



Advocacy Matters Newsletter

Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire

September 3, 2020

General Court News- Legislative Activities Suspension

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the General Court is conducting legislative activities remotely with the exception of publicly noticed sessions in the House or Senate Calendar. During this time, the State House and Legislative Office Building remain closed to visitors.

Gubernatorial Town Hall on Disability Issues - CHANGE OF DATE/TONIGHT

Due to circumstances beyond the planning committee's control, the Gubernatorial Town Hall will be held tonight, **Thursday, September 3, 2020, 7:00pm**. If you have already registered, your registration is STILL valid. Join candidates seeking the office of Governor of NH for a Zoom-based Town Hall meeting where they will present their disability policy platforms and disability issues they intend to focus on if elected. Register today for a Gubernatorial Town Hall on Sept 3rd, 7:00pm — Get YOUR questions ready! register: <https://ablenh.wildapricot.org/event-3949553>

Acquired Brain Disorder(ABD) Waiver Listening Sessions Dates

About the Acquired Brain Disorder (ABD)Waiver?

The Acquired Brain Disorder (ABD) Waiver provides Community Participation Services, Respite, Service Coordination, Supported Employment Services, Assistive Technology Support Services, Community Support Services (CSS), Crisis Response Services, Environmental and Vehicle Modification Services, Residential Habilitation/Personal Care Services, Specialty Services, and Wellness Coaching to New Hampshire's eligible participants with an acquired brain disorder. PDMS services are provided in accordance with He-M 525 and traditional services are provided in accordance with He-M 521, He-M 522, He-M 1001, and He-M 507. The rules can be found here: http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rules/state_agencies/he-m500.html

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services requests your input as the Bureau of Developmental Services (BDS) begins the Acquired Brain Disorder (ABD) Waiver renewal process. Every five years, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requires that the states renew their Home and Community-Based Services 1915(c) waivers.

Due to COVID-19 all listening sessions will be held remotely using a call in option or video conferencing (Zoom)

There are several ways to give your input to BDS:

- Attend one of the four (4) listening sessions held on the dates noted below. At the listening sessions, you can provide verbal or comments.
- Email comments to DLTSSWaiverRenewal@dhhs.nh.gov
- Mail written comments to:
Ms. Jessica Kennedy
New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services
Attn: ABD Waiver Renewal Input
105 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301

DATE: Thursday, September 10, 2020

TIME: 1-3 pm Zoom link: <https://unh.zoom.us/j/91799395729> Call-In Option:

Dial: +1 646 876 9923,

Meeting ID: 917 9939 5729

DATE: Monday, September 14, 2020

TIME: 5-7 pm Zoom link: <https://unh.zoom.us/j/93785723202> Call-In Option:

Dial: +1 301 715 8592,

Meeting ID: 937 8572 3202

DATE: Tuesday, September 22, 2020

TIME: 9-11 am Zoom link: <https://unh.zoom.us/j/99182214903> Call-In

Option: Dial: +1 301 715 8592,

Meeting ID: 991 8221 4903

DATE: Thursday, September 24, 2020

TIME: 2-4 pm Zoom link: <https://unh.zoom.us/j/91263455839> Call-In Option:

Dial: +1 646 876 9923,

Meeting ID: 912 6345 5839

Attached find additional information on the Listening Series. If you are planning on providing testimony on the scheduled ZOOM Listening Series Dates, please contact Ellen Edgerly at Ellen@bianh.org

[NH Launches Accessible Absentee Voting System](#)

The NH Secretary of State's Office has launched an accessible absentee voting system for people with print disabilities. The new system allows voters with print disabilities, including people who are blind, to request and fill out an absentee ballot privately and independently. The system will be used in addition to the existing absentee voting system. Voters who are blind or have print disabilities can use the accessible system to cast an absentee ballot during the September 8 state primary election. More information about the accessible absentee voting system, including how to request a ballot can be found on the Secretary of State's website, <https://sos.nh.gov/elections/voters/register-to-vote/absentee/accessible-voting/>.

Until now, voters with print disabilities who were unable to mark a paper absentee ballot themselves had to rely on assistance to complete their ballot. Because of this, voters who had print disabilities were not able to vote privately.

The new system allows voters with qualifying disabilities to request, receive, and mark an absentee ballot electronically. Once the voter has chosen their candidates, they print out their ballot and return it in an absentee ballot envelope for processing.

Requesting an accessible absentee ballot can be done online. To do so, voters can complete the application available on the Secretary of State's website, <https://sos.nh.gov/media/bp51bgvp/application-for-an-accessible-electronic-absentee-ballot.pdf>. Voters requesting electronically delivered ballots must also certify that they have a disability preventing them from filling out a traditional paper absentee ballot.

Once a request for an accessible absentee ballot has been processed, an electronic version of the ballot is sent to the voter. At the same time, official absentee envelopes are mailed to the voter to return their completed ballot. Once the voter receives an electronic ballot, they are able to fill it out on their computer and print it. The electronic ballots are designed to be compatible with commercial screen reading and marking software.

Returning a completed ballot is done through the mail, not the computer/internet. Voters will mail their completed ballot to their city or town clerk for processing. Voters may also hand-deliver their ballots after printing them out.

The accessible absentee ballot will look different than the paper ballots submitted by voters without print disabilities and it must be hand counted.

Voters with print disabilities may also request accessible voter registration forms via the accessible absentee ballot application available at <https://sos.nh.gov/media/bp51bgvp/application-for-an-accessible-electronic-absentee-ballot.pdf>.

Visit the NH Secretary of State's website <https://sos.nh.gov/elections/voters/register-to-vote/absentee/accessible-voting/> for more specific information and instructions about how to request, mark, and return an accessible absentee ballot.

Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire Covid-19 Financial Assistance Program

Supporting Our People during the COVID - 19 Epidemic. The Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire is pleased to offer a financial assistance program specifically focused on individuals/families who are struggling with the effects of COVID – 19.

A one-time fund of \$500 per family will be made available to brain injury survivors and family members who are struggling in the aftermath of the pandemic. These funds could be used for things like purchasing food, paying rent, utilities or for other household needs for individuals who are laid off, furloughed, or otherwise out of work. However, there are no restrictions on what may be requested except that it must be related to situations people are dealing with as a result of the pandemic.

For eligibility requirements and to access the grant application, please visit www.bianh.org or email Ellen Edgerly at Ellen@bianh.org.

If you have any questions relative to this newsletter, please contact me.

Take care-

Ellen

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