

# RAP Sheet

The Latest in Disability Research, Advocacy, Policy, and Practice

Summer 2017 Issue

## ADVANCES IN ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY



### DOES TECHNOLOGY HELP PEOPLE WITH VISION LOSS? YOU DECIDE. . .

By Stephanie Hurd, Community Relations Coordinator, Future in Sight<sup>1</sup>

*Welcome to the Summer issue of the RAP Sheet. Advances in technology are moving at an unprecedented pace. Highly sophisticated smartphones, tablets, and other devices and their easily downloaded apps are opening up whole new worlds for everyone, but especially for people with disabilities. In this issue we look at how assistive technology is providing individuals with disabilities opportunities to learn, work, and play with significantly greater independence.*

**M**y iPhone alarm goes off at 6:00 AM. It's the opening movement for the orchestra of technology that gets me through my day. OK, I admit a second alarm is set for 6:15; I like to wake up gradually. Thanks to the Stringafy app that works with my Hue lighting, the hallway and dining room lights slowly come on.

As I make breakfast, I tell Echo Dot,<sup>2</sup> "Alexa flash briefing" and she announces my morning news. I'm fairly coherent now that my talking microwave has warmed up my second cup of coffee. My daughter has left for school and I enjoy a little free time listening to Hillbilly Elegy, through Bard on my iPhone. Oops, there goes an Alexa alarm; it's time to get ready for work.

What to wear? This could be challenging, as I am blind and can't distinguish colors, but I've got an app for that. The color ID app confirms that my socks match. However, I have two identical sweaters one purple and one blue. I want the purple one, but the app isn't getting it right this time. Snap! I take a picture with my iPhone. "Siri send a text to my sister. What color is this sweater?" Within seconds she confirms it's purple. Problem solved.



Photographer – Mindy Hurd

*Stephanie Hurd uses her laptop for a Facetime conversation.*

*(Continued on next page)*

<sup>1</sup>Formally NH Association for the Blind

<sup>2</sup>Echo Dot is a hands free voice controlled device that uses Alexa to play music, control smart home devices, read the news, set alarms, read audio books, and more.

SUSAN COVERT, EDITOR

A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BY THE

DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER-NH, INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY, AND NH COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

*(Cover story continued)*

At work, my laptop is up and running. Using JAWS screen reader I check my email. My hands glide across the keyboard; JAWS reads the screen and echoes what I type. Shall I bore you with the reports I write and presentations I schedule? What does a Community Relations Coordinator do, anyway? It's actually a fabulous position with lots of variety, but I've got to fly. My iPhone calendar is reminding me with an audible alert that I have to leave for a presentation.

Wow, it's already 4:00 and I promised my nephew I'd listen to his latest song. I'm in New Hampshire and he's in Tennessee, but that's not a problem. I grab a bottle of water and make a Facetime call on my iPhone. I can't see him, but he enjoys seeing me and besides the sound is better on Facetime. My nephew is pretty tone deaf, but don't tell him. This is something we always enjoy together, so I let him go for it!

It's a beautiful day and there's still time for a walk. My health app keeps track of how many steps I've taken and incorporates that into My Fitness Pal app. (I am obsessed with this app, but there are times I really hate it keeps tabs on what I eat and how lazy I can be.) While I'm out, I pick up the mail. There's only one bill today. At home, I open the envelope and take a picture using my KNFB Reader app. Presto! I listen to my electric bill through my iPhone and then use my iPhone to pay it.

I'm glad we are going out to eat tonight; I don't feel like cooking. Using my iPhone, I check out dinner options on Applebee's menu. I go with my favorite, the oriental chicken salad; it's really good. When the bill comes, I use Apple Pay on my iPhone; it's a completely independent method using voice over. On the way home I pick up a few things at the grocery store. This time I pay with cash. I don't worry about getting the wrong change; I check it with my money identifier app.

I'm glad to be back home. I just want to relax in front of the TV. Yes, people with vision loss enjoy TV. At least I do. My Xfinity remote has voice guidance; I can speak into the remote to change channels, bring up the guide, and manipulate the arrows and other functions on the remote. I settle on the Big Bang Theory. That show is funny!

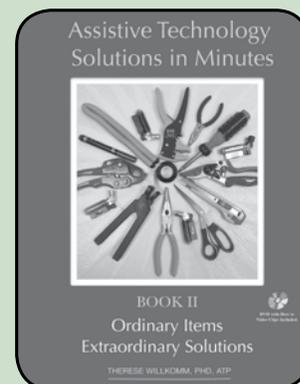
I just remember we're getting low on coffee. I cannot run out of coffee – it's a necessity. I tell Echo Dot, "Alexa, add coffee to my shopping list." Finally, time to get some sleep. To wind down I ask Alexa to play some relaxing jazz on Spotify. Another day is complete.

*For people who are blind or have low vision, technology can be an incredible help in navigating day-to-day life. Future In Sight offers workshops, as well as one-to-one training, on selecting the right technology to open up a world of independence and enjoyment. For more information contact Future in Sight - Call toll-free in NH at 1-800-464-3075 or email [services@futureinsight.org](mailto:services@futureinsight.org)*



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## WHAT IS ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY?

By Stacy Driscoll, M.Ed, ATP, Assistive Technology Specialist, ATinNH

Imagine you are unable to hear the television or you have memory loss and repeatedly forget to take your medication. Maybe you have lost your peripheral vision or suffered a stroke and now have trouble communicating. People in all of these situations may benefit from assistive technology. Public Law 108-364, the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended in 2004, defines an assistive technology device as “any item, piece of equipment or product system whether acquired commercially, off the shelf, modified, or customized that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.”

