

# family @ linkages newsletter



*Written by:  
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The 2015 health care coverage year open enrollment through the Marketplace is open. It kicked off November 15th and will remain open to February 15th 2015. There are several things you will need to keep in mind regarding the policies purchased through the marketplace during this period. The first being, if you would like to have your insurance coverage to begin January 1, 2015 you will need to choose and enroll into a plan by no later than midnight December 15th 2014. Second, if you currently have a health care plan purchased through the marketplace for the 2014 coverage year, you should have received a letter from your provider giving you instructions on how to retain or change your coverage.

One of the guidelines issued requires these letters to be sent to policy holders prior to open enrollment period. This letter explained the option for insurance companies to auto-enroll customers' renewals into a plan that is the closest plan available to the plan the customer is currently enrolled in if no actions are taken. To explain this provision a little more clearly, if you are currently enrolled into a health care plan that you like and wish to keep it, and if that plan is available for the 2015 coverage year, you may select to be re-enrolled automatically by simply doing nothing. If the plan you are currently enrolled in is no longer available for the 2015 coverage year, the insurance provider may enroll you into the closest plan you had for the 2014 coverage year unless you make efforts to choose a different coverage plan. If you have further questions, please contact your insurance provider or seek help from a qualified assister.

Moving ahead, if you did not have a plan that filled your needs or did not like provisions within your level of chosen coverage, you must go to your marketplace account (if you would like to utilize your advance premium tax credits) and make the necessary adjustments to prevent auto-enrollment. Once open enrollment concludes, if you choose to change your coverage level, there might be a possibility your Advance Premium Tax Credits (APTC) will be affected adversely. Bottom line, if you like your coverage you are currently enrolled in, make sure that policy is available for the 2015 coverage year. If it is not, you can choose to make an independent decision to examine other insurance coverage options.

Help is available to help sort all of these rules out and help you understand your coverage options. Michigan Consumers for Healthcare/Enroll Michigan, Michigan's statewide navigator network has partnered with assisters throughout the entire state. There are several ways you may request assistance. First, you may call Enroll Michigan at 517-367-7293 or seek them out on the web at [Enrollmichigan.com](http://Enrollmichigan.com). Second would be to call Michigan Consumers for Healthcare at 517-485-2130 or on the web at [Consumersforhealthcare.org](http://Consumersforhealthcare.org).

## ABLE Act Passes Senate Heads to the President's Desk to Become Law

The Senate has passed their Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act. The bill will allow families who have a child with a disability to save for their long-term care through 529-style savings accounts. The ABLE Act passed the House last week with a final vote of 404-17. This legislation has been called "...the broadest legislation to help the disabled in nearly a quarter-century."

The ABLE Act would amend Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Service Code to allow use of tax-free savings accounts for individuals with disabilities. The bill, first introduced in 2006, would ease financial strains faced by individuals with disabilities by making tax-free savings accounts available to cover qualified expenses such as education, housing, medical, and transportation. The bill would supplement, but not supplant, benefits provided through private insurance, the Medicaid program, the beneficiary's employment, and other sources.

## ADVOCACY/LEADERSHIP TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

### COMING SOON TO THE UPPER PENINSULA!

Leaders in Policy Advocacy (LIPA) is a leadership development program for adults with developmental disabilities and parents of minor children with developmental disabilities. The project trains and supports participants to become leaders in the disability rights movement. It is funded by the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council and administered by The Arc Michigan.

Topics include:

- Disability History
- Inclusive Education
- Assistive Technology & Social Media
- Self-determination and Alternatives to Guardianship
- Person-centered Planning
- Access to Housing and Employment
- Benefits and Systems of Support
- Systems Change



Michigan Developmental  
Disabilities Council

Participation in LIPA requires a significant time commitment. Six (6) weekend sessions begin on Fridays at 12:30 pm and end for the day at 9 p.m. The class resumes at 8:30 a.m. on Saturdays and concludes at 3:00 p.m. There is no cost to participate in the training. Participants will be asked to share a hotel room with another class member, if lodging is needed. Meals will be provided, including to caregivers, and participants will be reimbursed for mileage to and from the training sessions. No child care will be provided on site; however, assistance with the cost of child care may be available.

The Leaders class will be offered April through September 2015. Specific dates and venue to be announced soon, but please apply now! Application deadline is January 31, 2015.

