**disABILITY *LINK* – Legislative and Public Policy Advocacy and Education – Brief Report**

**October to December 2014**

**Always Promoting –** independent living (IL), community inclusion, self-determination, barrier removal, etc. – in every conversation, discussion, meeting, presentation, etc.

**Active participation in planning for The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) turning 25 in 2015:**

* Collaborating with other local, statewide and national organizations to plan and execute “ADA Legacy 25 Georgia” – series of events between January and July 2015
* disABILITY LINK is leading the plans for a major contingent of the disability community members in Atlanta’s Martin Luther King Day Parade on January 19, 2015 – “Disability Rights are Civil Rights”
* disABILITY LINK leading the plans for a “human flag” (with the universal symbol of access) for some time in the first half of 2015
* disABILITY LINK is planning a series of other events (e.g., disability community history classes, etc.)
* The 25th anniversary of the ADA is now included in all the presentations made about disABILITY LINK, IL, the ADA, etc. – distributing the ADA25 wrist bands and book marks whenever possible

**Targeting efforts to promote the Community First Choice Option (CFC):**

* disABILITY LINK is working with national disability community leaders to promote CFC – Georgia is a “target” state
* disABILITY LINK arranged a meeting with the State Medicaid Agency to request adoption of the Community First Option (for November 13) – continuing to ask them to undertake a cost analysis
* Working with other Georgia organizations to “follow up” the request
* More info at <http://kff.org/medicaid/state-indicator/section-1915k-community-first-choice-state-plan-option/>
* Representatives from disABILITY LINK participated in National Advocacy Action in Littlerock, AR – promoting community living in general , and CFC in particular

**Continuous Voter Registration and Education Efforts:**

* disABILITY LINK hosted an event on Monday, September 22 – guests included representatives from DeKalb County Office of Elections – discussion and education on the voting process and the issues – assisted consumers to register to vote, change addressees, become informed, etc.
* Followed up with widely distributed (via social media and email) information “reminders,” regarding voting at the November 4 election, etc.
* disABILITY LINK asks every new consumer if they are registered to vote and supports registration if required

**Continued Advocacy for Accessible Public Transit:**

* Representatives of disABILITY LINK are longtime advocates for accountability and accessibility in metro area transit providers
* Representatives from disABILITY LINK continue to advocate with MARTA regarding the plans for privatization of paratransit (in line with disABILITY LINK’s Policy Position Paper)
* More transportation education events are scheduled at disABILITY LINK (for example, on December 10)

**Other Legislative and Policy Efforts:**

* disABILITY LINK helped to share information about and participated in a Georgia Council on Development on Disabilities (GCDD) “Listening Tour” event in Decatur on Sunday, September 28, to help determine legislative priorities in 2015
* disABILITY LINK is active in statewide policy making around youth to adulthood transition services
* Representatives from disABILITY LINK participated in the Home and Community Based Services stakeholder meetings (in person and virtually) regarding the changes in the regulations from the Center of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
* Representatives from disABILITY LINK serve on the Independent Care Waiver Program (ICWP) Providers Planning Committee, working towards policy changes to better serve ICWP consumers
* disABILITY LINK continues to support consumers and allies to contact US Senators regarding the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - met with Isakson’s staff (Atlanta and Washington DC based staff) with other leaders in the GA disability community at the Senator’s office on Friday, August 29 – received positive information regarding Isakson’s support, but not on the push to ratify before 2015 - more info at <http://www.disabilitytreaty.org/crpd>