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HEARING

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

EXAMINING IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

MARCH 2, 2011

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IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2011

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:06 a.m., in room SD–430, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Tom Harkin, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Harkin, Franken, Blumenthal, Enzi, and Isakson.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR HARKIN

The CHAIRMAN. The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will please come to order.

First, I just want to apologize. I should have anticipated a bigger crowd, but I'm sorry for the small size of the hearing room. We've tried to open up the ante room to get as many people as possible in here.

Do we have to shut the doors? There may be some people there that can hear outside. We have a great group. If we can keep those doors open, and then we'll try to get in as many people as possible. Maybe we'll just have to do some rotations or something here, because I know there's a lot of people in the hallway who would like to be in on this hearing.

I am instructing my staff to set up as many chairs in here as possible for people that need to sit. If you can stand—I apologize—you can stand. But I'm more than willing to get some extra chairs in here to get as many people as possible in this room and maybe even in the center aisle. I don't know if the fire marshal will let us do that or not, but let's just see what we can do, Michael.

Well, the title of this hearing is Improving Employment Opportunities for People with Intellectual Disabilities. We're here today to examine the barriers, and, most importantly, identify solutions to increase the employment participation rate of individuals with disabilities.

For this hearing, we focus first on persons with intellectual disabilities, because, in many ways, they have faced the most significant barriers and the lowest employment participation rates of any group of individuals with disabilities.

According to some sources, the employment participation rate for persons with intellectual disabilities is as low as 23.9 percent. What that means is 76 percent are not working.

Persons with intellectual disabilities also may face the most significant barriers to employment, that of poor attitudes about their abilities and low expectations for their possibilities. We're here today to identify strategies for increasing employment participation for this important group of our citizens.

Participation in the workforce has many benefits for all of us beyond the obvious benefit of providing an income. Employment allows for the creation of social networks. It creates a community of colleagues and friends, and integrated competitive employment helps to create social networks that reach far into the community.

When people with disabilities work, they become part of their communities and have the opportunity to contribute to those communities. Having a job has been tied to better health, longer life, and greater satisfaction with life, for people with disabilities. And, of course, it reduces the likelihood that they will live in poverty.

Employment for persons with disabilities benefits all of society. Individuals with disabilities who are working even with services, such as supported employment, show a net fiscal gain for society. In other words, it doesn't really cost us. It adds to our society in a fiscal sense.

Employers report that this group is a dedicated, loyal group of employees, that they have a lower rate of turnover, a lower absentee rate, and greater productivity. There are great benefits to employing persons with disabilities for the individual, for the business and for society at large.

Recognizing the scope and urgency of this challenge, 15 of the most significant organizations working with individuals with developmental disabilities have joined together to form the Alliance for Full Participation. The Alliance will hold a conference in November focusing on competitive, integrative employment and will set a goal of doubling the employment participation rate of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities by 2015.

So this hearing is one of the first steps to address this problem of under participation in our workforce by persons with disabilities.

I'm asking my colleagues to join with me in working toward the great goals of significantly increasing the employment rate, decreasing the poverty rate and increasing the quality of life of persons with disabilities.

The important work we have done since the landmark passage 35 years ago of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act and 20 years ago of the Americans With Disabilities Act, which dramatically improved the lives of persons with disabilities. So we've addressed education. We've addressed access. Now, we must address employment and economic well-being.

Before we move into our first panel, I wanted to acknowledge two individuals in the audience who have devoted their lives to improving opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, Tim Shriver and Anthony Shriver. Where are you? Are you out here someplace?

[Applause.]

Thank you both. Thank you for your fabulous work with both Special Olympics International and the Best Buddies programs. You're carrying forward the proud legacy of your uncles and your mother in this regard.

As you know, I worked for many years with Senator Kennedy and with your mother, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, on issues related to disabilities. I know they would both be enthusiastically supportive of the efforts that we're making here today. In fact, your mother once said of people with intellectual disabilities that they had earned—and here's her quote—the right to play on any playing field, to study in any school, the right to hold a job.

Well, she was right, and I hope, through this hearing today, that we honor her words and continue to work toward the great goal of increasing the employment participation rate for persons with intellectual disabilities. By doing so, we will improve the quality of their lives and the quality of life for all citizens. Thank you.

Now, I will ask my—Well, hold the record open for a statement by Senator Enzi who couldn't be here at the beginning.

Oh, you're going to read it? OK. Then I'll yield to Senator Isakson.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR ISAKSON

Senator ISAKSON. Well, thank you, Chairman Harkin, for holding the hearing on this important topic, and I am pleased to sit in for Senator Enzi who will be here shortly, but could not be here at the beginning.

I'm pleased also to submit and read his statement for the record.

[The prepared statement of Senator Enzi follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR ENZI

Senator ISAKSON. Since the passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act over 20 years ago, Democrats and Republicans have regularly come together to support policies that encourage the participation of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of life, including participation in the workforce.

Americans are in agreement that individuals with intellectual disabilities can and should participate in the workforce. Beyond providing tangible contributions to their employers, evidence is clear that the overall workplace morale is boosted with an inclusive environment for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Regrettably, the employment opportunities for Americans overall continues to be strained due to the extended economic downturn resulting in sustained unemployment levels in excess of 9 percent.

People with disabilities have been particularly hit hard by current economic challenges that limit their opportunities to participate in the workforce resulting in lower workforce participation rates over the past few years. These continued low rates raise a number of questions about how we can promote competitive, integrated employment, particularly for those who are the focus of today's hearing.

I am pleased, on behalf of Senator Enzi, the Ranking Member, to acknowledge Joan Evans, the director of Workforce Services in the State of Wyoming. She's agreed to be with us today and share,

on the second panel, her perspectives on the firsthand experiences in increasing the competitive, integrated employment opportunities of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

I'm particularly interested in hearing how Wyoming is leveraging partnerships with private companies, such as Lowe's, to create good jobs. As Ms. Evans' testimony will show, States and the private sector should be in the forefront of developing innovative partnerships that lead to competitive, integrated employment opportunities.

One of the barriers I believe employers and individuals with intellectual disabilities face is the array of disjointed services that programs are available to facilitate and support competitive, integrated employment.

As the Government Accounting Office has repeatedly noted for the better part of the past decade, efforts from the Federal level are far too disparate, lacking coordination and coherence, ultimately leading to a confusing mess of inefficient programs. This stark reality is highlighted yet again in GAO's list of programs identified as high risk and in need of reform as a categorization that has been placed in the Federal disabilities program since the year 2003.

GAO claims these programs are high risk because, as stated in the report, they are grounded in outmoded concepts that have not been updated to reflect the current State of science, medicine, technology and the labor market conditions.

GAO has also recently noted that for the Federal Government existing hiring procedures are not well understood and effective outreach strategies are lacking for individuals with disabilities.

