

# Every Day is Independence Day

Spring 2010

Catskill Center for Independence

## **Waiver Programs at the Center** *Pete Miller – Service Coordinator*

The Catskill Center for Independence is pleased to announce that we provide services under two Medicaid Waiver Programs available for people who are at least 18 years of age and are Medicaid eligible. The programs are Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Medicaid Waiver Programs. Below is some information about each of the programs.

### ***Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTD)***



Have you ever wondered what life would be like if you or a loved one had something happen and became at risk to be placed in a nursing home? If you are 18 years of age or older, are eligible for Medicaid coverage and eligible for nursing home level of care, then the Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTD) waiver is an option to consider. The NHTD program is made for people that want to live in the community instead of a nursing home. The NHTD Medicaid Waiver is not only to divert individuals away from being placed in a nursing home facility it is also for individuals that currently reside in a nursing home and would like to transition back into the community.

There are nine agencies throughout New York State that can assist anyone interested in the NHTD program. The Regional Resource Development Center (RRDC) for Chenango, Otsego and Delaware Counties is the Southern Tier Independence Center (STIC). A Regional Resource Development Specialist (RRDS) can assist individuals with selecting a Service Coordination agency. After a Service Coordinator is selected, the individual and the Service Coordinator work together to develop a Service Plan. The Service

Plan is made to help the person live safely in the community.

The Catskill Center for Independence offers Service Coordination, Environmental Modifications, Community Transition Services and Moving Assistance through the NHTD waiver. It will be a pleasure to act as the Service Coordination agency for any individual on the NHTD waiver.

### ***Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)***

The Home and Community Based Services Medicaid Waiver for individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury (HCBS/TBI) is a community-based program, specifically designed to assist adults who have sustained a brain injury. The TBI Waiver is designed to provide specialized services to the individual in their own home, helping them to either avoid entering, or end the process of being admitted into, a skilled nursing home or rehabilitation center. To be eligible for the TBI Waiver program, a participant must:

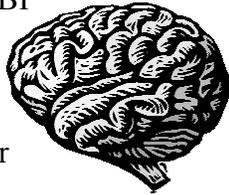
*Continued on next page*

Visitability	2	Money Follows the Person	3
Come Gather 'round the Round T-Able	5	New Faces at the Center	5
Giving Shouldn't be limited to Christmas	6	Legislative Day 2010	7



- Be enrolled in NYS Medicaid
- Be between the ages of 18 and 64 at the time of application.
- Have a diagnosis of traumatic brain injury or related diagnosis (excluding genetic and/or degenerative diseases) with an onset between the ages of birth and 64.
- Be assessed to be in need of a nursing facility level of care, as determined by the results of the Patient Review Instrument/Screen (PRI/Screen) tool.
- Choose to participate in services through the TBI Waiver rather than be a resident of a nursing home.
- Have an identified residence in the community which meets the individual's needs for a safe and secure environment.
- Be able to be safely served with funds and services available under the TBI Waiver and Medicaid State Plan.

The philosophy of the TBI Waiver is that each participant's dignity, right to risk and right to fail must be respected throughout his/her involvement with the waiver.



A program participant may have a menu of services that best meets their individual needs and desires. Services are provided on an individual basis. A program participant may choose to receive Service Coordination from the Catskill Center for Independence and a different service from another agency. This is the choice of the waiver participant. The Service Coordinator will assist the participant, as necessary, to coordinate, manage and solidify their chosen team.

Besides Service Coordination the Catskill Center for Independence also offers Environmental Modifications and Community Transition Services for individuals of the TBI Waiver.

## Visitability

*Charles Reichardt – Systems Advocate*

As you may know, the lack of housing is one of the most significant barriers to full community integration for people with disabilities, seniors and for individuals wishing to transition from, or avoid living in, institutional settings. People with disabilities frequently encounter attitudinal barriers as well, experiencing a lack of interest in providing, or working towards planning for, such housing from the powers that be. As an independent living center, The Catskill Center for Independence assists dozens of individuals each year who face significant barriers to accessing necessary quality housing that is both accessible and affordable.

Many of you would agree it defies logic to build new homes that prevent your friends and relatives from visiting when it's so easy and inexpensive to build new homes that allow them in.



New housing construction can easily be designed to incorporate necessary elements to provide access for all at minimal cost. However, it has yet to become a common approach to new home construction although, for the past ten years, "visitability" has been on the rise and can even be considered a nationwide trend.

