



Human Development and Disability

DHDD Newsletter – June 2023



A Note from the DHDD Director

Dear DHDD Partners,

As I fly home from the Special Olympics World Games in Berlin, I reflect on how this experience has opened my eyes to the global inclusion “revolution” that is demonstrated by countries from around the world. During the event, I got a chance to meet with several leaders from Special Olympics, including CEO Mary Davis, Chairperson Dr. Timothy Shriver, and Annemarie Hill, Senior Vice President of Global Health Affairs, along many members of her dedicated team. We talked a lot about how we can achieve inclusive health that supports every person in achieving their optimal level of health and well-being.

I got to see Special Olympic athletes in action as leaders. Members of the first Global Youth Leadership Council spoke about how Special Olympics has given them a chance to lead change in their communities, while allowing them an opportunity to connect with and influence others with and without intellectual disabilities. A highlight was getting to talk with Hanna Joy Atkinson. Hanna is a Special Olympics athlete in skiing and cycling but is now using her leadership strengths to promote inclusive health in the role of Sargent Shriver International Global Messenger. She is incredibly knowledgeable about health, nutrition, and fitness.

The Healthy Athletes program in action was also inspiring. The program has served more than 4,500 athletes and Unified partners and conducted more than 15,000 health screenings. In addition, 1,362 prescription eyeglasses have been provided, and 259 athletes were fit with hearing aids during the World Games. These numbers speak to both the need for these services and the need for a health system that better supports holistic and inclusive health.

While I celebrate each medal earned this past week, I also recognize the championship that resides within each athlete that participates in the World Games. I am renewed by the strength, courage, and perseverance they show. With their tenacity, and that of Special Olympics and other partners, we can achieve physical well-being and social inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities. I



DHDD Director Dr. Karyl Rattay (right) meets with Special Olympics CEO Mary Davis (left)



Dr. Rattay meets Hanna Joy Atkinson, a Sargent Shriver International Global Messenger.

am honored to be a small part of that effort, with CDC helping more than 70,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities participate in Special Olympics fitness programming last year.

I also know our work on inclusion and equity isn't done. We are already planning for the 33rd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act next month. Please be on the lookout for a web feature, social media, partner communications, and as special ALLY communication campaign in recognition of this historic event.

Until then, let's make these special commemorations part of our everyday lives through the work we do for all people with or at risk for disabilities. As my flight prepares to land, I know that while we haven't reached our destination yet, our collective efforts make a difference. See you on the journey.

Sincerely,
Karyl

Karyl Rattay, MD, MS, FAAP
DHDD Director



Dr. Rattay congratulates Caleb Guy on his silver medal win in the 200-Meter Tandem Kayaking event (Raven Allen, fellow silver medalist, not pictured)



Dr. Rattay kayaked with George as part of a Unified Sports event

In the Spotlight

Promote Disability Inclusion and Allyship Among Healthcare Professionals with New CDC Toolkit

As part of our recognition of the 33rd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, CDC is launching a [new digital toolkit](#) with shareable graphics and sample social media posts to help partners advocate for inclusion and accessibility in healthcare settings. This toolkit includes information on how providers can make small changes in their practice to increase accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities and their families. Videos in the toolkit, featuring Special Olympic athletes, amplify the voices of people with lived experience on why disability allyship is so important. We also include the voices of healthcare providers who are passionate about disability inclusion and allyship.

**Champion inclusion.
Improve patient care.
Change lives.**

I AM A DISABILITY **A.L.L.Y.**

Please join us in raising awareness about this important topic. We invite you to view and share the graphics, videos, and sample messages with your networks through social media, blogs, and websites.

When healthcare providers champion inclusive practices, everyone benefits.

[Click here for resources, trainings, and ideas for building a more inclusive practice.](#) [↗](#)



Click below to access a video of Ian Kahalewai speaking about the importance of inclusive health.

Publications

Series Unveils Key Metrics for Child Well-being, Addressing Disparities


In a series of papers published in *National Academy of Medicine (NAM) Perspectives*, "[Vital Signs for Pediatric Health](#)," [↗](#) a collaborative of [The Forum for Children's Well-Being](#) [↗](#), supported in part by funding from the CDC, introduces four crucial metrics that measure the physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional health of children across different developmental stages. These metrics include infant mortality rate, school readiness, chronic absenteeism in middle school, and high school graduation. By using these vital signs, communities and policymakers can identify areas of concern, tackle health inequities, and promote the overall well-being of children.

ASTHO's CDC-Funded Disability Specialist Program Improves Preparedness


A [blog post](#) [↗](#) published by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) describes the positive impacts of a [CDC-funded project](#) to embed disability specialists in state health departments, which began during the COVID-19 pandemic. The project concluded earlier this year; however, efforts are ongoing to build jurisdiction-level capacity to plan for and respond to the needs of people with disabilities during emergencies. ASTHO also published an article in the *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice* discussing how public health agencies can implement disability inclusion strategies to advance health equity. [Learn more here](#) [↗](#).

Partner News and Announcements

National Fragile X Foundation Materials Raise Awareness of Fragile X syndrome



In recognition of Fragile X syndrome Awareness Month this July, the National Fragile X Foundation has developed a suite of materials to help raise awareness about this genetic disorder, which is one of the most common causes of inherited intellectual disability. Find printable awareness cards, virtual backgrounds for video conference calls, and a social media template at the [National Fragile X Foundation website](#) . Materials also include an emergency card, which explains Fragile X syndrome on one side and includes a space for emergency contact information, medication needs, or allergy concerns.

CMS Recorded Webinar on Medicaid and CHIP Unwinding Now Available

With the end of the federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Declaration, federally funded programs have returned to normal operations. This means changes to eligibility rules for Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) offered a webinar in June to help partners understand how to ensure families and children have continued health insurance. To view a recording the webinar and a transcript, visit [the CMS website](#) .

U.S. Access Board Seeks Public Comment on Low Height for Medical Diagnostic Equipment

Medical care is essential for everyone, including people with disabilities. Medical tests often require people to transfer to medical diagnostic equipment (MDE), such as examination tables or chairs. MDE has been, and continues to be, inaccessible to many people who use wheelchairs, which can lead to misdiagnosis or barriers to basic care and examinations.

The U.S. Access Board has issued [a notice of proposed rulemaking](#)  to require a low transfer surface height of 17 inches for certain types of MDE used with patients in lying and seated positions. The U.S. Access Board is a federal agency that promotes accessible design and the development of accessibility guidelines and standards. The agency seeks public comment, including information on costs of compliance, time needed to comply, and other information that should be considered. For more information or to make a comment, visit the [Federal Register](#) . **Public comments are due by July 24, 2023.**

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DHDD'S mission is to lead inclusive programs to optimize the health and development of children and adults with, or at risk for, disabilities.

National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities
Division of Human Development & Disability

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