To apply, go to <http://www.arcmi.org/new/lipa.htm>, where you can complete an application form online or download and print one to fill out and mail in. Please contact Project Coordinator Salli Christenson if you have questions or need help in applying. She can be reached at 1-800-292-7851, ext. 130, or [salli.c@arcmi.org](mailto:salli.c@arcmi.org)



## ADVOCACY/LEADERSHIP INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**Mark Your Calendars: 2015 Michigan Division for Early Childhood Conference  
May 1, 2015 Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant**  
**The emphasis this year is *Inclusion: Access, Participation, and Supports***

MiDEC encourages session proposals that feature strategies for incorporating the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Joint Position Statement on Inclusion into every day practice, including: family engagement, strategies for embedding learning and/or addressing challenging behavior, use of the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) in inclusive classrooms, including children in child care settings, Positive Behavior Supports, including English Language Learners, and inclusion within Great Start Readiness Programs and/or Head Start. Sessions will offer content for personnel, administrators, faculty, and families with vital interest in serving/educating children birth to age 8 with special needs. If you are interested in presenting please contact: Christy Callahan by phone: (866) 334-5437 or email at [Callahan\\_c@cresa.org](mailto:Callahan_c@cresa.org)

Michigan DEC is seeking family leaders to serve and advise MI DEC on its Government Relations Committee and Parent Involvement Committees. Family Leaders Interested in serving on the Government Relations Committee can contact Deb Lively at: [dlively@svsu.edu](mailto:dlively@svsu.edu). While those interested in being involved on the Parent Involvement Committee may contact Lisa Cook-Gordon at: [lisacookgordon@michiganfamilyvoices.org](mailto:lisacookgordon@michiganfamilyvoices.org).



Michigan Family Voices is seeking local leaders from Southeast (Wayne, Oakland and Macomb) and Southwest Michigan (Allegen, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, Ottawa, Muskegon, St. Joseph, Van Buren) to participate in a leadership activity.



If you are a local leader who is an individual and/or a family member of a child, youth or individual with special needs and/or a disability contact us by phone to receive an application (800) 292-7851 x 472 or by email: [info@michiganfamilyvoices.org](mailto:info@michiganfamilyvoices.org) by March 1, 2014.

*If your local or state level parent/family involvement committee, council, or organization is seeking parents/families to serve and you would like to share through the Family Linkages Newsletter please send information to [info@michiganfamilyvoices.org](mailto:info@michiganfamilyvoices.org).*

The Statewide Independent Living Council (SICL) is actively looking for interested individuals throughout the state to serve on the Council. Council members attend approximately four (2-day) meetings per year. The appointment lasts for approximately three (3) years.

If you are interested in serving on the SILC Council or if you have any questions you may contact Rodney Craig or Tracy Brown at (517) 371-4872.





## **Skills for Effective Parent Advocacy with Jessie Morton**

Tuesday, January 20, 2015  
4:00 pm – 6:30 pm  
(Sign-in opens at 3:30 pm)

Ludington Public Library  
217 East Ludington Avenue  
Ludington, MI 49431

Register by January 13, 2015 with Andrea Sargeant  
(231) 794-1297 [andrea@michiganallianceforfamilies.org](mailto:andrea@michiganallianceforfamilies.org)  
Or online at [www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/rsvp](http://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/rsvp)

## **Skills for Effective Parent Advocacy with Kelly Orginski**

Wednesday, February 4, 2015  
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm  
(Sign-in opens at 5 pm)

Northville District Library  
212 West Cady Street  
Northville, MI 48167

Register by January 28, 2015 with Barbara Wright.  
(313) 557-8780 or [barbara@michiganallianceforfamilies.org](mailto:barbara@michiganallianceforfamilies.org)  
Or online at [www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/rsvp](http://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/rsvp)

These workshops will explore six skills parents can use to become more effective advocates for their child with a disability, including:

- understanding your child's disability
- knowing your school district
- knowing your rights and responsibilities
- using clear and effective communication
- understanding the special education process
- knowing the dispute resolution process

For more information about workshops  
visit: <http://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/upcoming-events/>



## COLLABORATIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN 2015

### **Essential Communication Skills for Team IEP Meetings**

January 8, 2015  
9:00 am – 3:00 pm  
COOR ISD  
11051 North Cut Road  
PO Box 827  
Roscommon, MI 48653  
(989) 275-9555  
<http://svy.mk/1DsoSGL>