Assistive technology, or AT as it is commonly called, encompasses a wide variety of devices and supports from the most simple adaptations, like a specialized pencil grip, to computerized and highly technical applications. Examples of no-tech and low-tech assistive devices include everything from canes, Velcro fasteners, handheld magnifiers, and slant boards to visual schedules and graphic organizers. Mid-tech AT examples include braille translation software, audio books, talking calculators, and screen magnifiers. At the high end of assistive technology are power wheelchairs, speech recognition software, environmental control units, and closed caption television.

Assistive technology can be suitable for any individual with a functional limitation no matter their age or ability. An Assistive Technology Specialist can help you

determine the technology that best meets your needs. AT Specialists generally are well informed about available technology and have advanced training to help individuals find the most appropriate AT devices and services for them. When picking an AT device, it is important to think first about the activity the person needs to accomplish. With a clear understanding of the activity, the AT Specialist can then consider the abilities and limitations of the person who will be using assistive technology. An AT Specialist also takes into account the environment in which the activity will be taking place and the assistive technology features that will be needed. Once this information is obtained, the AT Specialist can determine the best AT solution for the individual. Depending on the complexity of the AT device, the individual may need a trial period to determine if the device is the right one for them. Short or long-term training on using the chosen AT device also may be needed.

Finding the appropriate assistive technology can be a smooth and straightforward process if you take the time to assess the activity and the environment where AT is needed and to understand the capabilities and preferences of the person who will be using the technology.

For more information about the New Hampshire Statewide AT Act Program, ATinNH, visit: [www.atinnh.org](http://www.atinnh.org).

### Mary Schuh Selected as a Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation Fellow

Dr. Mary Schuh, Director of the National Center on Inclusive Education at the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability and Research Associate Professor at the UNH Department of Education, has received the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation Public Policy Fellowship.

Dr. Schuh has been with the Institute on Disability since its inception, working to coordinate family and consumer leadership and educational systems change. She has more than 30 years of experience in inclusive schools and communities. “Mary’s deep commitment and her extensive experiences and knowledge makes her an authentic advocate and

engaged scholar,” said Jan Nisbet, Senior Vice Provost for Research, University of New Hampshire.

The Kennedy Foundation Fellowship is a one-year intensive immersion experience in Washington, D.C. to prepare emerging leaders to assume critical roles in the public policy arena at state and national levels. Fellows receive first-hand knowledge and experience in the development of public policy and have the opportunity to learn how the organized disability community works to shape public policy impacting people with disabilities, and their families.



Courtesy Institute on Disability/UNH



## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR EDUCATION - SUPPORTING DIVERSE LEARNERS IN THE CLASSROOM

By Diana Petschauer, M.Ed, ATP, Assistive Technology Consultant, AT for Education

**A**ssistive Technology (AT) is continually evolving; every few months there are new apps, devices, and innovative tools to support students with disabilities across all educational environments and in making the transition to the workplace. People often don't realize the wide variety of low cost/high quality AT options that are available and exist in the mobile technology that we all use daily.

As an AT consultant working with students and staff in schools, it has been rewarding to see the positive impact that AT makes in students' lives. AT bridges the gap to learning and provides support for literacy, executive function, communication, as well as accommodating sensory and physical access to learning environments. AT opens up a world of possibilities and significantly improves the ability of students with disabilities to access curriculum and to participate in the classroom.

I work with Annie, a fifth grade student with low vision who is legally blind.<sup>1</sup> When I first observed Annie in her classroom, she was trying to use her laptop. Her paraprofessional had opened a document, enlarged the text, and guided her fingers to the correct keys. Sitting with her face extremely close to the screen, Annie struggled to type. During the morning lesson, the paraprofessional in the classroom described what was being written on the board and took notes for Annie.

There are a number of AT options for students with low vision including magnification software for computer screens, screen readers, adapted mice and cursors, large print keyboards, and technology to magnify the classroom board. These options can be costly and cumbersome and often are less effective than apps and accessibility features available on the iPad and iOS. For Annie, I turned on her iPad's text to speech for reading the screen and showed her the option for high contrast and inverse colors. Using these features, Annie could now access every website and document on her iPad. It was one of those great "Aha!" moments. "Oh my gosh," Annie said, "I can see that!"

We used an app to take a picture of the assigned worksheet (typically, Annie would have oversized worksheets with enlarged print that were still hard to see and often had to be read aloud). With the worksheet on her iPad, Annie could enlarge the image, change to high contrast (white on black), and have it read aloud by the computer. Using a high contrast large print keyboard with letters and words read aloud for editing, Annie could now work independently. With a magnification app to enlarge the whiteboard image and invert colors, she is able to see what is written on the board.

With her iPad Annie also has the option to handwrite on the screen or dictate answers. When she completes an assignment, Annie can print a hard copy or use Google Drive or email to share it with her teacher. I also introduced Annie to an app for accessing textbooks and pleasure reading that allows her to enlarge print, use high contrast colors, highlight information, and use text to speech. All of this is possible with one device that is mobile and can be used in the community!

When Annie and I met with her teachers and her mother, Annie was excited to show what she had learned, "Look what I can do!" Annie's enthusiasm brought tears to her mother's eyes and to several others. Annie and I continue to work together and she always greets me with a huge hug. Annie now uses an app that takes a photo of text and immediately reads it aloud; this is helpful for reading menus and other text when she goes out to eat or shopping. Annie is working on orientation and mobility skills and, with the help of a talking GPS app, she is learning to navigate independently in her community.