Equally concerning is the fact that we have little information on why people with disabilities leave their positions within Federal agencies, leaving many unanswered questions about the effectiveness of our own outreach and accommodations. I believe the Federal Government must and should lead by example, and we have a lot to learn if we choose to take on this leadership role.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to hearing the testimony today and working with you in the future to the improvement of access for employment for all with intellectual disabilities.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Isakson.

Before I introduce our first panel, I just want to note that I think we have a vote at 11 o'clock on the continuing resolution. So we'll have a brief break around 11 o'clock.

First, we have the Honorable Lynnae Ruttledge, who is a presidential appointee serving as commissioner of the Rehabilitative Services Administration in the Department of Education.

Ms. Ruttledge previously worked for the Washington Department of Social and Health Services, and also worked for the Oregon Department of Human Services in the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. She has over 20 years of leadership experience in public vocational rehabilitation programs as well as over 20 years of experience in international diplomacy.

After Ms. Ruttledge, we'll hear from the Honorable Sharon Lewis, appointed commissioner of the Administration on Developmental Disabilities in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Ms. Lewis has worked in disability policy for more than 10 years at the local, State and national levels, and originally came here as a Kennedy Foundation Public Policy Fellow working for the HELP Committee here on our Subcommittee on Children and Families. In 2007, however, she left this side and went over to the other side——

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. The House of Representatives, and worked for the Education and Labor Committee there as a senior disability policy advisor. Before coming to Washington, Ms. Lewis worked on public policy for the Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition and for The Arc.

Ms. Lewis is also a parent of three daughters, including one with a disability.

Your statements will be made a part of the record in their entirety. We'll start with you, Ms. Ruttledge. Welcome, again, to the committee, and if you could sum up your statement in 5 or 7 minutes or so, I would be most appreciative. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF LYNNAE RUTTLEDGE, COMMISSIONER, REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. RUTTLEDGE. Well, I have this counter in front of me, so I think I'm going to know when I'm at my limit.

First of all, Mr. Chairman, Senator Isakson and members of the staff and all of the other committee members, thank you. Thank you for the work that you do. Thank you for the commitment that you have to really helping us figure out how are we going to improve employment for people with disabilities, and especially youth with disabilities, and especially youth with intellectual disabilities.

We have a whole room of people that are interested in this topic, and I have to tell you that across the country there couldn't be anything that's more important than addressing issues related to employment.

As you mentioned, I am the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and it's really my honor and pleasure to serve for the President and to serve the country in providing leadership to both vocational rehabilitation and independent-living programs nationwide.

I think that we're here today to help understand the barriers and the challenges, but also the opportunities that exist so that we can increase employment for people with disabilities and so that we can really impact the transition outcomes for youth with intellectual disabilities.

In order to be able to achieve competitive, integrated employment, we need to look at some very specific barriers and then opportunities to overcome those barriers. You mentioned this in your opening remarks, Mr. Chairman, that we have to establish high expectations, and I think that's where it really needs to start. We continue to know that attitudes are really the most significant barrier that exists. We need to work together to be able to design and provide the support services that people need, so that when they do go to work they are able to be successful and they're able to achieve their potential.

We need to be able to address the barriers that limit an individual's decision to be able to go to work and sometimes discourage them from seeking better-paying jobs, and some of those relate to asset limits, some of those relate to really a low expectation about what someone's earning wage could be.

We have to assess where we are now and where we need to get to in terms of really judging the performance of our programs. I'm the first to always acknowledge that we need to do better, and we have, I think, an opportunity through these hearings, to be able to look at what could that look like.

And we'll be able to learn from some of the States that have already shown that they do know how to increase employment outcomes for individuals with intellectual disabilities. States like Wyoming and Washington and Vermont and Connecticut and Arizona within their vocational rehabilitation programs are placing youth with intellectual disabilities at more than $4 an hour. It's a start. So we know that it's possible.

We need to look at the promising practices that exist and build on those. We need to share them. We need to learn from those State partnerships that have really helped us to be able to figure out strategies, so that youth with intellectual disabilities are able to do jobs not just in housekeeping, not just in administrative support, but in health care and in production and in starting to learn how to own their own business. Those are the possibilities that exist for us, and we know that that's happening throughout the country. We need to build on it.

We need to be able to target our research and our demonstration activities to really identify those additional effective models. We know that supported employment works. We need to build on that.

We need to look at ways to develop more models that integrate workplace supports, so that individuals with significant disabilities can be employed in the public sector, the private sector and the nonprofit sector.

We know that there's going to be an increasing demand in our economy for skilled workers, and we know that having access to postsecondary education is one of those key factors that allows someone to be able to earn a better wage and demonstrate greater skills.

We know there are programs, hundreds of them throughout the country, that are including individuals with intellectual disabilities in the mainstream of their programs, and we're demonstrating the success that can result from that, and it really does allow people to take those next steps toward independent living and their careers.

We know that leadership in both business and governmental agencies is what's necessary to be able to move that bar forward, and I know that that's one of the things that you talk about, Senator Harkin, is that we've got to raise the bar and we just need to figure out what it's going to take to support those leaders to help us be more successful.

I have lots and lots of examples, but I want to stop here and say we share your commitment and we know that this is the beginning of the dialogue. We also know that people with intellectual disabil-

ities, especially youth with intellectual disabilities, deserve nothing less from us.

So thank you very much for this opportunity.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Ruttledge follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LYNNAE RUTTLEDGE

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before the committee today. Mr. Chairman, your decades of leadership in and commitment to inclusion of individuals with disabilities as full partners in every facet of our society has resulted in significant gains. I applaud you for continuing to seek greater understanding of the barriers that prevent individuals with disabilities from being full partners in our society and for your tenacity in seeking solutions. Senator Enzi, I want to also thank you for your leadership in this area and for your continued commitment to skills training and employment of people with disabilities.

I am pleased to discuss the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program administered by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services under the U.S. Department of Education. It is an honor to serve as the Commissioner of RSA and to provide national leadership for the public VR and independent living programs. Before accepting my presidential appointment 14 months ago, I served as the director of the Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation from 2005–9 and bring more than 30 years of experience to the work that I do. My national and State level experiences give me a unique perspective on the challenges and barriers that young people with intellectual disabilities face and on the possibilities available for more successful transition outcomes.

Today, I will discuss some of the Department's programs and efforts related to youth with disabilities. However, my attention is primarily given to youth with intellectual disabilities and how State VR agencies serve in a leadership role to support youth with intellectual disabilities to develop and maintain careers. Work is an important marker of full inclusion and participation in the American economy and society.

