



# Quarterly

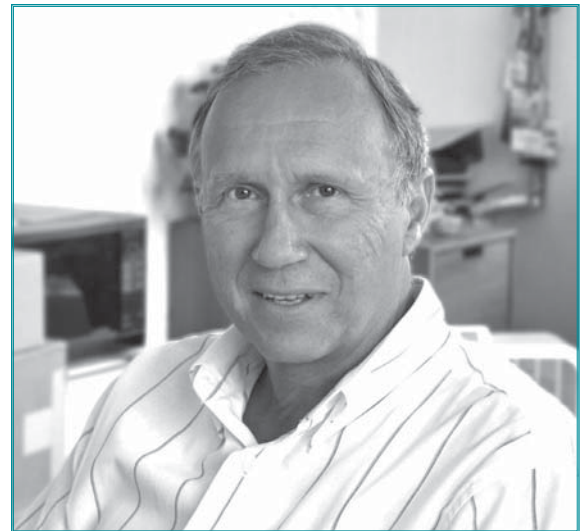
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## ODDC Executive Director Zwyer Announces Retirement

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David Zwyer recently announced his retirement as ODDC's executive director. Zwyer will retire in September 2008, after leading the agency for nearly 12 years. He has, during his tenure at ODDC, developed a national reputation and significantly influenced disability policy in the state of Ohio. Ron Kozlowski, executive director of Advocacy & Protection Services, Inc. said, "Dave has consistently demonstrated his advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities and their families. He has been a resource and leader in the field in his various roles and we owe him a debt of gratitude for his contribution in the legal, public policy, and self-determination arenas."



*Executive Director David Zwyer*

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### **Strengthening the Voices of Individuals with Disabilities**

Zwyer has worked to assure that individuals with developmental disabilities have a voice in the decisions that affect them. He has championed the causes of individuals by advocating for Ohio's Bill of Rights and was instrumental in establishing programs and supporting legislation to protect people with disabilities from abuse and neglect, supplemental services trusts, and guardianship issues. His leadership has helped people with disabilities gain a stronger voice in policymaking. According to John Hannah, former president of People First of Ohio, "Director Zwyer has been very helpful with getting People First involved with the legislature of Ohio."

Bringing the voice of Ohioans into the national disability advocacy arena was also important to Zwyer. He successfully advocated for the appointment of an ODDC member who has a disability and is a minority on the board of directors of the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD). "There's nobody more thoughtful and fair than David. He gives everyone an opportunity to participate," said Becky Harker, president of the NACDD and executive director of the Iowa DD Council.

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*ODDC Mission*

*It is the mission of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council to create change that improves independence, productivity and inclusion in community life for people with disabilities and their families.*

# Cincinnati's Advocacy Legacy Continues

By Paul Jarvis, ODDC

Cincinnati has long been recognized as the birthplace of disability advocacy. More than 60 years ago, parents of children with disabilities in Cincinnati joined to form what was known as the Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) – now known as The Arc. Today that legacy lives on in state and local chapters in Ohio, and around the nation, as parents and self-advocates continue the fight for equality and opportunity for people with disabilities.

It is fitting that The Arc Hamilton County is implementing one of four ODDC Centers for Public Policy grants. These grants are used to develop regional resource centers that, according to Mary Butler, chair of ODDC's Public Policy Committee, become agile grassroots networks that can take action at a moment's notice. "The focus of these grants is to teach advocacy, encourage participation in public policy development, and empower advocates to build working relationships with their legislators and other policymakers," said Butler. "I think right now we have a great group of people working very hard to do just that."

Tom Eamoe, executive director of The Arc Hamilton County, and project director for the Center for Public Policy grant is addressing the need to nurture the relationship between advocates and policymakers. He arranges monthly meetings with them to discuss specific issues and concerns. The feedback gained from these meetings has been extremely positive. "We feel that bringing together policymakers and constituents is one of the chief strengths we have as an ODDC Center for Public Policy grantee," said Eamoe.

## Advocacy Efforts Produce Results

The Arc Hamilton County has seen some very promising returns on their advocacy efforts. One example is the inclusion of Medicaid Buy-In in the state's operating budget, an issue the Hamilton County Center strongly advocated for, along with many other advocates across the state of Ohio.



*Senator Eric Kearney (center), meets with advocates from The Arc Hamilton County Center for Public Policy, including (left to right) Tom Eamoe, executive director, The Arc Hamilton County, Aimee Strunk, Cheryl Phipps, superintendent, Hamilton County Board of MRDD, and Troy Moore*

Advocates also convinced state Senator Eric Kearney to introduce Senate Bill (SB) 165 to expand membership of county boards of mental retardation and developmental disabilities. The bill would add two individuals who are eligible to receive county board services to each board. Kearney also introduced amendments to Ohio's hate crimes law to include protection for people with disabilities. That bill, SB 349, was introduced on June 24, 2008.