Many of the same devices and apps that Annie uses are extremely helpful for students with learning disabilities, sensory impairments, physical disabilities, as well as those who struggle with executive function. More and more schools are implementing Universal

<sup>1</sup> To respect the student's privacy, her real name has not been used.

Design for Learning (UDL) to support personalized and individual learning needs and to offer students multiple ways of acquiring information and demonstrating competency. AT can be a critical component of UDL, making it possible for diverse learners to access instruction and materials.

Used effectively, assistive technology fosters independence, builds confidence, promotes academic achievement, and supports students with disabilities to make a successful transition to college or employment.

For more information on assistive technology for education, visit [www.ATforED.com](http://www.ATforED.com) or email [diana@atfored.com](mailto:diana@atfored.com)

### **ATinNH Fall After School Series**

Wednesday afternoons from September 20th through October 11th, ATinNH will be presenting workshops on using assistive technology in schools.

Workshops will be held from 3:30-5:30 at the Institute on Disability Professional Development Center, 56 Old Suncook Road in Concord.



**Sept 20, 2017**

Mastering the Accessibility Features of the iPad  
Presenter: Stacy Driscoll, M.Ed, ATP

**Sept 27, 2017**

iPad Apps for Executive Function  
Presenter: Stacy Driscoll, M.Ed, ATP

**October 4, 2017**

iCreATe – Making, Taking and Implementing  
Presenter: Therese Willkomm, PhD, ATP

**October 11, 2017**

101 Solutions for Using the iPad Camera  
Presenter: Therese Willkomm, PhD, ATP

**Cost per workshop is \$49.**

**To register - <http://iod.unh.edu/atafterschool>**

## ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ **INSTAMORPH® FABRICATION LEADS TO 3D PRINTING**

By Stacy Driscoll, M.Ed, ATP, Assistive Technology Specialist, ATinNH

**A**lthough 3D printing began in 1986, it has more recently become a means for prototyping and creating. Over the last few years those interested in assistive technology (AT) have turned to 3D printers to create solutions for individuals with disabilities.

Assistive Technology in New Hampshire (ATinNH) now has the capability of printing AT solutions using our new 3-D printer. In the last year we have built hundreds

of solutions using InstaMorph®, a thermal plastic material that can be heated and shaped in 10 seconds. Chad Payette, our summer intern and recent Manchester Community College graduate, used his expertise in CAD (computer-aided design) and SolidWorks to create InstaMorph® “walker hooks” that could be turned out on a 3D printer. These plastic



*Chad Payette demonstrates the fidget he created using InstaMorph*

hooks are among our most popular items, they can be easily attached to walkers to carry bags, reachers, or other personal belongings. Chad said it was really rewarding to see his computer drawings come to life and create a device that is helpful to so many people.

The 3D printer Chad used is a very basic printer designed for manufacturing smaller prototypes. During his summer internship he also printed a variety of different “fidget” items for individuals with autism or other disabilities who find it calming to have something that they can manipulate in their hand.

ATinNH continues to create additional solutions from InstaMorph® including spring loaded scissors, mouth sticks, and devices for one handed use that assist with getting latex gloves on and off. Stay tuned - we expect to be creating many more items on our 3D printer.

Photo Credit – Therese Willkomm



## iCreATe FOR PARALYSIS

By Stacy Driscoll, M.Ed, ATP, Assistive Technology Specialist, ATinNH

*"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn."  
~ Benjamin Franklin*

The Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire has received a \$75,000 High Impact Innovative Assistive Technology Quality of Life grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation for the iCreATe for Paralysis project through the Assistive Technology in New Hampshire (ATinNH) Program

ATinNH Director Dr. Therese Willkomm said, "I am so excited for our work on this project. Using the momentum from the current Maker's Movement, this project will empower New Hampshire residents with the tools, materials, and knowledge to create solutions in minutes for individuals who experience paralyzing conditions."

With support from the grant, ATinNH will be conducting 14 Assistive Technology Makers Workshops throughout the state. Workshop participants will be fabricating

over 1000 assistive technology solutions for children and adults who experience paralysis. Workshops are open to service providers, caregivers, family members, and individuals who experience difficulty or the inability to move their upper or lower extremities due to paralyzing conditions such as stroke, Alzheimer's disease, brain injury, multiple sclerosis, ALS, and spinal cord injury. For dates and locations of AT Makers Workshops visit [www.iod.unh.edu/icreate](http://www.iod.unh.edu/icreate).

The grant also will provide increased opportunities for UNH students to become makers of assistive technology. Dr. Willkomm and ATinNH currently work with occupational therapy, special education, and early childhood students to create AT solutions for individuals with disabilities. Through the iCreATe project, ATinNH will expand its reach to work with students from UNH Departments of Nursing, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Therapeutic Recreation, and Engineering to fabricate AT solutions for individuals who experience paralysis.

The grant involves a number of partners including ServiceLink, Granite State Independent Living, Northeast Passage, and Crooked Mountain - ATECH Services. Collaborating with the project, Velcro USA and Zoo New England are providing materials for fabricating AT solutions.

*The iCreATe for Paralysis Project, led by Dr. Therese Willkomm, is funded through the Reeve Foundation's cooperative agreement with the Administration for Community Living (cooperative agreement number 90PR3002-02-01).*





## RESTORATION

By David Johnson, Director of Marketing and Communications, Crotched Mountain Foundation

In the punishing heat of a Texas summer, 17 year-old Randy Jorgensen put the final touches on his magnum opus, the result of a year's worth of scavenging salvage yards and scrounging parts: a 1970 GTO Judge. With a turn of a key, this slab of American muscle cleared its throat and bellowed out the unique growl only a 400 horsepower Ram Air engine can muster - a primal sound that filled the teenager with a deep satisfaction.