The VR State Grants program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, is a Federal/State program that assists individuals with disabilities to obtain, regain and maintain employment. Nationally, there are about 1 million individuals with disabilities in various phases of the vocational rehabilitation process within the VR system, about 93 percent of whom are individuals with significant disabilities. State VR agencies may provide a variety of individualized services, including community-based assessments and functional evaluations, vocational training, career guidance, job placement, on-the job supports, and other services that are necessary to achieve an employment outcome. Services are provided under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) based on the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

The VR program has yielded measurable results for decades. In fiscal year 2009, State VR agencies assisted approximately 180,000 individuals to achieve employment, 93 percent of whom were individuals with significant disabilities. Of the individuals who achieved employment, 95 percent obtained competitive employment. In the VR program, competitive employment means that the employment is in an integrated setting with earnings at or above the minimum wage.

My vision for youth with intellectual disabilities begins with establishing high expectations. It is incumbent upon all of us—educators, service providers, parents, students, and employers—to expect more from and for our country's youth with intellectual disabilities. We need to expect that youth with intellectual disabilities can engage in a broad range of work occupations, not just a few "traditional" occupations, such as janitorial, food service and office occupations. We should expect that youth with intellectual disabilities can earn wages that can lead to self-sufficiency. Some youth with intellectual disabilities are currently finding employment outside the "traditional" occupations in healthcare, banking, and the Federal Government, and are earning good wages. But we need to do more and we can do more.

To help more youth with intellectual disabilities reach higher goals, we are:

- assessing where we are now to establish performance goals for our programs that reflect high expectations;
- identifying current promising practices in order to evaluate results and identify successful models for replication;
- targeting research and demonstration activities to develop additional effective models; and

• making investments to support the implementation of current and new practices.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Data

We know that both schools and VR agencies play major roles in preparing and placing youth with intellectual disabilities into employment. Current IDEA trend data from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) show that graduation rates for students with disabilities are improving, but less dramatically for students with intellectual disabilities. The percentage of students with disabilities who left school by graduating with a regular high school diploma increased from 46 percent in school year 1998–99 to 60.0 percent in school year 2008–9. For students with intellectual disabilities, the percentage who left school by graduating with a regular high school diploma increased from 36.8 percent to 38.7 percent in the same period. Dropout rates show better improvement than graduation rates for students with intellectual disabilities. The percentage of all students with disabilities who left school by dropping out decreased from 42.6 percent in school year 1998–99 to 22.4 percent in school year 2008–9. For students with intellectual disabilities, the percentage dropping out decreased from 36.0 percent to 19.8 percent during that decade. These positive trends suggest that OSEP and RSA's focus on improving transition services are resulting in greater success and that there are pockets of excellence in our special education and VR systems that we can build on.

VR Program Data on Youth With Disabilities

In fiscal year 2009, there were approximately 330,000 individuals whose service records were closed after receiving services under an IPE. Of these individuals, about 107,400 (33 percent) were youth with disabilities aged 14–24 at time of application for VR services. Of these transition-age youth with disabilities, 17,198 (16 percent) were youth with intellectual disabilities.

RSA data also show that fewer youth with intellectual disabilities who apply for VR services drop out of the VR program after only applying for services as compared to the larger group of all youth with disabilities. Only 3.8 percent of youth with intellectual disabilities exited the VR services program from applicant status, while 13.6 percent of all youth with disabilities exited the VR services program from applicant status. We believe that local partnerships and increased collaborative efforts to assist youth with intellectual disabilities may be having a positive impact on the VR dropout rate for this population.

Services

The VR services most commonly provided to youth with intellectual disabilities include job readiness training (26.7 percent), job search assistance (31 percent), job placement services (44.8 percent) and on-the-job supports (39.8 percent). Supportive services such as transportation (23.8 percent) and maintenance (11.5 percent) are also provided as needed. Of the 17,198 youth with intellectual disabilities whose service records were closed after receiving VR services in fiscal year 2009, 1,266 (7.4 percent) received postsecondary occupational or vocational training, and an additional 528 (3.1 percent) received college or university training. New initiatives promoting postsecondary programs for youth with intellectual disabilities and recent changes in the Higher Education Opportunity Act and regulations making student financial aid available for youth with intellectual disabilities should improve these numbers.

Employment Outcomes

Fiscal year 2009 VR data show that transition-age youth with intellectual disabilities achieve employment outcomes at about the same rate as other transition-age youth with disabilities (52.3 percent vs. 53.7 percent). In addition, of the approximately 55,650 transition-age youth with disabilities who obtained competitive employment outcomes in that year, a total of 8,339 (14.4 percent) were youth with intellectual disabilities. However, youth with intellectual disabilities were about three times more likely to achieve competitive employment with supports (supported employment) than other transition-age youth participating in the VR program.

Broad Occupational Areas

There are indications that VR consumers are being employed in a broad range of occupational areas. In fiscal year 2009, VR employment outcomes for youth with intellectual disabilities occurred in 25 occupational areas. However, the employment outcomes were still concentrated in food preparation and service (24.1 percent of employment outcomes for youth with intellectual disabilities), cleaning and mainte-

nance occupations (16.4 percent), and office and administrative support occupations (11.4 percent). Youth with intellectual disabilities also achieved employment outcomes in production occupations (8.9 percent); personal care and service occupations (7.7 percent); sales and related occupations (7 percent); installation, maintenance and repair occupations (4.1 percent); healthcare support occupations (2.2 percent); and constructive and extraction occupations (1.4 percent).

Earnings and Hours Worked

To help individuals with intellectual disabilities reach earnings that lead to self-sufficiency, State VR agencies and their partners are looking at ways to maximize their participation in the workforce, increasing both hours worked per week and hourly wages, consistent with the informed choice of the individual. RSA 2009 data show that youth with intellectual disabilities who achieved competitive employment worked on average 24.4 hours per week and earned on average $7.70 per hour. By comparison, all youth with disabilities achieving competitive employment worked on average 30.4 hours per week and earned $9.51 per hour on average. Transition-age youth with intellectual disabilities achieve full-time employment (defined as 35 or more hours per week) only about half as often as all transition-age youth.

Some VR agencies are doing better in assisting youth with intellectual disabilities to achieve full-time employment outcomes with good wages. For example, RSA data shows that West Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Delaware, and Nebraska have found full-time jobs for more than 40 percent of transition-age youth with intellectual disabilities participating in their VR services programs. Other States, including Connecticut, Vermont, Washington, Wyoming and Arizona, have demonstrated success in placing eligible VR youth with intellectual disabilities in jobs with wages higher than $9.00 per hour.

Youth with intellectual disabilities may work less than full-time as a result of individual circumstances, but there also are other factors such as system barriers, the lack of available supports, as well as the effect of low expectations that affect their level of participation and earnings in the workforce. For example, lower hourly wages may also be a result of low expectations and/or employment in traditional occupations. Approaches that will lead to employment in a broader range of occupations may also result in commensurately higher hourly wages.

