

Special Interest Articles:

- Highlights of the Legislative Review.
- Membership Increase.
- Brag and Steal Updates.

Officers and Board Members:

President:

Matt Bruinekool

President-Elect:

Gary Johnson

Vice President:

Jeffrey Morgan

Secretary:

Mary Ott

Board Members:

Jay Brewer

Keri Osterhaus

Mike Williams

Jamie Corwin

Lois Staff

Jessica Schneider

A Message from our President

As I settle into my role as President I wanted to share with all of you some of my thoughts about what I would like to try and accomplish this year. The association and its members have a strong and proud history of trying to improve the quality of life of individuals with disabilities. Each year as I have become more actively engaged I have observed the willingness of so many of our members to step forward and volunteer their services for the betterment of the association. My central goal as president is to help ensure the continuation of this great tradition for years to come.

To this end the first priority that I have is to work with the leadership and board members to develop a strategic plan for the association. I believe that it is critical for the long-term health of any organization to have a vision for where it wants to go and a plan for how it will get there. I hope that this process will help us to identify those things that are important to our membership and where we should focus our energies.

One component that I will advocate to be a part of our strategic plan is strengthening our membership. At the 2010 Annual Conference thanks to the work of many of our members our association was able to break the one hundred-member mark. This was an outstanding accomplishment and something that we all should be very proud of. The responsibility for growing our membership however doesn't fall on the shoulders of our membership chair, a membership committee, or even a group of people at a conference dedicated to watching Roger Carter write a check. Imagine if each one of us over the course of the next year could work hard to get just one of our colleagues to become a member. If we could accomplish a feat like that we would double our membership.

To me one of the greatest challenges to enticing new members to an association is being able to provide them with services and resources that they see value in. If you are like myself you see the value in your membership in this great association. The education and training, legislative advocacy, and networking that you my colleagues have provided me has been invaluable to me as a professional. Unfortunately some of our colleagues in the field have either failed to see that value or have not had the opportunity to experience it themselves first hand. Therefore another objective that will advocate for inclusion in the plan is to try and identify the benefits that our current members find of most benefit and to identify what potential members might be looking for as they evaluate whether or not to join our association.

The final component that I believe needs to be a part of our strategic plan is the identification and development of additional revenue streams. Currently we are disproportionately dependent on membership dues for revenue and should spend some time and energy trying to identify other potential sources of revenue for the association. If anyone has any ideas that they feel could be of benefit to the association please let us know.

None of these goals are new ideas for our association. Nor are things that members have not expended considerable time and energy on in the past. They are simply ideas that I believe are once again important to revisit. In closing I just want to say that if it weren't for the outstanding leadership team and board that I have working with me this year I probably would not take on these agenda items. The individuals that you, the members, have elected are very intelligent and hard working people who truly care about the future of your association and I am very excited to be working with them. In future newsletters I hope to provide you with updates on our progress and information on how you can assist us.

BRAG AND STEAL CONFERENCE Announcement

Friday June 24, 2011

“Abilities Abound”

NIACC Muse Norris Center in Mason City

Information has been provided about this year’s Brag and Steal Conference from Mary Ott. Beginning our annual conference we will hear about excellent customer service from Billy Krefft. He will provide us insight and a fresh perspective of strategies to build relationships with community businesses! Some other topics include

- Trauma Based Mental Health Issues
- The use of Prosthetics and Orthotics in the Workplace
- A True Story-Adjustment to disability and career changing
- Assistive Technology in the Workplace
- Assisting People in Job Search

and more topics to be announced! Make sure to put this conference on your calendars! Registration form: [..\Documents\BAS Registration.doc](#)



We need your help !!

If you have topics or issues that you would like to have addressed in our newsletter please do not hesitate to ask. Also, if you have articles upcoming events that you would like to have added to the newsletter, we would appreciate your contribution.

Please contact Jessie Schneider at: jessica.schneider1980@hotmail.com with any of your comments or questions.



Job Descriptions: President-Elect

Each newsletter I will provide the detailed description about the positions held in our Iowa Rehabilitation Association membership. Review these descriptions to see if you might want to participate in, in the future. This month the job description focus is President-Elect. The President-Elect

services a one year term and is a member of the Executive Committee. S(he) serves as Chairperson of the Annual Conference Committee and is, therefore, responsible for coordinating and planning the; dates, location, conference schedule, trainers and local arrangements. The

President-Elect provides conference planning updates to the board and prepares articles and conference registration forms for the inclusion of the Association newspaper and other publications. Most importantly, the President-Elect recruits new members.