Today, over three decades later, Randy is still in the shop, up to his elbows in WD-40 and 1/4" sockets and filled with that same kind of satisfaction. But instead of Mustangs and GTOs, he spends his days working on Permobil C 500s and Winnie Lite Supreme Walkers and Pride Revo Three-Wheel Scooters.

Randy is the Program Administrator for Crotched Mountain's Refurbished Equipment Marketplace (REM). REM, part of Crotched Mountain's Assistive Technology (ATECH) program, is New Hampshire's largest distributor of used medical equipment, all priced to be extremely affordable. That Permobil C 500, for example. New, it costs \$24,000, the same price as a 2017 Chevy Silverado. REM sells it for \$500.

Here's how it works. Donated equipment regularly rolls into ATECH's Concord location; some of it's in good condition, some not so good. Randy and his co-gearhead Mark Hall put the equipment through its paces. Everything, from simple walking canes to Hoyer lifts to the highest of high-end power chairs, gets the full REM treatment. It's taken apart, cleaned, tweaked, torqued, and tested. If it passes muster, the equipment lands in the REM inventory, listed on the [www.shoprem.com](http://www.shoprem.com) website for digital browsing and available to peruse at the Concord showroom.

If the equipment doesn't get the Randy and Mark seal of approval, it's harvested for parts, which can be just as useful to potential customers. New Hampshire currently has no used parts warehouse for medical devices; REM has been methodically building up inventory to address this market. Come take a look at the workshop, we have



Photographer - David Johnson

Randy Jorgensen (left) and Mark Hall work to restore a power chair.

an impressive floor-to-ceiling cabinet of curiosities loaded with all manner of gizmos (many of which, if new, would cost more than your average BMW dealer part).

"I got a call one day by from someone looking for a computer display on a power chair," Randy said. "This is a unit that is integral to the operation of the chair. But the manufacturer doesn't even make it anymore. We had three of them."

*(Continued on page 13)*



To donate used equipment, call the Refurbished Equipment Marketplace (REM) at 226-2900 ext. 25, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. You also can visit us on line at [shoprem.com](http://shoprem.com) and click Donation Policy in upper left corner to learn more about how our program works and for information on the types of equipment we accept for donations.



## THERESE WILLKOMM, THE MACGYVER OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

By Déodonné Bhattarai, JD/MPH, Volunteer Lawyer, Disability Rights Center - NH

**A**t the beginning of April, New Hampshire's very own assistive technology MacGyver, Therese Willkomm, began a series of workshops where participants learn how to fabricate assistive devices. Willkomm, who was inspired to hack, adapt, design, and make everyday tools while growing up in Wisconsin's farming country, now has over one thousand inventions and devices in her portfolio. Willkomm is no ordinary tinkerer. An Associate Clinical Professor at UNH and Director of the New Hampshire Statewide Assistive Technology Program, Willkomm holds a master's degree in Vocational Rehabilitation and a Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Science and Technology. Her work is aimed at increasing the autonomy of individuals with disabilities by allowing them to complete tasks independently while at home, work, and play.

Despite her extensive formal education, Willkomm's work is grounded in the belief that you don't need to be an engineer in order to fabricate a useful and creative solution to a problem. Her work is also an alternative to traditional assistive technology, which is frequently expensive and difficult to obtain. Her projects are inspired by the quick and inexpensive repurposing, reusing, and recycling of everyday objects. Her rapid fabrications are often "built in five minutes or less, for five dollars or less, without electricity or glue."

My family first experienced Willkomm's creative talents when she arrived at our house with two of her assistive technology students. She and her students met our son and saw how challenging it was for him to independently access his picture books from his wheelchair. Once the problem was identified, Willkomm and her students began brainstorming. Willkomm's rapid-fire questions, feedback, and advice prompted her students to think creatively and design for our son's unique abilities. A few weeks later, we received a formal report proposing a special shelf that our son could slide out from the rest of the bookcase, roll up to, and sit at as though reading at a table. Inspired by her student's visit to our home, Willkomm has now instituted an experiential element in

her assistive technology course – all her students are now required to go out and build something for someone.

By asking the question, "How do you make stuff?" Willkomm found that most people head straight to YouTube before starting a project. So, in addition to her printed publications, she has more than 3,000 tutorials available on her ATinNH YouTube channel - [www.youtube.com/user/ATinNH/videos](http://www.youtube.com/user/ATinNH/videos). She's also currently exploring ways to bridge the gap between watching a video clip and actually executing the solution. Through strategic use of QR codes and touch screen technology, we may soon be able to swipe through a step-by-step video instruction of a project while simultaneously shopping for the materials needed to complete it.

Willkomm's workshops, publications, and videos seek to inspire and empower us all to identify the assistive technology challenges we face in our daily lives and create our own solutions to them. Whether it is a low-tech adaptation for a high-tech device or an uncommon repurposing of a commonplace object, at their core, her fabrications are entirely consumer driven and individualized. They are all informed by the unique needs of individuals with disabilities. This user-friendly, low-risk approach to fabricating solutions welcomes us all to think creatively and channel our inner MacGyver.



