addresses improvement of coordination among the communities of individuals with disabilities.

Continued on page 12

National Rehabilitation Association Public Policy Updates and Alerts

CMS Proposed Rule to Improve Access and Quality Of Medicaid Services--Seeking Public Comment by July 3, 2023

Background: The National Rehabilitation Association strongly supported the ADA, and the Olmstead Decision that followed in 1999, a decision that facilitated the development of Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) under Section 1915 of the Social Security Act. **HCBS, coupled with Social Security Based Work Incentives (Ticket to Work provisions), provides the opportunity for individuals with significant disabilities to be employed while living independently in their communities.**

On April 18, President Biden issued an historic Executive Order containing over fifty directives to mobilize resources across the federal government to bolster the care economy.

Pursuant to this Executive Order, on May 3, 2023, The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Administration of Community Living (ACL) issued the Proposed Rule Ensuring Access to Medicaid Services (Access Rule).

The Fact Sheet Ensuring Access to Medicaid Services (CMS 2442-P) provides a summary of the Proposed Rule.

“A substantive component of this proposed rule focuses on improving access to, and the quality of HCBS. Over the past several decades, HCBS have become a critical component of the Medicaid program and are part of a larger framework of progress toward community integration of older adults and people of all ages with disabilities that spans efforts across the Federal government. The proposed changes in this rule are intended to strengthen necessary safeguards to ensure health and welfare, promote health equity for people receiving Medicaid-covered HCBS, and achieve a more consistent and coordinated approach to the administration of policies and procedures across Medicaid HCBS programs. Specifically, the proposed rule seeks to:

- Establish a new strategy for oversight, monitoring, quality assurance, and quality improvement for HCBS programs;
- Strengthen person-centered service planning and incident management systems in HCBS;
- Require states to establish grievance systems in FFS HCBS programs;
- Require that at least 80% of Medicaid payments for personal care, homemaker, and home health

aide services be spent on compensation for the direct care workforce (as opposed to administrative overhead or profit);

- Require states to publish the average hourly rate paid to direct care workers delivering personal care, home health aide, and homemaker services;
 - Require states to establish an advisory group for interested parties to advise and consult on provider payment rates and direct compensation for direct care workers;
 - Require states to report on waiting lists in section 1915(c) waiver programs; service delivery timeliness for personal care, homemaker and home health aide services; and a standardized set of HCBS quality measures; and
 - Promote public transparency related to the administration of Medicaid-covered HCBS through public reporting of quality, performance, and compliance measures.”
- The Proposed Rule seeks feedback on each of the bullet points. Comments must be received via CMS website on July 3, 2023. If this issue is not directly germane to your work, please pass it on to other parties for whom these proposals are of significant importance.

NRA (2023-2024) Issue Statement

Continued From page 11

ities and older adults, including multiply marginalized BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities, government agencies, centers for independent living, VOADs, and other non-governmental organizations, in comprehensive disaster planning for improving outcomes for all individuals, including individuals with disabilities and older adults.

Recommendation: The National Rehabilitation Association calls on members to ask their U.S. Senators and Representatives to support and co-sponsor this important legislation.

For more information, please contact:
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