### **Mi Bridges Navigation**

January 27, 2015  
5:30 – 8:30 pm  
Family Resource Center  
1901 Maple Street  
Saginaw MI 48601  
(989) 272-0231  
<http://svy.mk/1uBLhYM>

### **Essential Communication Skills for IEP Team Meetings**

March 18, 2015  
9:00 am – 3:00 pm  
Detroit Public Schools  
Jerry L. White Center  
14804 West McNichols  
Detroit MI 48235  
(313) 416-4200  
<http://svy.mk/1DsoSGL>

### **What Every Family and Provider Should Know about Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)**

April 14, 2015  
5:30 pm – 8:30 pm  
811 Hazen Street  
Paw Paw, MI 49079  
(269) 415-0270  
<http://svy.mk/1A04wQ6>

### **Health Care Advocacy for Children and Youth with Special Needs/Disabilities**

January 8, 2015  
5:30 pm – 8:30 pm  
Saginaw Transition Center  
3860 Fashion Square Blvd.  
Saginaw, MI 48603  
(989) 399-7473  
<http://svy.mk/1zMWGdO>

### **How to Better Understand Your Medicaid and Mental Health Rights**

March 10, 2015  
9:30 am – 1:30 pm  
Arc Community Advocates  
Emerald Drive Nonprofit Campus  
3901 Emerald Drive  
Kalamazoo, MI 49001  
(269) 342-9801  
<http://svy.mk/1zMYDqI>

### **Everything I Need to Tell My Child About Sexuality**

March 30, 2015  
9:00 am – 3:00 pm  
Wayne RESA  
33500 Van Born Road  
Wayne, MI 48184  
(734) 334 1300  
<http://svy.mk/1zjfgZG>

### **Family Voices on Committees and Councils**

April 15, 2015  
5:30 pm – 8:30 pm  
Emerald Drive Nonprofit Campus  
3901 Emerald Drive  
Kalamazoo, MI 49001  
(269) 342-9801  
<http://svy.mk/1IME6qq>





## COLLABORATIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN 2015

### Helping Families Tell Their Stories

April 21, 2015

12:30 pm - 4:00 pm

Washtenaw ISD Vogel C  
1819 South Wagner Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106  
(734) 994-8100

<http://svy.mk/1wn8Gle>

### MI Bridges Navigation

April 24, 2015

9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Sanilac Career Center  
175 East Aitken Road  
Peck, MI 48466  
(810) 648-2200

<http://svy.mk/1uBLhYM>

### How to Better Understand Your Medicaid and Mental Health Rights

May 21, 2015

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Power Hope and Grace Bible Church  
6495 West Warren  
Detroit, MI 48210  
(313) 895-7464

<http://svy.mk/1zMYDqI>

### How to Better Understand Your Medicaid and Mental Health Rights

April 23, 2014

12:30 pm - 4:00 pm

Family Resource Center  
1901 Maple Street  
Saginaw, MI 48601  
(989) 272-0231 Ext 1231

<http://svy.mk/1zMYDqI>

### Family Voices on Committees and Councils

May 19, 2015

5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Saginaw YMCA  
1915 Fordney Street  
Saginaw MI 48601  
(989) 753-7721

<http://svy.mk/1IME6qq>



<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Michigan-Family-Voices/517493244973999?ref=hl>



<https://twitter.com/MIFamilyVoices1>

### Who Should Attend Michigan Family Voices Collaborative Learning Opportunities:

Individuals and family members of young children, teen and young adults with special needs/disabilities (including: youth guardians: adoptive, biological, foster and step-parents, domestic partners who co-parent, grandparents, siblings, aunts/uncles, nieces/nephews, cousins, neighbors, communities, religious leaders and any other person the individual defines as a family member), organizations and service providers who work with families of young children, teen, young adults, and individuals with disabilities.

We encourage individuals and families to invite people who provide support and services to you and your family. Providers are encouraged to invite individuals and families you support and serve. Forming partnerships between people served and those providing services is crucial in building collaboration and partnering in decision-making at all levels with individuals and families of children and youth with special needs/disabilities.

For More Information about Collaborative Learning Opportunities contact Michigan Family Voices at (800) 292-7851 or [info@michiganfamilyvoices.org](mailto:info@michiganfamilyvoices.org)  
Visit the Michigan Family Voices Website for most updated advocacy, leadership, and learning opportunities at: <http://michiganfamilyvoices.org/>