*Therese Willkomm and Marika Steir talk with UNH students about assistive technology.*

Courtesy of UNH Institute on Disability



## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY – WHEN TO SEEK LEGAL HELP FROM THE DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER - NH

By James Ziegler, Staff Attorney, Disability Rights Center – NH

Over the past several years, advances in technology and medicine have resulted in tremendous improvements in the field of assistive technology (AT). The development of smart phones, tablets, text to speech software, and other wireless technology has increased the effectiveness of AT and enabled people with disabilities to live and work more independently than ever before.

Individuals with disabilities access AT services and supports from a wide variety of sources; for example:

- ◆ Medicaid and Medicare can cover durable medical equipment for beneficiaries.
- ◆ Schools can provide AT for students with IEPs.
- ◆ Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) can offer AT to help people reach their employment goals.
- ◆ Area Agencies can provide AT to individuals with developmental disabilities.

What happens when you are denied access to needed assistive technology? Do you have a right to challenge this decision? How do you go about doing that? The Disability Rights Center-NH can help people with disabilities understand their rights and provide assistance to solve legal problems related to AT.

For people receiving Social Security benefits, Medicaid and Medicare can cover medically necessary AT, known as durable medical equipment (DME). In order for the equipment to meet Medicare's definition of DME, the AT must be used primarily to serve a medical purpose, be able to withstand repeated use, and be appropriate for use in a person's home. Examples of DME include wheelchairs, hospital beds, breathing equipment, and blood sugar monitors.

DRC can help people who experience problems with Medicare and Medicaid regarding DME. For example, if Medicaid is refusing to pay for needed repairs to a wheelchair or lift, DRC may be able to help. Contact the DRC-NH to find out more about your rights regarding DME acquisition, repair, and replacement.

For many students with disabilities, assistive technology plays a critical role in their education. Examples of class-

room AT include text to voice or word predictive software, and FM devices to help hard of hearing students access the curriculum. Schools are required to provide AT if it is necessary for the student to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). If your child is not receiving the AT necessary to succeed in school, contact DRC to schedule an intake visit. You will be able to speak with an attorney who will discuss your concerns and provide you with legal advice, support, and advocacy to make sure that your child receives the AT that he or she needs for their education.

The New Hampshire Department of Education's Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) provides services to help people with disabilities achieve stable employment and financial independence. VR services may include assistive technology. People eligible for VR services meet with a counselor to develop an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE), which includes the services that are necessary to meet their employment goals. VR can provide AT if the technology is included as part of the IPE. DRC frequently offers advice and guidance to help people advocate for the inclusion of Assistive Technology in their IPE.

Individuals who are served by the state's Area Agency system are entitled to an annual AT evaluation. New Hampshire law requires that Area Agencies perform a "comprehensive screening evaluation" to determine the type of AT that would benefit a client. A new evaluation must be conducted every year, even for people already receiving AT from the agency. Area Agency clients who have been denied AT or who disagree with their Area Agency about their services have a right to appeal. The Disability Rights Center-NH can provide advice about legal options and may be able to provide representation for an appeal.

If you have been denied needed AT services or if you have legal questions regarding AT, call DRC at (800) 834-1721 or (603) 228-0432, or apply for an intake appointment online at [www.drcnh.org/A2J.html](http://www.drcnh.org/A2J.html)



# NEW RULES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

By Karen Rosenberg, Senior Staff Attorney, Disability Rights Center – NH

The New Hampshire State Board of Education has adopted new rules for the education of children with disabilities, Ed 1100. The new rules became effective on Friday, March 24, 2017.

Many of New Hampshire's special education rules remain the same, but there are some significant changes, especially to the **rules for evaluations**. School districts now have 60 calendar days to complete evaluations and hold an IEP Team meeting to consider a child's initial eligibility for special education. Prior to the rule change, school districts had 45 days to complete the initial evaluation, with a possible 15-day extension. The new rules do not allow any extension for school districts to complete initial evaluations. The 60-day deadline also applies to re-evaluations. However, the parent and school district may agree to extend the deadline for completion of re-evaluations, but not for more than 30 days.

The school district must provide the parent or guardian with copies of each examiner's evaluation and assessment report at least 5 days before the meeting of the IEP team at which these reports will be discussed. This applies to both initial and re-evaluations and is a positive development for parents and guardians. The school district will send evaluation reports via U.S. mail, unless the parents and school agree upon another method, such as email or allowing the

parent to pick up the report. Before the rule change, early review of evaluation reports only occurred for parents who knew they were entitled to access the evaluations 5 days in advance of the IEP meeting. Parents can better prepare for the IEP Team meetings and more fully participate in decision-making regarding their child's education program if they have the opportunity to review all evaluation and assessment reports before the meeting.

Another significant change applies to the requirements for children whose educational placement is "home instruction." Under the new rules, children with disabilities who are placed in "home instruction" must receive full-day school programs, unless the superintendent has excused the child from full-time attendance due to concerns about the child's health or welfare. In these exceptional situations, the parent and superintendent must agree on the number of hours per week of instruction, including special education and related services, that the child will receive. Children with disabilities who are removed from school for conduct code violations and receive education at home are entitled to a minimum of 10 hours per week of instruction, including special education, plus the related services specified in their IEPs.

The Parent Information Center of New Hampshire has prepared a guide to the final revised rules, together with supplemental rules and laws that are referenced in New Hampshire's rules (*see link below*). **This is not an official document.** The official version of the rules will be published on the websites of the New Hampshire Department of Education and the State of New Hampshire General Court.