Kearney isn't the only policymaker taking notice of advocates for people with disabilities. In April, Cincinnati City Councilman John Cranley introduced a proposal to restructure and expand the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority to include Butler, Clermont and Warren Counties. The proposal was developed with considerable input from advocates of The Arc Hamilton County Center for Public Policy through the Transportation Regional Action Network, a project Eamoe and others created as a result of their work on current and previous local public policy grants.

For more information about the Centers for Public Policy, contact Paul Jarvis at (614) 644-5545 or [Paul.Jarvis@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:Paul.Jarvis@dmr.state.oh.us) .

## Chairman's Message



*Michael Scholl,  
Chairman of ODDC*

The ODDC organizational and program review is complete! This comprehensive review, conducted at the request of the Governor's Office, provides a report for ODDC to use as a planning resource, and recommendations designed to increase the organizational capacity of ODDC. This will enable ODDC to more efficiently and effectively create change that improves independence, productivity, and inclusion in community life for people

with developmental disabilities and their families.

Dynamic Pathways, Inc., the organization that performed the review, provided an overview of the results and recommendations to ODDC members at the Council's May meeting. The full Council held a special meeting in June, facilitated by the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution, to analyze each recommendation. ODDC members reviewed, discussed, and then voted to accept, reject, or modify each of the 16 recommendations.

ODDC members accepted and endorsed all of the recommendations and elevated two of them to a high priority level: (1) expand the involvement of other organizations, and (2) engage in organizational planning. ODDC will begin implementing all recommendations over the next several months.

An internal audit of the Council's finances, at ODDC's request, was also recently completed by the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODDC's fiscal agent under the Developmental Disabilities Act). Both the organizational and program review and the internal audit were conducted to improve ODDC's functioning, to increase operational effectiveness, and to ensure that fiscal obligations are managed in a responsible manner.

Our thanks to everyone who worked with the consultants and auditors to give ODDC a roadmap for change.

To request a copy of the ODDC organizational and program recommendations or the fiscal audit, contact Tammy Waller at (614) 466-5208 or email at: [Tammy.Waller@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:Tammy.Waller@dmr.state.oh.us) . ■



Improving the lives of  
Ohioans with disabilities

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The Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council is a group of 35 people, appointed by the governor, who plan and advocate for Ohioans with disabilities. ODDC receives federal funds and distributes those funds by awarding grants for projects and activities that create visions, influence public policy, pilot new approaches, empower individuals and families, and advocate system change.

8 East Long St.  
Suite 1200  
Columbus, OH 43215

Voice: (614) 466-5205  
(800) 766-7426  
(Toll free in Ohio)

TTY: (614) 644-5530

Fax: (614) 466-0298

[www.ddc.ohio.gov](http://www.ddc.ohio.gov)

# Do Ohio Initiatives Support Community Inclusion and Self-determination?

Ohio is initiating several programs that have the potential to increase choice and improve the lives of people with disabilities. Programs such as Medicaid Buy-In for Workers with Disabilities, HOME Choice (Money Follows the Person), healthcare expansion, and the reports and recommendations of the Futures Committee and the Unified Long Term Care Budget Workgroup are moving forward in Ohio. These initiatives can foster self-determination and improve community inclusion opportunities, giving people with disabilities the choice to live in the community, a civil rights issue for people with disabilities.

The *DD Quarterly* asked stakeholders from Ohio's disability community for their opinions about these initiatives. They were asked the following question:

***Do you think current initiatives implemented in Ohio will increase opportunities for community inclusion and self-determination for Ohioans with disabilities?***

Here are their responses.

"I think the Futures Committee will have an impact because they talked to people with disabilities and their families first to ask how to improve the system, and now they are taking their findings to collaborative organizations to recommend how the system can help reach those goals."

- Robert Shuemak, self-advocate  
2006 graduate of *Partners in Policymaking*

"We now have the tools to make community inclusion and self-determination a reality in Ohio. But there has been a tremendous expansion of Medicaid home and community based waivers during the last decade and the addition of long-overdue initiatives such

as Medicaid Buy-In, but as we take one step forward, we have also stepped back.

Disability specific schools are being reestablished throughout the state because our public schools have failed to meet parent expectations. Ohio's method of funding services to individuals with disabilities has created a system of haves and have nots, based on where one lives in the state; and, while our tax base weakens, the number of Ohioans with disabilities continues to grow.

We have the tools, but true inclusion and the implementation of self-determination ideals must be implemented across all support systems rather than one state department at a time, with the active and integral participation of Ohioans with disabilities and their families."

- Gary Tonks, executive director  
*The Arc of Ohio*

"There are people like me who have a hard time understanding the things they send to us in the mail. New programs need to be in words that we can understand."

"The state of Ohio needs to train the advocates. You can not learn about new things until you are given the chance to learn."

