35 Years of Rights Protections

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Speakers

Disability Rights Florida Intake Staff

• Ann Robinson, Intake Manager
• Paul Finch, Intake Coordinator
• Linda Rollins, Mental Health Coordinator
Learning Objectives

• Understand the history of the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) System and Client Assistance Program (CAP).

• Obtain a working knowledge of Disability Rights Florida as an example of one of the largest P&A’s (also houses the CAP program).

• Increase your knowledge of other key disability resources/referrals in each state.
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)

• The nonprofit membership organization of the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy (P&A) Systems and Client Assistance Programs (CAP).

• Collectively, the P&A/CAP network is the largest provider of legally based advocacy services to people with disabilities in the United States.
Exploring NDRN website

- Locate the P&A in your state: http://www.napas.org/
Mental Health Bell

- Located in the Lobby of the National Headquarters of the Mental Health Association in Virginia.
Disability Rights Florida

• Disability Rights Florida is a member of the National Disability Rights Network, AIRS and the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (FLAIRS) – a state affiliate of AIRS.

• Headquarters in Tallahassee with offices in Tampa and Hollywood – several telecommuters around the state.
Disability Rights Florida

- Disability Rights Florida is the designated P&A system/Client Assistance Program for individuals with disabilities in Florida.
- Disability Rights Florida has authority and responsibility under eight federal grants.
- Established in 1987, Disability Rights Florida is a statewide, not-for-profit corporation.
Our Mission

To advance the quality of life, dignity, equality, self-determination, and freedom of choice of persons with disabilities through collaboration, education, advocacy, as well as legal and legislative strategies.
Access to education, employment and independence.

Better laws, policies and practices.

Elimination of abuse and neglect.
Authority to Pursue

- Legal
- Administrative
- Other appropriate remedies
Authority to Access

• **Facilities**
  - Including state hospitals, crisis stabilization units, residential treatment facilities, short term residential treatment centers, group homes, intermediate care facilities for individuals with DD, jails, prisons, and other types of facilities.

• **Records**
  - With consent of individual, legal guardian or court order
  - And in special cases, without consent
Priorities

• Abuse, neglect or rights violations in institutional and residential settings
  • Inappropriate restraint and seclusion use
  • Restriction of communication
  • Discharge planning or release
  • Failure to provide medical treatment
  • Denial of information about rights
  • Use of service animals
Priorities

• **Community placement**
  • Alternatives to institutionalization

• **Access to publicly funded benefits and services, particularly home and community based services**
  • Waiver services
  • Medicaid state plan services
Priorities

• **Access to vocational rehabilitation and blind services**
  • Including integrated/competitive employment opportunities
  • Outreach to private corporations to promote employability and assistive technology
Priorities

• Equal access to public and private programs and services including:
  • Businesses
  • Transportation
  • Airports
  • Postsecondary education
  • Recreation
  • Housing and
  • Assistive technology
Priorities

• Least restrictive alternatives to guardianship

• Voting rights and civic participation
Priorities

• Self-empowerment and rights of individuals to gain greater control over important life decisions

• Control over use of public benefits and personal assets
What is Wrong with This Picture?
Assistive Technology, Devices and Services

• “Technology is one of the primary engines for economic activity, education and innovation in the Nation, and throughout the world.” From AT Act of 2001

• Protection and Advocacy for Assistive Technology (PAAT) program specifics.
National Pass It On Center

• Recycle Assistive Technology and provide to those in need.
• Locations in your state for AT recycling programs -
  http://www.passitoncenter.org/
Our Intake Operation

• Large P&A intake unit for Issue based teams.
• Centralized Intake in Tallahassee.
• MH/Institutional hotline, Spanish line, general intake and online intake.
• Approximately 7,000 service requests per year.
Florida's Intake Initiative

- 7 FTE’s Certified Information and Referral Specialists (CIRS) and 1 part-time position.
- 2 bilingual specialists (English/Spanish).
- Two employees have worked at a 211.
- Professional and positive customer service.
Florida Experience

• Benefits of professional Certified Information and Referral Specialist (CIRS) credential for our intake unit.
• Key competencies coincide with P&A intake needs and I&R provision.
• National webinar provided to NDRN August 30, 2011 encouraged connections with AIRS and I&R agencies.
Our Connection with other I&R systems

• Knowledge of general community resources meets a critical need of callers in the current economy.
• People with disabilities may also have other needs.
• Allows us to be a better resource for our clients.
• Benefits of participation in AIRS and FLAIRS training conferences.
I&R Resources

- Find your P&A @ http://www.napas.org/
- State Technology Assistance Programs - http://assistivetech.net/webresources/stateTechActProjects.php
- Disability Specific Consumer Groups and Affiliates in each state such as: MS Society, Epilepsy Foundation, etc.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Programs http://rsa.ed.gov/programs.cfm?pc=basic-vr
I&R Resources

• Aging and Disability Resource Centers – http://www.adrc-tae.org

Advocacy Now

- Will shape services and opportunities for individuals with disabilities in this century.
- Rapidly changing technology and AT systems will benefit our clients.
- Our systems must continue to evolve and support innovation.
M. Ann Robinson – Intake Manager
annr@disabilityrightsflorida.org
Paul Finch – Intake Coordinator
paulf@disabilityrightsflorida.org
Linda Rollins, MH Coordinator
lindar@disabilityrightsflorida.org

2728 Centerview Drive, Suite 102
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
800.342.0823 • TDD 800.346.4127

www.DisabilityRightsFlorida.org