PIC-NH Guide to Revised Special Education Rules:  
<http://nhspecial.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Ed-1100-3-23-2017.pdf>





## NH TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NH-TEAP)

By Brianna Cameron, NH-TEAP Coordinator, Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

NH-TEAP is a program that provides specialized telephone equipment and accessories to any NH resident who has a disability that makes it difficult or impossible to use a standard telephone. Disabilities include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- ◆ Blind/Low-Vision
- ◆ Mobility Challenges
- ◆ Speech Challenges
- ◆ Cognitive Challenges

Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (NDHHS) is under contract for the NH-TEAP with the Governor's Commission on Disability. Funding for this service is received through the telecommunications relay service trust fund established by the Public Utilities Commission per (RSA-362-E)<sup>1</sup>. NH-TEAP not only helps guide you to find the equipment that best meets your need(s), but also provides financial assistance to help pay for your specialized telephone equipment at little or no cost to you. NDHHS has run the program for nearly 10 years. NH-TEAP has assisted nearly 1,000 clients since 2012!

NH-TEAP has the following specialized telephone equipment available through the program:

- ◆ Amplified Telephones (capable of being 20x louder than standard phones for a Deaf/Hard of Hearing individual)
- ◆ CapTel Phones (amplified phones with a screen that provides captioning, so a Deaf/Hard of Hearing individual may listen and read what is being said simultaneously)
- ◆ Phones with Large Buttons/Braille (to assist blind/low-vision clients to dial)
- ◆ Speakerphones (great for clients who have mobility challenges)
- ◆ Memory Button Phones (assists clients with cognitive challenges or memory loss)

- ◆ Signalers (makes lights flash to indicate the phone is ringing for a Deaf/Hard of Hearing individual)
- ◆ Voice Activated Telephone Dialer (dials for a blind/low-vision client so s/he does not have to dial numbers s/he calls most often)
- ◆ Headphones/Neckloops (allow hands-free communication for a Deaf/Hard of Hearing client)
- ◆ Other options and accessories!

If you or a loved one is interested in applying to NH-TEAP to receive specialized telephone equipment, please call (603) 224-1850 Ext. 207 (voice) or (603) 968-5889 (videophone) to speak with the coordinator. Or email us at [equipment@ndhhs.org](mailto:equipment@ndhhs.org). For an online application, as well as additional information about the program and photos of available equipment, visit our website at [www.ndhhs.org/nhteap](http://www.ndhhs.org/nhteap).

NH-TEAP offers free presentations to New Hampshire agencies, organizations, and hospitals. We also provide in-home training for clients on how to use their new specialized phone. If you have questions, want to schedule a presentation or training, or would like an equipment demonstration, please contact us or stop by our office.

Always know that you can call the NH Governor's Commission on Disability at (603)271-2773 or visit their website at [www.nh.gov/disability](http://www.nh.gov/disability) for disability-related questions.

*For more information about NH-TEAP and Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Inc.:*

NDHHS, 56 Old Suncook Rd. Suite 6,  
Concord, NH 03301

Voice: 603-224-1850 Ext 207 | VP: 603-968-5889

Fax: 1-603-856-0242 | Email: [equipment@ndhhs.org](mailto:equipment@ndhhs.org)

Web: [www.ndhhs.org](http://www.ndhhs.org)

Check us out on Facebook! | Amazon Smile

<sup>1</sup> New Hampshire law (RSA-362-E) establishes that the Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD) shall administer a program that enables qualified persons in New Hampshire to access telephone service through the use of telecommunications equipment assistance.



## ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL – COMMUNICATION ACCESS

By Julia Freeman-Woolpert, Disability Rights Center - NH

**W**hen it comes to health care, what can be more important than being able to communicate with your health professionals? Access to effective communication in medical settings is essential; it assures the delivery of good medical care, and is vital for gaining informed consent, understanding instructions, and preventing medical errors. It's also the law under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In response to complaints against hospitals for failing to provide communication access for deaf and hard of hearing people, St. Joseph and other New Hampshire hospitals developed communication access programs to assure effective medical treatment for deaf and hard of hearing patients.

Almost seven years ago, St. Joseph Hospital in Nashua hired Rosemary Ford to develop and administer its communication access program. Rosemary is a national certified Oral Transliterater and a New Hampshire State Screened/Licensed American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter. With a background as an interpreter she is skilled in addressing communication needs in many different situations and with people who require different supports to communicate effectively. An individual who became deaf at an early age may use ASL or may communicate orally. Another person may prefer to communicate using an in-person oral interpreter or a video interpreter. An individual with limited communication skills may need a Certified Deaf Interpreter or a pictogram book where they can point to pictures to communicate. Someone who is hard of hearing or who has lost hearing later in life may need amplification or written communications. A Deaf-blind person may use a tactile interpreter.

People coming to St. Joseph who have communication or other assistive technology needs, have the opportunity to review a list of possible options and choose the ones that work for them. The hospital's program

provides support for patients, family members, and visitors who need assistance with communication. Each hospital department and outpatient location has a kit with a captioned telephone, a pocket talker, pen and paper, a dry erase board, a magnifier, and a picture book with photos to aid communication. The kit also includes an iPad with applications that improve accessibility, including video remote interpreting and video phone capabilities, magnification, and Dragon dictation that will convert speech into print.

In addition, hospital departments have a visual and audio alert system that includes a vibrating alarm clock, visual monitor, and door knock sensor. Video phones are available at various locations within the hospital; video phones enable a deaf person to make phone calls with a hearing person using an interpreter. For a demonstration of how a video phone works, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGFcP0OQV3k>.