WANTED: A FEW GOOD WOMEN (OR MEN)

Well, IRA isn't the U.S. Marines, but like that storied group, we are seeking a few good people who would be able and willing to serve as officers and board members on next year's IRA board – i.e., we are looking for **future leaders**. As I am now IRA's past president, it is my role to seek nominees for the following positions: president-elect, vice-president, treasurer, and 3 board members.

Fortunately for me, the hardest to fill position already is spoken for. Jeffrey Morgan has said he will run for **president-elect** in 2011. However, if you want to give him some competition, he has said he will welcome that.

I invite any of you to consider the other positions that will be open. The **Vice-president** serves a one-year term, and is responsible for filling in for the president if (s)he is not available for meetings or other essential duties. Although this is not in the official job description, the past two vice-presidents came in with the understanding that this year was a preparation for moving on to president-elect, and from there to president and past president. I like that trend, and would love to see it continue.

Rosie Thierrier, who has served ably as our **treasurer** for the past 4 years, is stepping down. This crucial position is a

two-year term, and obviously we are looking for someone who is good with numbers and can communicate well about the financial position of IRA.

We will be looking for **3 at-large board members** to serve 2-year terms. This is a good entry-level position for those who want to be of service, but don't know yet how IRA operates, or in what manner they best can serve this organization.

If you are interested in serving in any of these positions, please don't be shy. Call me, e-mail me, or button-hole me as soon as possible. That will earn you my eternal gratitude, and save me from having to beat the bushes for candidates.

Best ways to contact me are by phone (319-365-9111 or 888-346-9111 – leave a message if I'm not there) or by e-mail, at jonathan.ice@blind.state.ia.us.
If you want to contact me by mail, here are the particulars:

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Legislative Review

January 2011

The Iowa House, despite public hearings attended by hundreds of Iowans in which more than 90% of the public comments, either orally or written were in overwhelming support against sweeping budget cuts. Passed House File 45 in the Republican controlled house by a vote of 60-40. House File 45 would eliminate Iowa's state funded voluntary pre-school program, the Iowa Power Fund, the Grow Iowa Values Fund, the Iowa Core Curriculum, smoking cessation programs and money for passenger rail transportation. Area Education Agencies would take a \$10 million dollar cut, and requires staff cuts to first come from administration staff. State workers would be charged \$100 per month for insurance premiums and the Iowa Communications Network would be sold or leased. It also creates a Tax Relief Fund to receive one time excess funds from Economic Emergency Fund, once state reserves are full and use it toward tax relief. It is estimated that \$327.4 million would flow into this fund in FY 2012. This bill also cut funding to state universities but limits tuition rate increases and requires any staffing cuts to start with administrative staff.

This bill did appropriate \$25 million to eliminate waiting lists for county mental health/disability services (MH/DS), repeals the current mental health services delivery system and requires a new system to be in place by July 1, 2012. A seven member House working group will be charged with coming up with the new system. It is speculated that this will be Reps. Heaton, Schulte, Gray, Brandenburg, Smith, Heddens and Wessel-Kroeschell.

Even though this bill had enough votes to pass and possibly eliminate state funded pre-school programs, the Senate Democrats have indicated that they have the votes needed to continue the program. Senate Majority Leader Mike Gronstal, D- Council Bluffs has not indicated whether the bill will be taken up by the Senate or if a new bill will be introduced.

Governor Branstad has appointed Jason Glass to be the new Director of the Department of Education. It has been reported that Glass does not support the elimination of the Iowa Core Curriculum standards. He has indicated that he would like to see the standards and benchmarks rolled out and implemented before it may be tossed aside. Lawmakers approved this in 2008 and teachers and administrators spent more than two years preparing for its implementation. The Iowa Core Curriculum is designed to set a centralized set of standards for schools. High schools must implement it by 2012 and middle and elementary schools by 2014.

One of the proposals being made to improve student achievement in Iowa is to bring a teacher pay for performance system to Iowa that is similar to the one that he worked on in Eagle County, Colorado. He has indicated that such a system would not be forced on school districts to adopt, and would be piloted in willing districts. There is some precedent for this as in 2007, the Iowa legislature enacted provision to allow pay for performance and created a commission to study the effort. A pilot program was initiated in 2008-2009 in two school districts. Teachers were given \$1,000 bonuses if at least 60% of their students reached targets on an exam.

It is reported that House Republicans will move forward this session with a collective bargaining bill. A labor consultant for the Governor, Leon Shearer, released a report recommending that the Legislature revise Iowa's collective bargaining law for public employees and restructure health insurance programs for government workers.