- Self-advocates  
*People First of Ohio*

"I am very pleased with the changes I see in access to services and supports ... By and large, the service system is becoming more open to individual choice and control, and people with disabilities are assuming their rightful place in the 'driver's seat.' They are selecting their services and providers, and they are determining how money allocated to them

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## **Do Ohio Initiatives Support** *(continued)*

is spent. Medicaid waivers, while still too administratively burdensome, have opened doors for individuals and helped local and state governments stretch limited dollars to purchase services for more people.”

- Cheryl Phipps, superintendent,  
Hamilton County Board of MRDD

“Medicaid Buy-In is a great idea and will have an impact on people with disabilities, but it needs to be better publicized. The service support administrators in local county boards of MRDD need to understand it better so they can promote it as an option.”

- Bill Adelsberger, parent  
2000 graduate of Partners in  
Policymaking

“All these initiatives have the potential to significantly increase community inclusion and self-determination; however, it will be imperative to publicize the initiatives and educate people about them so that people with disabilities and/or their caregivers will know how to take advantage of these initiatives.”

- Jane Novick, chair of Employment and  
Health Committee and parent  
ODDC

“Absolutely. Two key words in your question are ‘increased opportunities.’ Ohio’s disability community has finally seen a change in how Ohioans and their leaders perceive having a disability thanks to the dedicated education and advocacy efforts of many disability organizations and their constituents. Ohio’s government leaders also deserve credit. In spite of decreasing revenues they chose to institute Medicaid Buy-In. Money Follows the Person is exciting but carries state

costs. They authorized those costs. And they increased waiver slots that enable community living.

I am a person with a disability. I feared growing older here because I knew I would have to go into a nursing home for assistance I would need. No longer. I will have community-based options!”

- Brenda Curtis, executive director  
Ohio Statewide Independent Living  
Council

“Several of the initiatives in the laundry list hold great promise for more consumer control and should support the tenets of self-determination. As with all new initiatives the devil is in the detail, and the ultimate outcomes depend upon us listening to individuals who will be impacted or will use the new services. For Medicaid Buy-In to be successful, we will need to rely on marketing the availability of the program and helping individuals through the tedious process of applying for a program with no track record. Many of the recommendations from the Future’s group ... rely on a realistic and well supported implementation plan ... We must be vigilant in developing programs and services that honor and respect choice of the user.”

- Dan Ohler, executive director  
Ohio Association of County Boards  
of MRDD

## **What Do You Think?**

Do you think current initiatives implemented in Ohio will increase opportunities for community inclusion and self-determination for Ohioans with disabilities? *DD Quarterly* would like to hear from you. Send your comments to [newsletter@olrs.state.oh.us](mailto:newsletter@olrs.state.oh.us) . ■

## Self-determination: Choosing the “Stuff of Life”

by Holly Binkley and Dee Zeffiro-Krenisky,  
Ed.D., Huron County Board of Mental  
Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
(HCBMRDD)

A small group of people from the HCBMRDD recently attended the International Conference on Self-Determination. The three-day conference, held in Detroit, Michigan, welcomed more than 1,000 people who traveled from Britain, Australia, Ireland and 40 states in the U.S. The conference was coordinated by the Center for Self-Determination ([www.self-determination.com](http://www.self-determination.com)).

One presentation really hit home for Barb Penza and Rachel Jones from Huron County who attended the conference courtesy of the HCBMRDD. Penza and Jones heard about the “stuff of life” and about being in a position to make choices for themselves from conference presenter Michael Head, Michigan Department of Community Health. Penza and Jones learned from Head’s presentation that to achieve self-determination, you must be the one who has the power and authority to make choices to do the things you dream of, put those dreams into action, and make those choices meaningful for yourself.

According to Penza, the “stuff of life” most important to her is deciding what activities to participate in after work and being able to spend time with the people she chooses. For example, she chooses to go on bike rides organized by a recreation program, one of her favorite activities. Being able to choose how she earns money at work is the “stuff of life” and a value to Jones. Jones said about her job at a document destruction facility, “I like to work on the shredding crew and going on pick-ups.”

Penza, Jones, and other HCBMRDD attendees were also inspired by the thought-provoking words from individuals who are true examples of self-determination. One individual who started his own business was particularly impressive. He explained how he took full



*HCBMRDD group at the self-determination conference.  
Left to right: Rachel Jones, Holly Binkley,  
Dee Zeffiro-Krenisky, Barb Penza*

advantage of the natural supports in his life to help overcome barriers he encountered as a person with a disability. He discussed how he fought against the traditional support system to make his own choices about acquiring a wheelchair accessible van, his apartment, and his business.

People left the conference motivated and encouraged to put into action the “stuff of life” to achieve a self-determined life.

For information about the conference, go to [www.communitydrive.org/Conference.html](http://www.communitydrive.org/Conference.html) . ■

### **Ohio Self Determination Association 2008 Conference**

The Ohio Self Determination Association annual conference will be held September 16 - 17, 2008 at the University Plaza Hotel in Columbus, Ohio.

Conference registration brochures will be available in July. For more information: [www.ohiosda.org](http://www.ohiosda.org)



