There are patients who come into the hospital unaware that there is technology that could help them. Rosemary often works with seniors who have become hard of hearing. She introduces them to the pocket talker, which amplifies sounds close to the listener and reduces background noise. Many patients loved this device so much they wanted to buy one. Rosemary arranged to have the hospital gift shop carry pocket talkers; these can now be easily purchase by anyone who is interested. Families report that pocket talkers have made big difference back home, older relatives are able to participate in conversations and be included in activities that they had once loved, but had given up once they began to lose their hearing.

The hospital's communication access program was originally intended to ensure effective communication for people who are deaf or hard of hearing; it has been expanded to include accommodations for other disabilities and foreign language speakers.



Photo Credit – Julia Freeman-Woolpert

*Rosemary Ford Interpreter Services/LEP/ADA Program  
Administrator for St. Joseph Hospital*

St. Joseph sees many people whose preferred language is not English. The hospital employs a full time Spanish interpreter and uses per diem interpreters for other languages.

For a list of auxiliary aids available for deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and blind/low vision individuals - <http://www.stjosephhospital.com/patients-and-visitors/patient-guide/auxiliary-aid-available-for-deaf-hard-of-hearing-deaf-blind-blindlow-vision-individuals>

Rosemary Ford can be reached by –  
Video Phone: 603-718-3444,  
Voice: 603-882-3000, or  
Email: [rsimpsonford@sjnh.org](mailto:rsimpsonford@sjnh.org).

Find out more about your rights to effective communication on DRC's website:  
<http://drcnh.org/interpflyer.pdf>

*(Continued from page 7)*

These parts - like the equipment on the showroom floor - are served up at a major discount. The driving force of REM and ATECH is connecting people with the technology that will improve the quality of their lives. For those who daily rely on a patient lift or a wheelchair, having their equipment out of action can have devastating effects. These devices are more than inert pieces of metal and circuitry; they are extensions of a person.

Randy understands this. He's seen the bonds form between people and technology. He's also seen its impact on loved ones. Like the woman who called Randy after her husband had passed away. Their house had been modified for accessibility - lifts, wheelchairs, you name it. She finally felt ready to donate it all. The woman paced while Randy inspected the equipment. "Are you alright?" Randy asked.

She broke down in tears. "How am I supposed to go on without him?" she asked. The equipment was more than equipment; it was part of her husband. Randy consoled her. He said he knew how she felt; he had lost both of his parents and his brothers.

After a final, longing look at the equipment, she turned back to Randy. "This will help somebody else," she said. "And I am so happy that it will."

Randy bid farewell and drove back to Concord, his van loaded with a trove of life-changing metal, padded, and plastic treasure, bound for his workshop where he'd strap on the safety goggles, get out his 3/4" wrench, and get down to doing what he's always loved - restoring.

# ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

## NEW HAMPSHIRE RESOURCES

### **AT for Education**

AT for Education provides assistive technology and accessibility services for students and adults in the education environment as well as at the workplace.

### **ATinNH**

Provides AT training, education, and outreach and AT services, including equipment demonstrations, loans, and refurbishing and reuse. ATinNH is a program of the UNH Institute on Disability.

### **ATinNH YouTube Channel**

A multitude of short how-to videos for creating assistive technology solutions.

### **Crotched Mountain ATECH Services**

Specialized clinical program providing evaluation and AT consultation services.

### **Granite State Independent Living**

Promotes life with independence for people with disabilities through advocacy, information, education and support.

### **Northeast Passage**

Northeast Passage delivers disability-related health promotion and adapted sports programs throughout New England.

## NATIONAL AT RESOURCES

### **AbleData - Your Source for Assistive Technology Information**

AbleData a comprehensive, annotated AT library of over 36,000 product listings. The site includes listing of resources and links to national and international sites

### **Adaptive Environments**

Advances the role of design in expanding opportunity and enhancing experience for people of all ages and abilities. This international organization balances expertise in legally required accessibility with best practices in universal design.

### **Assistive Technology Store, Perkins School for the Blind**

Offers adaptive solutions for greater independence of people who are blind, visually impaired or learning disabled.

### **Assistive Technology Industry Association**

ATIA serves as the collective voice of the assistive technology industry so that the best products and services are delivered to people with disabilities.

### **ATAP - Association of Assistive Technology**

A place to find your statewide program information.

### **AT Connects - Sharing Information on Assistive Technology**

An information site for assistive technology in your state. Locate AT programs around the country, find people who use the same equipment as you do.

### **CAST**

Expanding learning opportunities for all individuals, especially those with disabilities, through Universal Design for Learning.

### **CATEA- National Public Website on Assistive Technology**

A resource with over 22,000 products in its library. The site provides access to information on AT devices and services as well as other community resource.

### **JAN - Job Accomodation Network**

Leading source of free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. JAN works to find practical solutions that benefit both employer and employee.

### **National Center on Accessible Instructional Materials**

A resource for educators, parents, publishers, media, and others interested in learning more about and implementing AIM and NIMAS.

### **PACER Center**

Promotes opportunities that enhance the quality of life of children and young adults with disabilities and their families, based on the concept of parents helping parents.

### **Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America**

RESNA supports the development, dissemination, and utilization of knowledge and practice pertaining to rehabilitation and assistive technology.



# TRAINING & EVENTS

## nTIDE Lunch & Learn Webinar Series

On the first Friday of every month, corresponding with the Bureau of Labor Statistics jobs report, the Employment Policy and Measurement Rehabilitation and Research Training Center offers a live broadcast via Zoom Webinar to share the latest nTIDE findings. In addition, we provide news and updates on disability employment and host panelists for discussions on disability related findings.