Building housing that is universally accessible has always made sense—common sense and dollars and cents. For one thing, it's less expensive to build a home one can age in alleviating the all too common need to sell and move once stairs become difficult to navigate by the occupants. "Visitability" also makes a home livable to anyone experiencing a temporary disability such as a sprained ankle or knee-surgery. In its simplest definition, "visitability" refers to single-family housing designed in such a way that it can be lived in or visited by all people including people with disabilities, young children, and the elderly, the fastest growing segment of our society.

*Continued on next page*



A home must meet three basic requirements before it can be considered “visitable”:

- At least one no-step entrance (such as a gradual rise to the front door),
- Doors and hallways wide enough to navigate through while using a wheelchair, and
- A bathroom on the first floor big enough to be used by a wheelchair user.

In addition, lowered electrical switches, outlets and environmental controls are required by some municipalities who have adopted visitability statutes.

“Visitability” does not cost a lot of money. It is estimated that achieving visitability in houses built on a concrete slab can cost an additional \$100 or less per house, while houses built on a crawl space would cost less than an additional \$500. “Visitability” does not take money from any social program or industry.

Advocates for persons with disabilities are urging our legislators to establish standards for “visitability” in state law. This would require all newly constructed dwellings (single-family houses, townhouses and ground-floor units of duplexes and triplexes) built with public funds be made accessible. There is a housing crisis in New York State for people with disabilities. As the federal government makes changes to existing housing programs, programs private owners often opt out of, the availability of housing for people with disabilities becomes scarcer every day. The bottom line is that people with disabilities can end up or remain in institutions because there is very little accessible and affordable housing available to them. Homes that are made “visitable” can help to reverse this trend.

Contact the Catskill Center for Independence for more information on housing rights, options, and resources to help you improve or secure your independent living arrangement. In addition, the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Universal Design at SUNY/Buffalo has produced the booklet "Visit-ability: an Approach to Universal

Design in Housing." It is available for download at <http://www.ap.buffalo.edu/ercud/visitabilitybook.htm>

Now that you know what “visitability” means and how important it is to you and your future, make sure that you contact your legislators to ensure that they know as well.

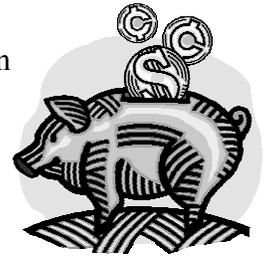
### **Money Follows the Person:**

#### **Identification of and Outreach to Nursing Home Residents Project**

*Rina Riba – Community Transition Facilitator*

Catskill Center for Independence is now providing outreach to residents of nursing homes, informing them of available community services should they desire to return there to live.

The Money Follows the Person Identification of and Outreach to Nursing Home Residents Project (MFP) is a program of the New York State Department of Health (DOH).



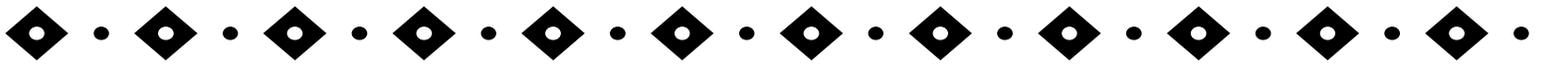
It was designed to identify and reach out to certain residents of nursing homes who are Medicaid recipients, in order to provide them with comprehensive and unbiased information about home and community-based services.

Catskill Center for Independence (CCFI), working as a subcontractor to Southern Tier Independence Center (STIC), will be the provider for the following counties: Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Otsego, Tompkins.

STIC will be the provider for these counties: Allegany, Broome, Tioga, Cattaraugus, Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga.

STIC and CCFI are independent living centers which provide assistance and services to people with disabilities of all ages, as well as to their families and friends, local businesses and government agencies, with the purpose of promoting independence in all aspects of integrated community life. Both STIC and CCFI share the following characteristics:

*Continued on next page*



- Consumer-Controlled
- Community Change Agent
- Independent Living Philosophy
- No charge for most services
- Non-Profit
- Non-Residential
- Peer Approach

For the MFP program, contact with residents and/or their legal representatives is conducted by peers, including people with disabilities and seniors. Contact is in person whenever possible. If this cannot be arranged, telephone or email may be used. Communication by residents and/or their legal representatives with outreach peers is voluntary.

Nursing home residents/ legal representatives who have not been identified by the Department of Health, using specific project criteria, can request to meet with outreach workers and to be provided with information on home and community services. In addition, family members or professional staff may make referrals of residents to peer workers.