CURRENT POCKETS OF EXCELLENCE, PROMISING PRACTICES AND INITIATIVES

Now, I will highlight some promising and innovative practices that are showing positive results. In many of these practices, a key factor is creative collaboration among providers and stakeholders. RSA is working closely with the Department's Office of Special Education Programs and the Office for Postsecondary Education to coordinate transition efforts for youth with intellectual disabilities. In addition, RSA is working with the Department of Labor and other Federal partners to identify solutions to some of the existing system barriers, but we can do more.

Although we have ongoing collaborative activities and data sharing agreements with the Social Security Administration (SSA), more work with SSA and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is needed to identify system barriers and solutions. For example, the Affordable Care Act created new options and additional flexibilities for the provision of home and community-based services in Medicaid. The findings and information obtained from this interagency information exchange will be disseminated through our 2012 Institute on Rehabilitation Issues paper on the implications of the Affordable Care Act for improving VR outcomes.

At the State and Federal level, a number of collaborative program models are exhibiting encouraging results. In Iowa, the State VR agencies have had success working with the Veterans Administration (VA) to place students with intellectual disabilities in high paying, full-time Federal employment with benefits. The VA shared position descriptions with the VR agency. For example, the VR agency has conducted job analyses for a variety of jobs using position descriptions shared by the VA. The VR agency then pre-screened candidates to refer job-ready individuals for direct hire through the Federal Government's schedule A appointing authority. In addition, the VR agency implemented customized training programs to develop a pool of job-ready candidates for future workforce needs.

In Ohio, Project Search, a nationally recognized transition program, began in a hospital setting and has been widely replicated in private industry and government, including within the Federal Government at the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services and Labor. Project Search exemplifies interagency collaboration among school systems, VR agencies and business communities to provide paid work experiences and internships for youth with intellectual disabilities prior to exiting school. Project Search offers job readiness training and experiential learning

for high school seniors with intellectual disabilities through total immersion at the employer work site. This program is a model for exposing youth with intellectual disabilities to a variety of nontraditional work settings while changing employers' attitudes about the capabilities of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

In Utah, a coalition of the State VR agency (DVR), the State Department of Services to Persons with Disabilities (DD), and advocacy groups planned and proposed a braided funding program of supports designed for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The coalition presented a proposal to its State legislature indicating the compelling need for additional funds to support training and employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Utah State legislature funded the Utah Partnership Plus initiative to serve eligible individuals waiting for DD services. The Utah DVR agency provided the upfront job placement services and the initial on-the job supports, and State appropriated funds were used to provide interim support until funds from Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work program became available for continued support.

During the first 2 years, at an estimated cost of $245,000 per year, the Utah program provided services that resulted in employment for approximately 200 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities per year. Even in the current constrained fiscal environment, Utah State legislators have provided continued support for Utah Partnership Plus. With this continued funding, 44 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities were placed into employment in the first quarter of this fiscal year. This effort shows how collaboration among agencies and advocates can leverage funding and develop systems of support for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities beyond the availability of VR services.

The Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), in conjunction with public schools and TransCen, Inc., a research, training and development non-profit organization, has established relationships with employers in the Washington, DC area to place individuals with intellectual disabilities in competitive employment. Working with the Maryland DORS, TransCen uses an internship approach that in many cases results in employment. TransCen also provides a job development function in assisting DORS, schools, and employers deliver employment experiences for youth with intellectual disabilities. Youth with intellectual disabilities have obtained employment in law firms, hotels and the Federal Government. These efforts show how the use of worksite-based internship approaches can result in employment in a broad range of occupations.

My last example is from the State of Washington. Washington leaders who shared a commitment for improving employment outcomes for individuals with intellectual disabilities worked in collaboration with community colleges to create an employment specialist certificate program. These professionals provide employment support to individuals with intellectual disabilities and play an integral role in assisting people to become contributing members of their community. The program offers high quality training taught by skilled professionals, builds on the skills of the participants, provides opportunities for networking, and builds future leaders in supported employment.

These models are examples of just some of the promising partnerships and practices we can cultivate, disseminate, and replicate to improve outcomes, not just in isolated areas, but all across the country.

RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP ADDITIONAL MODELS OR PRACTICES

The Department has invested in many research projects over the last few years to continue to identify and tackle the challenges faced by youth with intellectual disabilities, many of them housed at the Institute for Community Inclusion. You will hear from Bill Kiernan, the Institute director, today.

Examples of projects funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) include the following:

- The Rehabilitation and Research Training Center for Vocational Rehabilitation Research (VR RRTC) conducts a project that identifies and evaluates best practices in VR employment services for individuals with developmental disabilities. The VR RRTC disseminates products and new knowledge throughout the VR and workforce systems, and to a number of disability and advocacy organizations.
- The University of Minnesota is developing a multi-state database on predictors of individual outcomes for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The purpose of the study is to merge and analyze the records of more than 10,000 randomly sampled adults from 15 purposely selected, nationally distributed States to examine the interactions among individual characteristics, service delivery models and settings, and individual outcomes and experiences. The project will evaluate

the methods that support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities at work and in their communities.

• Syracuse University (SU) is building and evaluating the Peer-to-Peer Project, a peer support network for students with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities in higher education. This project operates a network of undergraduates to provide peer supports to students with significant disabilities who are taking classes at SU. SU has a dual enrollment program for students up to age 21 in high school, and an access program for students over age 21 who have finished high school. Students with intellectual and developmental disabilities audit courses to meet personal, academic, and vocational goals. The Peer-to-Peer Project operates from an innovative, universally designed, and person-centered framework that uses peer support in flexible, individualized ways, as needed by students with intellectual disabilities to fulfill goals and maximize inclusion.

• The Center on Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities conducts research and disseminates information on promising practices that facilitate and support individuals with intellectual disabilities access to inclusive postsecondary education resulting in improved long-term independent living and employment outcomes. This Center conducts research to address the gaps in knowledge about participation of individuals with intellectual disabilities aged 13–26 participating in postsecondary education programs.

In addition to NIDRR's research projects, the Department awarded $10.9 million in 2010 to support grants under the Model Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities into Higher Education (TPSID) program. The TPSID program, authorized in 2008 by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA), supports model postsecondary programs and demonstrations that promote the successful transition of students with intellectual disabilities into higher education. TPSID grants were awarded to 27 postsecondary institutions and consortia of institutions to enable them to create or expand high quality, inclusive model comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities to attend college. Funds were also awarded to support a coordinating center at the Institute for Community Inclusion to establish performance measures and to compile data on program participants and their outcomes.

NEW INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The President's fiscal year 2012 budget proposes strategic investments that will fuel the continued innovation and collaboration necessary to achieve outcomes that will lead to individual self-sufficiency and justify keeping expectations high for young people with intellectual disabilities.