Governor Branstad makes \$360 million in cuts... In his budget address the Governor proposed a budget for the next two fiscal years that makes a total of \$360 million in budget cuts, reduces the corporate income tax and commercial property taxes and increases the taxes on state casinos.

His budget spends about \$6.2 billion in FY 2012 and nearly \$6.3 billion in FY 2013. It includes \$194 million in reductions in the state budget in the general fund and would save \$89 million by not providing extra money to pay for state workers' salary increases, and would save \$75 million by not continuing some programs currently funded with one-time resources. Each state agency will face cuts of about 5-8%.

Legislative Report Continued

By not providing the money for state salary increases, it would force state agencies to pay for the increase in money in their existing budgets intended for other things. State agencies continue to review the 1,500 individuals who were hired to replace those who took early retirement and layoffs of the new hires may be announced soon.

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In Congress..

By a vote of 245-189, the House of Representative passed the Republican bill HR 2 to repeal the affordable care act. Four committee chairpersons, David Camp (R-MI) of Ways and Means; Fred Upton, R- MI, of Energy and Commerce, John Kline(r-MN) Education and the Workforce, and Lamar Smith (R-TX) of Judiciary, plan to hold oversight hearings and draft bills to replace elements of the ACA.

Malpractice liability if expected to be the first issue to be taken up by the House Republicans. They have introduced two bills highlighting approaches to changing the system. One measure(HR 314) introduced by Rep. Thornberry (R-TX) would help states create specialized "Health courts" featuring a judge with medical expertise or a panel of neutral experts to award damages. A second bill (HR 157) sponsored by Pete Sessions (R-TX) would protect physicians from litigation stemming from care provided by emergency services. Other measures introduced would allow consumers to purchase insurance across state lines, codify President Obama's executive order clarifying that no federal funds would be used for abortions under the ACA, and permanently ban federal funding of abortion and eliminate tax breaks for health insurance premiums on policies that cover abortion related services.

Little is known of what the Republican measures may include. The absence of information is owed in part to the large number of freshmen Republicans in the House (870 and the large proportion nearly half assigned to the influential Ways and Means Committee. What is certain is the individual responsibility to obtain health insurance (commonly referred to as the individual mandate) will not be included. This key provision broadens the risk pool by increasing the number of insured persons, and consequently brings down costs, is the centerpiece of the ACA.

The House Judiciary Committee will hold hearings to show their disagreement with the ACA's individual responsibility requirement that most persons obtain health insurance or face a penalty. 26 states, including Iowa's Governor have challenged the constitutionality of this provision. This provision is expected to be implemented until a decision is made by the Supreme Court.

The House Committee on the Budget also utilized it first hearing of the year to determine the "fiscal consequences of the new health care law." The main witness was the Chief Actuary of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services(CMS), Richard Foster. Mr. Foster affirmed the analyses of the Congressional Budget Office(CBO) that the law will decrease the federal deficit over the next ten year.

The Democratically controlled Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) heard testimony on the impact of health insurance reforms on consumers. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius stated that in addition to giving Americans more control over their health care, the new law is strengthening our economy with more than a million new private sector jobs.

In 2010

Iowa Rehabilitation
Association
Membership
319 Marie Avenue
Elk Run Heights, IA 50707

- At the close of the IRA Training Conference, we were 100 members strong and we have maintained that total since then. Help us to stay strong by renewing your membership and telling your co-workers about the benefits of joining the organization.
- Board members that were left on for another year included; Mike Williams, Jay Brewer and Keri Osterhaus.
- Sherri Clark won the NRAJPD Marian Fairbairn award
- Brag and Steal was held in Ames in July, hosted by John Lee-Egan
- Ellen Sokolowski was elected to the NRA National Board
- Jonathan Ice received the President's Plaque at our annual Awards Luncheon at the 2010 conference.

Legislative Updates

If you would like a copy of the entire Legislative Review, please contact Ellen Sokolowski. Thank you, Ellen for the precise notes and for keeping us current on all legislative issues.

Calendar Dates for Legislation

Friday March 11th—Bills need to be voted out of committee by the end of the day, or they can no longer be debated(except budget or tax bills). This is the "First Funnel"

Friday, April 8th—Bills need to be voted out of one chamber, and then out of committee in the second chamber. This is the "Second Funnel"

Friday, April 29th- Last day of the session, the 110th day This is the final day that legislators can receive a per diem. Sessions do go longer, but legislators may not be paid for their work.

We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.iraiaowa.org

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