The MFP outreach workers will inform facility discharge planners of residents' desire to return to the community when requested to do so by residents or their legal representatives. Once equipped with information, residents/legal representatives can then work with their discharge planners to arrange for transition back to the community with appropriate services. When necessary, MFP outreach workers can assist discharge planners in locating community services for their residents.

Upon request, by residents or their representatives, information is available on the following home and community-based options:

- Adult Care Facilities
- Adult Day Health Care
- Assisted Living Program (ALP)
- Local Independent Living Center (ILC)
- Certified Home Healthcare Agencies (CHHA)
- Congregate and Home Delivered Meals

- Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP)
- EPIC or other prescription subsidy program
- Expanded In-home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP)
- Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP)
- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
- Hospice services
- Long Term Home Health Care Program (LTHHCP)
- Local Office for the Aging (OFA)
- Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTD) Medicaid Waiver
- NY Connects
- NYHousingSearch.gov
- Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) Medicaid Waiver
- Personal Care Services program (PCS)
- Private Duty Nursing services (PDN)
- TRAUD (Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities program)
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Medicaid Waiver
- Other county-specific services

For more information contact the Catskill Center at 607-432-8000 or email us at [ccfi@ccfi.us](mailto:ccfi@ccfi.us)



The Oneonta YMCA received a grant from an anonymous donor to purchase a new state-of-the-art battery operated swim lift. The lift allows access to both pools, and allows individuals who cannot use the stairs to enter the water. The lift can accommodate 300 lbs. and is fully ADA compliant. Please call the Oneonta Family YMCA at (607) 432-0010 for more information.



## Come Gather ‘round the Round T-Able!

*Laurene Reichardt - Disability Programs Manager*

The Catskill Center for Independence announces the Round T-Able Program! The Center has been providing the program to area schools in the Chenango-Delaware-Otsego County area on a limited basis for many years, and we are proud to announce that we have been awarded funding that allows us to enhance the program and expand to serve more schools.

The Round T-Able Program is a student-driven, curriculum-based program developed for high school students with disabilities assisting them in the challenges they will face as they *transition* from school to adult life. Many of the modules are focused around a specific issue and videos are often used. Videos create an atmosphere conducive to after-discussion and generate ideas for future meetings.

Activity areas can include information and training on:

- Independent Living Centers
- Transition services
- Adaptive equipment & assistive technology
- The ADA, IDEA & disability-related laws
- The Workforce System & the One-Stop
- Accessibility issues
- Self-determination/self-empowerment
- History of Independent Living
- Accessible parking
- Housing
- Transportation & rural issues
- Medical insurance, health & well being
- Careers in disability areas
- Social Security/SSI
- Small Business & the ADA

Currently the program is being provided to seven schools with more showing an interest. If you would like more information on the Round T-Able Program, contact the Catskill Center for Independence at 607-432-8000, e-mail the Center at [ccfi@ccfi.us](mailto:ccfi@ccfi.us), or go to our website at [www.ccfi.us](http://www.ccfi.us).

## New Faces at the Center



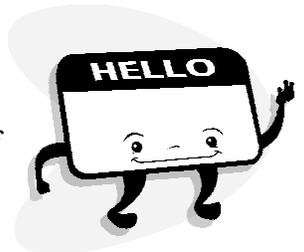
My name is Pete Miller and I joined the Catskill Center for Independence in January 2010 as a Service Coordinator for the Medicaid Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTD) and the Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) waiver services. I have 5 years experience working with people with developmental disabilities and 3 years experience working with adolescents with mental health diagnosis. I strongly believe in the Independent Living Philosophy and I would like to pass on my knowledge to others, as they come into our waiver programs.

I am blessed to have a beautiful, supportive wife, Mary, and two wonderful children, Noah and Kylie. I can honestly say that my life is never dull as a result of having two young children that like to stay active.

My personal interests include going camping, hiking and fishing with my family as often as I can, learning to cook gourmet meals and either playing sports or watching sports. My wife and children all love to participate in outdoor activities, which I am grateful since I spent 13 summers working outdoors at Boy Scout Camps.

I look forward to building up our NHTD and TBI waiver services program at the Center.

Hello, my name is Ilene Arlet. I recently joined the Catskill Center for Independence at the end of March 2010. I’ve always had a great love for people and strong belief that” no one is stronger or weaker than anyone else”. It continues to be very rewarding to have the opportunity to work in the upstate community. The excellent support systems, great resources,



*Continued on next page*

educational opportunities and dedicated individuals that truly care make it possible for all people to lead independent, healthy, productive lives. The philosophy and mission of Catskill Center for Independence is what it is all about. I am looking forward to the challenges and rewards of being the Independent Living Specialist at the Center.