Future success must start with a strong and inclusive education foundation. The President and Secretary believe that students with disabilities are general education students first, so the President's 2012 budget prioritizes investment in programs that will encourage innovation, support State- and district-led reform, and help improve outcomes for students with disabilities in the context of the regular education environment.

In addition, proposed increased investments in IDEA programs signal the President's steadfast commitment to the need for individualized services and supports for young people with disabilities. With a proposed increase of $200 million for IDEA Part B Grants to States, the Department hopes to improve the quality of the education that students with disabilities receive so they can participate in the general education curriculum to the maximum extent possible and are prepared for college and a career.

The 2012 budget request also includes an increase of $50 million in Part C for grants to States for early intervention services for young children with disabilities and their families, to encourage States to implement a seamless system of services for children with disabilities from birth through age 5. To support a holistic approach to the transition of young people on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, the President has requested $40 million for PROMISE: Promoting Readiness of Minors in SSI, a pilot program which would be jointly administered with the Social Security Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Labor to improve health, education, and post-school outcomes of children who receive SSI.

The Department has requested funding in fiscal year 2011 and fiscal year 2012 for continuation awards to the current 27 TPSID grantees and the coordinating Center as part of the request for the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE).

The President's fiscal year 2012 budget request would provide approximately $3.1 billion for the VR State Grants program to assist individuals with disabilities to ob-

tain and maintain employment. The Administration also believes that additional targeted investments in Rehabilitation Act programs are needed to help spur new and innovative approaches to improving postsecondary results for students with disabilities. To capitalize on the potential of technology to benefit individuals with disabilities, including youth with disabilities, $10 million has been proposed for Access through Cloud Computing, a new initiative that would seek to improve Internet and technology access for individuals with disabilities through research and development activities to provide on-demand accommodations that are stored remotely. This new initiative would be administered by NIDRR in consultation with the National Science Foundation, the Access Board, the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and other White House offices. Access through Cloud Computing will benefit students and employees with disabilities who, as a result of this innovative research, will be able to bring their accessibility accommodations with them to any platform at schools, libraries and work locations.

Finally, the President's 2012 budget request includes almost $380 million for the Workforce Innovation Fund (Fund) to encourage innovation and support projects to identify and validate effective strategies for improving the delivery of services and outcomes for beneficiaries under the Rehabilitation Act and other programs authorized by the Workforce Investment Act. Jointly administered by the Department of Education and Department of Labor, the Fund would support competitive grants for projects that strengthen collaboration across program and agency lines, and identify the most promising approaches for improving services and achieving better outcomes. Some approaches we might explore include innovative models that provide youth with significant disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities, opportunities for career exploration and work experience; leverage strategic partnerships among State VR agencies, community colleges, employers, and other nontraditional partners; and engage employers in creating full-time career opportunities with benefits for individuals with significant disabilities.

Planned 2011 Activities

These 2012 investments will build upon the Department's strategies already underway. The VR program is an integral partner in achieving the goals set forth in the President's Executive Order 13548 that directs the Federal Government to be a model employer for hiring people with disabilities. State VR agencies that have proven success with Federal partnerships around the country will step up their technical assistance to assist in recruiting and hiring practices so that all Federal agencies and hiring officials will benefit.

RSA has begun work on developing performance measures that reward States for reaching milestones that lead to better employment outcomes and self-sufficiency for youth with disabilities, especially those of transition-age youth who may require longer services and more supports.

We will use what we have learned from RSA monitoring activities and knowledge translation research to accelerate the dissemination of information obtained from projects that support successful outcomes, provide technical assistance, as necessary include important partners, and to evaluate results of these projects. To that end, RSA, along with the other components of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, will host a national conference that will inform participants about research findings and practices that have demonstrated improved educational and employment outcomes for youth with disabilities.

CONCLUSION

Our President's leadership is translated through our programs and passion. We share your commitment to and interest in seeing America's youth with intellectual disabilities have lives and careers that meet high expectations and enable them to live as independently as they desire. Our young people with intellectual disabilities deserve our best effort. We are excited about the potential demonstrated by our current projects, partnerships, and proposed investments. We look forward to working with you to accomplish what we know we can achieve together.

Thank you and I am happy to take your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. Ruttledge, and now we'll turn to Ms. Lewis to proceed.

STATEMENT OF SHARON LEWIS, COMMISSIONER, ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. LEWIS. Good morning, Chairman Harkin, Senator Isakson and staff.

I echo Ms. Ruttledge's comments in terms of thanking you for bringing this hearing to light and focusing on this important issue. I'm honored to be here representing Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD).

I'd also like to thank all of the individuals with intellectual disabilities who are here with us today, as well as Special Olympics and Best Buddies, for all the great work that you have done over the years to support individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Employment is a critical component of community living. As you mentioned in your remarks, chairman, work is not only the means to economic self sufficiency, it is also important, particularly for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, for many other reasons—to contribute to community, to build a network of social relationships and to create opportunities for lifelong learning.

To illustrate, I'd like to start with a story about a young man named Patrick who's involved with the Wisconsin Developmental Disabilities Council. Patrick started working when he was 16 as a high school sophomore. He found his job the same way that many of us find our first jobs, through community involvement and a network of relationships.

At a retreat, Patrick's future boss saw him demonstrate a strong work ethic, attention to detail and a generous spirit. At the end of the retreat, he asked Patrick to apply for a job which Patrick ultimately got at $8.50 an hour as a starting wage in 2005.

Now, 5 years later, Patrick is considered the star of his unit, having increased the overall productivity of the business. He gets regular raises and shares in all the company perks.

Now, why is this otherwise typical story significant? Patrick is a young adult with Down syndrome who is working in integrated employment earning a competitive wage. His success can be attributed to several factors, including high expectations, a supportive family, hard work using social capital and personal networks, a welcoming employer and Patrick's own self-determination.

Unfortunately, Patrick is part of a small minority. One study of recent high school graduates with ID/DD indicated that only 14 or so percent were earning at least minimum wage, and 1 to 4 years after high school, youth with intellectual disabilities demonstrate the lowest rate of paid employment among students with disabilities.

As is true for the general population, education is a key determinant in the employment success for students with ID/DD.

As States look at college- and career-ready standards, questions have arisen about the applicability of such standards for students with intellectual disabilities. Low expectations continue to be one of the biggest barriers for success for these students. Yet, again, research has shown that the participation in standards-based assessments has made a tremendous positive difference in achievement for students with significant cognitive disabilities. And, now, students with ID/DD are going to college.

In order to provide more opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities to attend quality comprehensive integrated programs, ADD is investing $4 million over 5 years in the Consortium to Enhance Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities.

During the past 8 years, the number of college programs available for students with intellectual disabilities has grown from 4 to over 250 spread over 36 States serving approximately 6,000 students. The consortium has been a vital resource to this expansion providing training and technical assistance, research and dissemination on promising practices and supporting the establishment of many new programs.