**Dates:** July 7, August 4, and September 1, 2017

**Time:** 12:00 p.m. EST

**Location:** [www.researchondisability.org/ntide](http://www.researchondisability.org/ntide)

## Plan Your Response for an Autism Emergency (Families)

Since 2009, 74 children with autism have died after wandering away from a safe setting. Since 2011 over 400 people have been reported missing. Nearly half of children with autism wander or bolt from a safe setting. This training will identify: 1) issues of autism-related risk; 2) provide strategies to help manage ASD risk at home and school; 3) explore disclosure options: ID cards, 911 registries, and field disclosure; 4) discuss prevention, alert, and response plans for dangerous wandering; and 5) identify tools and options for parents, care providers, educators, and persons with autism to develop partnerships with law enforcement, first response, and criminal justice agencies.

**Date:** June 7, 2017

**Time:** 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

**Presenters:** Dennis Debbaudt

**Location:** Memorial Union Building, Strafford Room, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

**Cost:** Free with light refreshments and door prizes!

## Methods, Models, & Tools

Learn how to facilitate person-centered planning. In this course, you will gain an understanding of the impact that service planning policies and practices have on individual/family choice, control, and self-efficacy; develop basic facilitation skills; learn techniques and strategies for managing interpersonal dynamics within planning teams; gain a working knowledge of primary funding sources and ways to creatively combine sources to develop an individualized budget; and acquire an understanding of the components of service brokering and strategies for negotiating sustainable service agreements.

**Date:** June 15, 16, 22, 23, and 26, 2017

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**Presenters:** Patty Cotton, M.Ed., Pam McPhee, MSW

**Locations:** New Hampshire Hall, 124 Main Street, Room G44 & The Browne Center, 340 Dame Road, Durham, NH 03824

**Cost:** \$650\* (\*\$600 per person if registering a group of three or more)

## 2017 Conference on School Culture, Climate, and Positive Behavior Support

Schools and communities continue to face obstacles to addressing behavior, climate, safety, and academic achievement. Establishing a safe school environment using a multi-tiered system of support is related to improved outcomes for all students. The theme of this year's conference is "Classroom Success with MTSS." Keynote speaker Terrance M. Scott, Ph.D. will present Effective Instruction and the Management of Challenging Classroom Behaviors.

**Date:** August 11, 2017

**Time:** 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

**Location:** SERESC Event & Conference Center, 29 Commerce Drive, Bedford, NH

## 4th Annual NH Leadership and ABLÉ NH Charity Golf Classic

Join the NH Leadership Series and ABLÉ NH at the 4th Annual Charity Golf Classic. This event was started by family and friends of people who have lifelong disabilities. As graduates of the NH leadership Series and members of ABLÉ NH, we are working to provide training and create support for full lives in the community for ALL!

**Date:** September 22, 2017

**Time:** 12:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

**Location:** Windham Country Club, Windham, NH

**Cost:** \$150 for golf, lunch, raffle ticket, and one free mulligan.

### 3 EASY WAYS TO REGISTER!

online



[WWW.IOD.UNH.EDU/Events](http://WWW.IOD.UNH.EDU/Events)

call to register or to request a registration form



603.228.2084

mail a completed registration form



INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY  
56 OLD SUNCOOK ROAD, SUITE 2  
CONCORD, NH 03301

# RAP Sheet

## NH COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

2½ Beacon Street, Suite 10  
Concord, NH 03301-4447

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- ◆ *Assistive Technology in New Hampshire*
- ◆ *ATECH – Refurbished Equipment Marketplace*
- ◆ *Legal Help for Assistive Technology*
- ◆ *Therese Willkomm – the MacGyver of AT*

## DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER - NH

64 North Main Street, Suite 2, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Concord, NH 03301-4913  
Voice and TDD: (603) 228-0432 ◆ 1-800-834-1721 ◆ FAX: (603) 225-2077  
TDD access also through NH Relay Service: 1-800-735-2964 (Voice and TDD)  
E-mail: [advocacy@drcnh.org](mailto:advocacy@drcnh.org) ◆ Website: [www.drcnh.org](http://www.drcnh.org)  
"Protection and Advocacy System for New Hampshire"

*The Disabilities Rights Center is dedicated to eliminating barriers to the full and equal enjoyment of civil and other legal rights for people with disabilities.*

## INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY/UCED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

[www.iod.unh.edu](http://www.iod.unh.edu) | [facebook.com/instituteondisability](https://facebook.com/instituteondisability) | [twitter.com/unhiod](https://twitter.com/unhiod) | [youtube.com/unhiod](https://youtube.com/unhiod)

Durham Office:

10 West Edge Drive, Suite 101 | Durham, NH 03824  
Phone: 603.862.1769 | Relay: 711 | Fax: 603.862.0555

Concord Office:

56 Old Suncook Road, Suite 2 | Concord, NH 03301  
Phone: 603.228.2084 | Relay: 711 | Fax: 603.228.3270

*The IOD promotes full access, equal opportunities, and participation for all persons by strengthening communities and advancing policy and systems change, promising practices, education, and research.*

## NH COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

2½ Beacon Street, Suite 10  
Concord, NH 03301-4447

Phone: (603) 271-3236 ◆ TTY/TDD: 1-800-735-2964 ◆ Website: [www.nhddc.org](http://www.nhddc.org)

*Dignity, full rights of citizenship, equal opportunity, and full participation for all New Hampshire citizens with developmental disabilities.*

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