I was born in Wilmington, Delaware and grew up in the New England area. Otsego County has been my home for over 27 years. My true love outside of work is my family. My husband John and daughter Wendy are what continues to make smile. I am writing this the Friday before Mother's Day, how ironic; being a mother has been the best experience of my life! My husband and my daughter are also in human service profession.

I love cooking (eating too, unfortunately), camping, theatre, music, reading, travel, learning, trying new activities, meeting new people and enjoying it all with family and good friends. Please feel free to send me an e-mail ([Ilenearet@ccfi.us](mailto:Ilenearet@ccfi.us)) or give me a call at the Center.

## Computer Classes

If you are interested in learning a little something about using computers or surfing the "net", please call Meghan at the Center to sign-up. Spaces and times will be limited, so don't hesitate to call us at 607-432-8000, or email us at [ccfi@ccfi.us](mailto:ccfi@ccfi.us)

## Giving Shouldn't Be Limited to Christmas

*Don Wyckoff - Architectural Barrier Consultant  
NYS Code Enforcement, Loan Closet Coordinator*

I would like to remind our friends, community members and consumers that the Catskill Center for Independence has a fairly extensive loan closet and has access to other loan closets throughout our three county



service area. Items such as wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, canes portable toilets, shower chairs and many other items are available for loan. If you, a family member or friend have a need for any of these items or if you would like to donate an item to be used in our lending closet, please call the Center at (607) 432-8000. I can also be reached via email at [donwwyckoff@aol.com](mailto:donwwyckoff@aol.com).

Many times we receive calls from folks who would like to donate larger items such as ramps, mobility scooters, hospital beds and powered wheelchairs, but they need the items picked up. On occasions such as these, I try to contact consumers who have expressed such a need and notify them of the available item. Many times our consumers are able to coordinate with the person donating the item.

There are many reasons to donate your items, but perhaps none of them as rewarding as knowing your donation increases independence in someone's life.

### Our Newsletter on Tape/E-Mail

Would you like to receive our newsletter on tape or via email? There is no charge for either service, though it is helpful if those who are receiving the tapes return them if they are just planning to throw them away.

Please contact the Center at 607-432-8000, or you can e-mail us at [ccfi@ccfi.us](mailto:ccfi@ccfi.us) if you would be interested in this service.



## NYAIL's Legislative Day 2010

*Charles Reichardt - Systems Advocate*

The New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL), the Catskill Center for Independence (CCFI) and other independent living centers across the state are dedicated to removing barriers to ensure the full community integration of people with disabilities of all ages.

NYAIL promotes policies and strategies outlined in the Disability Priority Agenda (DPA) that are aimed at promoting the overall theme of disability programs and policies supportive of living and working in the most integrated setting. This is a requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the 1999 Supreme Court Olmstead decision. In all areas of public policy, including the development of new proposals and the enforcement of existing laws and regulations, NYAIL seeks to promote full community integration to enable all people with disabilities to live active, independent lives in their communities.

NYAIL's 2010 Disability Priority Agenda is a reflection of these overriding principles and seeks to further promote these goals. Each year many disability advocates from across the state, including SSAN volunteers, independent living center staff and NYAIL representatives meet with Senators and Assembly members at the Legislative Office Building in Albany to discuss barriers that individuals with disabilities continue to face and proposals for their elimination. We call on all lawmakers, executive officials and their staff to work together to make these proposals a reality for all New Yorkers with disabilities.

NYAIL's annual Legislative Day for 2010 was held on February 1, 2010. Several CCFI staff members met with legislators and/or their staff to discuss the NYAIL Disability Priority Agenda and the barriers New Yorkers with disabilities continue to face. We found our legislators to be very receptive as we discussed issues such as voting access, housing, transportation and IL funding. For example, Senator James Seward said that he appreciates meeting with

us because it allows him to put a face with our correspondence through telephone conversations or

email messages. Even though we often have the support of our law makers, it can sometimes seem like we are trying to climb a mountain. Even today, after the passage of the ADA and other disability related laws, people with disabilities still face so many barriers in employment, education, housing, health care and voting that it sometimes seems insurmountable.

However, through all of our efforts, progress has and continues to be made towards an integrated, barrier free society for everyone. If you would like to become involved in these efforts please contact Charles Reichardt at the Center at 607.432.8000 or [CReichardt@ccfi.us](mailto:CReichardt@ccfi.us)



Helen Benlisa, Project Director, (l) & Charles Reichardt, Systems Advocate, (r), meet with Senator Seward (c) on NYAIL's Legislative Day.