Recently, ADD held a series of listening sessions across the country asking for community input. Among the major issues, access to integrated employment at competitive wages for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities was repeatedly cited as a high priority.

Much of the ADD network is already working hard to improve employment opportunities, including the development of employment first strategies that focus upon integrated community-based employment.

For example, in Iowa, the University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, the UCEDD, and the DD Council are working in collaboration with the National State Employment Leadership Network and State agency partners to develop and implement a statewide competitive employment plan that makes employment in the general workforce the first priority and the expected and preferred outcome in the provision of publicly funded services.

Support for access to integrated employment services varies tremendously across States. State ID/DD agencies report that currently only 22 percent of their clients participate in integrated employment.

Medicaid is the largest Federal source for funding for home- and community-based services, and the State ID/DD agencies are the primary funding source for employment services through Medicaid waivers.

Among the most important factors influencing employment outcomes is the approach taken by these State ID/DD agencies which plays a critical role in determining the direction of State and Federal Medicaid investment. Successful strategies include flexibility in funding, data collection focused on integrated employment, rewards and incentives and innovative practices and training.

Multiple studies also show that self determination status is a predictor of the quality of life and is positively correlated with improved employment, independent living and community-inclusion outcomes.

Beyond the opportunity to earn wages, other benefits of integrated employment include expanded social relationships, higher job satisfaction, improved self worth, transferable work skills and increased self determination.

ADD currently plans to invest over $2 million in demonstrations later this year to improve access to competitive, integrated employment in collaboration with our partners at the Office of Disability

Employment, at the Department of Labor, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Social Security and the Rehabilitation Services Administration. These competitive grants will challenge applicants to develop and implement innovative partnerships to improve access to integrated employment at competitive wages for individuals with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities.

In closing, I leave you with a quote from a woman with a developmental disability, because I think that she says it better than I ever could. Miss Susan Willis came to us during one of our listening sessions and said, and I quote, "When meeting someone new, we almost always ask, What do you do?" A person's work seems to define who he or she is. It certainly gives people, especially those with disabilities, a sense of self-worth and confidence. With employment comes some level of self-sufficiency, and with that—independent living. Without a full- or part-time job at reasonable wages, none of this can be realized.?

ADD and our network are striving to improve opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to access competitive, integrated employment, so that when an individual is asked that question—What do you do?—they can answer with confidence, with a smile and with a paycheck in their hands.

Thank you. I'm happy to take questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lewis follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SHARON LEWIS

Chairman Harkin, Ranking Member Enzi and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am honored to be here representing the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to share some successful strategies to achieve integrated employment of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The purpose of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (DD Act) is "to assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of and have access to needed community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life, through culturally competent programs . . . " (42 U.S.C. 15001). The Administration on Developmental Disabilities works with our partners in every State to achieve the goals embodied in the act. The ADD network consists of three programs that operate in each State and territory—State Developmental Disabilities Councils (DD Councils), University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), and Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&As). ADD also implements the Projects of National Significance (PNS) which are designed to support the ADD network through data and research projects as well as fund innovative approaches to improving outcomes for those with developmental disabilities. Approximately two-thirds of the ADD network entities report active engagement related to improving employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities, through a broad range of activities including direct support for individuals with disabilities seeking employment, development of State and local policies and practices, protection of employment rights, data collection and analysis, and training initiatives.

At the Department of Health and Human Services, Secretary Sebelius is fully committed to finding solutions that address barriers to community living for individuals with disabilities that give people more control over their lives and the supports they need. Employment is a critical component of community living for most adults, including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Work is not only the means to economic self-sufficiency, it also is an important way for individuals to contribute to their communities, build a network of social relationships, and create opportunities for lifelong learning.

To illustrate, I would like to tell you about a remarkable young man, Patrick, from Wisconsin. Like many young people, Patrick got his first job at 16. Patrick's

first job came the same way most of us get a job: a great work ethic, dedication, a terrific attitude, and a social network derived from community involvement.

Patrick met his boss, Todd, at a retreat where Todd had the opportunity to see first-hand Patrick's work ethic, attention to detail, and generous spirit. At the end of the retreat, Todd told Patrick's dad, Brian, that he would like Patrick to apply for a job at his packaging business in Menomonee Falls, WI.

As a high school sophomore, Patrick started working 3-hour shifts, three days a week after school. His starting pay was $8.50 in 2005. Five years later, Patrick is considered the star of his unit. He assembles boxes, and can work about twice as fast as the average box assembler—he holds the assembly record. This has increased the overall productivity of Todd's organization. Patrick is able to work in different parts of the organization, filling in when another area is short-staffed—doing marketing and label packaging, for example. He gets regular raises and shares in all the company perks.

This is a success story of a typical young man, starting his career and through his hard work and dedication achieving great success. Why is this story significant? Patrick is a young adult with Down syndrome who is working in integrated employment, earning a competitive wage and benefits. Only a small minority of young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities are employed in such settings. In one current study of 338 recent high school graduates with intellectual and developmental disabilities, only 14.2 percent were employed in individual positions paying at least minimum wage.[1]

Patrick's success can be attributed to several factors, as described by the Wisconsin Medicaid Infrastructure Grant project at the University of Wisconsin's Waisman Center:[2]

- **High expectations and supportive family.** Patrick always has been treated the same as his siblings and his peers, with high expectations at home, in school and at work. Additionally, Patrick's family received support to participate in leadership development through Wisconsin's Waisman Center (a UCEDD) and the Wisconsin DD Council, which helped his family understand the importance of self-determination.
- **Hard work and preparation.** Patrick knows he has to work to achieve. He has been active in sports, volunteers on a regular basis, and has a second degree Black Belt in Tae Kwan Do. He has taken on additional responsibilities at work over time, and has been rewarded.
- **Person-centered thinking and self-determination.** Throughout Patrick's school-to-work transition process, Patrick and his team made decisions based upon his desires, strengths, and choices. Patrick and his family used person-centered planning to ensure the availability of natural and paid supports necessary for a quality life for Patrick.
- **Community involvement.** Patrick has been involved in sports, the community, and his church, which helped him develop the social capital that led to the job and provided ongoing natural supports.
- **Welcoming employer.** The company worked with Patrick to get his Occupational Safety and Health required training, accommodating Patrick with experiential learning rather than handing him a manual. Patrick has co-workers he can turn to for questions and support.
- **Flexible supports.** The school system and vocational rehabilitation (VR) system offered flexibility in supporting Patrick to pursue his goals, and Patrick depends upon Medicaid for healthcare and occasional personal support. For example, the school partnered with the State VR agency to provide a job coach for the first few weeks of Patrick's job, and the school offered a flexible schedule to allow Patrick to balance work and continued learning.
- **Starting early.** Patrick started working during his sophomore year. When he finished the high school curriculum at the end of his senior year, he left the high school environment, increasing his time at work while continuing reading and math instruction through a tutor. Patrick focused on living and working in the community starting at age 18; he did not wait until he aged out of school-based services. This is consistent with data that indicates that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) who participate in work-based experiences during high school are more likely to find success in competitive, integrated employment.

