



The Arc's Legislative Agenda for 2015 will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Budget & Revenue

This is an ongoing processing each year. The Arc supports the extension of the state's income tax.

2. Rebalancing:

We continue to advocate for an end to the waiting list, closure of State developmental centers, implementation of the Ligas Consent Decree and the transition of people into the community.

3. Care Campaign

The Arc will continue advocate for increasing the wages and benefits of Direct Care Professionals with the Care Campaign.

4. Criminal System and People with ID/DD

We will work on legislation dealing with the treatment of persons with DD and ID in the corrections and criminal justice systems and police training. We are considering the creation of a task force as a first step to working with various stakeholders such as States Attorneys, Public Defenders, Judges, Sheriffs, and DHS. We are talking with the Guardianship and Advocacy Commission about working on this jointly. The Dept. of Human Services is also looking into its forensic placement practices. Director Casey is also helping to gather some information from other DD Directors around the country about this issue since it does not just happen here.

5. Employment First

We will be working with the Governor's Employment Task Force to implement Employment First. We are also considering the new requirements of the Workforce Innovations law recently signed by President Obama. We may consider a bill that incorporates some of its requirements into Illinois law, especially with respect to preparation of youth for integrated competitive employment.

6. Down Syndrome

We agreed to work on a bill with the Down Syndrome Association to require the Department of Public Health to provide information for parents and families regarding Down Syndrome to local health care providers and genetic counselors. Massachusetts and a couple of other states have similar laws and the bill can be modeled after them.

7. Puns

There are some issues regarding the way PUNS is administered. The Developmental Disability Council is taking the lead on this. This is one issue. The other issue has to do with persons being wrongly found ineligible for Medicaid and consequently being denied long-term support services when they are called in off of the PUNS. This has to do with the counting of household income under the MAGI methodology. Federal regulations say that persons who are SSI eligible do not come under the MAGI methodology, which means only the individual's income should be considered. We are working along with Health & Disability Advocates with DHS to correct the Medicaid issue, and we are going to explore a change in Illinois' State Medicaid Plan so that anyone found eligible for SSI based on a disability is automatically eligible for Medicaid. We are one of a handful of states that still require a separate application for Medicaid for individuals who are already eligible for SSI. This also extends to people eligible for SSDI which makes them eligible for Medicare but not necessarily Medicaid and they have to wait two years for Medicare to kick in.

8. Firearm Operators Identification Card (FOID) Reporting

The Arc needs to reconvene an ad hoc group that met last Spring. We should also consider a bill that excludes residential programs for persons with DD and ID from concealed carry. The reporting requirements are discriminatory and assume that persons with DD are inherently dangerous, which is a misconception that leads to discriminatory actions, especially in the areas of housing and employment.

9. Health Care

We will continue to oppose Phase III Integrated Care Program, the managed care of developmental disability services.

We will consider setting up a legislative task force to review the amount of time individuals with I/DD spending in waiting or emergency rooms in local hospitals. In addition, we will look into people with I/DD, especially those with a dual diagnosis, not be accepted to local psychiatric programs in community hospitals and being shipped to substandard options

10. Assistive Technology

We will work with the Illinois Assistive Technology Project and the Coleman Institute on a legislative resolution on the rights of people with cognitive disabilities to technology and information access.

In addition we will work on national disability advocacy issues with The Arc of the United States.