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[1] Simonsen, M. (2010). *Predictors of supported employment for transitioning youth with developmental disabilities* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Maryland: College Park, MD.

[2] Swedeen, Beth, et al. (2009). *On the Job: Stories from Youth With Disabilities.* Natural Supports Project, University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Waisman Center, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

While Patrick has found great success in his job, unfortunately many Americans with disabilities, especially people with ID/DD, are struggling to access employment opportunities. According to the January 2011 Current Population Survey (CPS), the proportion of the population of people with disabilities who are employed is estimated to be 17 percent, compared to 63 percent for people without disabilities.[3] And, for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the likelihood of participating in integrated employment is even lower, with State ID/DD agencies reporting that only 22 percent of the number of individuals served by these agencies participate in integrated employment.[4]

Among the strongest predictors of post-school employment success for young adults with disabilities is whether or not they held one or more paid jobs during high school.[5] The importance of community-based vocational evaluation, job training, and paid employment opportunities while still in high school have been well-documented in achieving positive post-school outcomes.[6] Getting that first job can make a significant difference for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, just as it did for Patrick.

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION

As is true for the general population, education is a key determinant in employment success for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Currently there are approximately 1 million American students with disabilities age 3–21 eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) categories of intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, autism, traumatic brain injury, and developmental delay.[7] Only 34 percent of students with intellectual disabilities, 40 percent of students with multiple disabilities, and 56 percent of students with autism graduated from high school with a regular diploma during the 2007–8 school year.[8] Among all students, those with the most significant cognitive disabilities are the least likely to graduate with a regular high school diploma.[9] And, even with a diploma, youth with intellectual disabilities demonstrate the lowest rate of paid employment among students with disabilities (29.8 percent), 1 to 4 years after exiting high school.[10]

As States define, and re-define college and career-ready standards and develop supporting initiatives to help students achieve these standards, questions have arisen about the applicability of such standards for students with intellectual disabilities,[11] especially students with significant cognitive disabilities. Current data from States indicate that many of these students are leaving high school unable to read

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[3] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Economic News Release February 4, 2011 Table A–6. Employment status of the civilian population by sex, age, and disability status, not seasonally adjusted. Accessed February 24, 2011: *http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t06.htm*.

[4] Butterworth et al. (2010). *State Data: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes, 2009.* Boston, MA: Institute for Community Inclusion ID/DD Agency National Survey of Day and Employment Programs for People with Developmental Disabilities, p. 49.

[5] Test, D.W., Mazzotti, V.L., Mustian, A.L., Fowler, C.H., Kortering, L, & Kohler, P. (2009). *Evidence-Based Secondary Transition Predictors for Improving Postschool Outcomes for Students with Disabilities.* Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 32, 160–81.

[6] Flexer, R., Simmons, T., Luft. P., & Baer, R. (2008). *Transition Planning for Secondary Students with Disabilities (3rd ed.).* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

[7] *U.S. Department of Education, (2010). Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Data—Data Accountability Center.* Number of children and students served under IDEA, Part B, in the United States and outlying areas by age group, year, and disability category, 2008. Table 1–11.

[8] *U.S. Department of Education, (2010). Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Data—Data Accountability Center,* Exiting Children and students served under IDEA, Part B, in the United States and outlying areas by age group, year and disability category, 2008. Table 4–2.

[9] Wagner, M., Newman, L., Cameto, R., Levine, P, and Garza, N. (2006). An overview of findings from Wave 2 of the National Longitudinal Transition Study–2 (NLTS2). Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

[10] Newman, L., Wagner, M., Cameto, R., Knokey, A.M., & Shaver, D. (2010). *Comparisons Across Time of the Outcomes of Youth With Disabilities up to 4 Years After High School. A Report of Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2).* Page 37. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International. Available at *www.nlts2.org/reports/2010_09/nlts2_report_2010_09_complete.pdf*.

[11] Samuels, Christina, (2010) *Standards' Impact for Special Ed. is Weighed,* Edweek, Quenemoen, R., Kearns, J., Quenemoen, M., Flowers, C., & Kleinert, H. (2010). *Common Misperceptions and Research-Based Recommendations for Alternate Assessment Based on Alternate Achievement Standards* (Synthesis Report 73). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

beyond sight words or do math beyond basic functions using a calculator.[12] Low expectations continue to be one of the biggest barriers to success for these students.[13] Yet maintaining high expectations for these students is critical to their success in life and in work; research has also shown that participation in standards-based assessments has made a tremendous positive difference in achievement for students with significant cognitive disabilities.[14]

Despite these performance statistics and the cultural challenges of low expectations, students with intellectual disabilities can—and do—go on to succeed in postsecondary education and in employment. There are approximately 6,000 students with intellectual disabilities currently attending college, an experience which can make a tremendous difference in gaining employment. One recent study of vocational rehabilitation outcomes showed that youth with intellectual disabilities who participated in postsecondary education were 26 percent more likely than students with no postsecondary education experience to leave vocational rehabilitation services with a paid job and earn a 73 percent higher weekly income.[15]

In order to provide more students the opportunity to attend quality college programs that support students with intellectual disabilities to participate in comprehensive, inclusive educational experiences integrated into institutions of higher education across the country, the Administration on Developmental Disabilities is investing $4 million over 5 years in the Consortium to Enhance Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities project. The Consortium is providing training and technical assistance to institutions of higher education, conducting research, and disseminating information on promising practices that support individuals with intellectual disabilities to access postsecondary education, resulting in improved long-term independent living and employment outcomes. The primary activities of the project include:

- Research and planning to develop and validate promising practices in postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities including development of standards, quality indicators, and performance benchmarks.
- Development and testing of a national training program for colleges and universities that supports replication of promising practices and addresses gaps in information for institutions of higher education that are developing or expanding programs for students with intellectual disabilities. This includes the "Think College" Web site and online, self-paced coursework for higher education professionals on effective practices for this population.
- Assisting institutions of higher education to implement quality programs and establish partnerships that will help them transition to sustainable models beyond start-up funding periods, as well as partnering with national organizations for large-scale dissemination of training programs.

During the past 8 years, the number of college programs available for students with intellectual disabilities has grown from 4 to over 250, spread over 36 States and 2 Canadian provinces.[16] The Consortium has been a vital resource to these institutions of higher education, providing training and technical assistance to programs at all stages, researching and disseminating information on promising practices, and supporting the establishment of many of these new programs.

INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

Recently ADD held a series of listening sessions and stakeholder meetings across the country, asking the community to provide input about priorities and concerns. Approximately 650 individuals participated in-person in these meetings, including people with disabilities, family members, professionals and support staff as well as representatives from multiple Federal agencies. Among the major issues identified by the community, access to integrated employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities was repeatedly cited as a top concern and was rec-

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[12] Kearns, J., Towles-Reeves, E., Kleinert, H., Kleinert, J., & Thomas, M. (in press). *Characteristics of and implications for students participating in alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards.* Journal of Special Education.

[13] McGrew, K.S., & Evans, J. (2004). *Expectations for Students with Cognitive Disabilities: Is the Cup Half Empty or Half Full? Can the Cup Flow Over?* (Synthesis Report 55). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

[14] Ysseldyke, J., Dennison, A., & Nelson, R. (2004). *Large-scale Assessment and Accountability Systems: Positive Consequences for Students with Disabilities (Synthesis Report 51).* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

[15] Migliore, A., Butterworth, J., and Hart, D. (2009) *Postsecondary Education and Employment Outcomes for Youth with Intellectual Disabilities.*

[16] Grigal, M., Hart, D., & Migliore, A. (2010, October). *Think College: An Overview of National Research.* Plenary Session, State of the Art Conference, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA.

ommended as a critical priority for ADD and the ADD network to address. In particular, stakeholders identified the establishment of "Employment First" policy and strategies across various programs as one of five top goals that should be pursued.

Much of the ADD network already is working hard to improve integrated community-based employment opportunities at competitive wages for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, with 39 P&As, 39 DD Councils and 36 UCEDDs reporting active engagement in employment activities, such as:

• In 11 States, DD Councils and/or UCEDDs (CA, HI, IA, IN, MD, NM, NC, NV, OR, PA, VT) are actively collaborating with the ID/DD State agency to develop and improve job access and retention. For example, in Iowa, the UCEDD assisted the Department of Human Services to update its Olmstead Plan that includes competitive employment as a "Strategic Priority." The action steps include working in collaboration with the national State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) and State agency partners (including the Iowa DD Council, Department of Education, Iowa Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVR), Workforce Development, Department for the Blind, Department of Human Rights) to develop and implement a statewide competitive employment plan that makes employment in the general workforce the first priority and expected and preferred outcome in the provision of publicly funded services. In Oregon, the DD Council convened a workgroup that developed the Employment First Policy which was then adopted by the State DD agency and is being implemented collaboratively with VR.

• Through a Medicaid Infrastructure grant provided by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Wyoming Employment Systems Development Project at the UCEDD brought together the various State agencies, disability groups and business organizations to determine the most effective means of permitting people with disabilities to retain their health care benefits after obtaining employment, working to expand personal assistance services outside the home for Medicaid recipients seeking employment, and integrating the various service systems into a single, one-stop source of delivery with a community focus.

• Project SEARCH is a nationally recognized education, training and internship program leading to integrated competitive employment for students with significant disabilities. Currently seven DD Councils (AZ, CO, FL, GA, NY, OH, OK) and three UCEDDs (AZ, IN, NY) are supporting Project SEARCH. In addition, ADD and ACF are hosting DC-area Project SEARCH interns in our offices this school year.

• The Alaska DD Council implemented the StartUp Alaska Initiative to increase the self-employment of Alaskans with disabilities. As a result, 71 individuals were served and 33 launched their own businesses. Even more importantly, several entities, including the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Employment Security Division, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Center for Human Development and the Center for Economic Development at the University of Alaska Anchorage, and the University Small Business Development Centers are implementing policy to sustain best practices identified through the grant.

• Vanderbilt University's "Project Opportunity" provides educational, developmental and employment opportunities within Vanderbilt University to students with disabilities. Twenty-one of twenty-eight students have achieved competitive employment at the University upon completion. The Project also collaborated with The Arc of Davidson County, the Walmart Foundation and Metro Nashville Public Schools to use the Project Opportunity model to develop a classroom housed within the municipal government which then became a model for the city of Nashville being implemented by Mayor Karl Dean.

• UCEDDs and/or DD Councils in 12 States (AL, CA, GA, IA, KS, MD, MO, NE, NV, OR, SC, UT) are working with State ID/DD agencies to establish "employment first" as a guiding principle in policy and systems change. Employment first is an approach that is underway in many States that focuses upon integrated, community-based employment as the first option and priority goal for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. States that have adopted this approach ensure that vocational rehabilitation, home and community-based service providers and educational service systems work together in developing strategies across programs so that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are supported to access integrated, community-based employment opportunities.

Approaches to supporting access to integrated employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities vary tremendously across States. According to *The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes 2009* published by the

Institute for Community Inclusion at University of Massachusetts Boston, the most important factors that influence integrated employment include[17]:

• **Approach of the State agencies directing Medicaid services for people with ID/DD:** Medicaid is both a primary source for health care for individuals with ID/DD and the largest Federal source of funding for home and community-based services.[18] State ID/DD agencies are playing a critical role in determining the direction of the State and Federal Medicaid investment. In States that have started to address the need for competitive, integrated employment opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, successful strategies include flexibility in funding, data collection focused upon integrated employment, rewards and incentives, and innovative practices and training. For example, in Oklahoma, an innovative outcome-based funding approach pays for services based upon the number of hours an individual works, not the number of service hours provided. In several localities in Michigan and other States, agencies have established rate structures that incent integrated employment outcomes.

• **Approach of the Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs):** As the primary source of day and employment services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, CRPs play a critical role in providing work opportunities. Currently, only 26 percent of individuals served by CRPs are working in integrated employment.

• **Collaboration with State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies:** Collaborative initiatives between VR and ID/DD agencies are an important element in supporting stronger employment outcomes.

• **Community-based non-work (CBNW) activities:** Participation in community-based non-work activities supported by home and community-based waivers and State funds—defined as activities that take place in the community and do not involve paid employment—has rapidly grown over the past 15 years, as reported by State ID/DD agencies.[19] Thirty-eight State ID/DD agencies that reported CBNW services indicated that that 36.2 percent of those served participated in CBNW activities in fiscal year 2008, up from 18.7 percent in fiscal year 1999.

• **Direct Support Personnel (DSPs):** Competent support staff often play a key role in the success of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities on the job.

• **Individual and family factors:** Research has shown that many individuals with disabilities and their families want to consider community options, but have concerns about long-term placement and stability, safety, and the social environment.[20]

For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, self-determination is another important factor in employment outcomes. Individuals with ID/DD who have the degree of control they desire over their lives consistent with their capacities, strengths and needs are more likely to express satisfaction with their individual employment outcomes. Research suggests that beyond the opportunity to earn wages, other benefits of integrated employment include expanded social relationships, higher job satisfaction, improved self-worth, transferable work skills, and increased self-determination.[21] Multiple studies indicate that self-determination status is a predictor of quality of life,[22] and is positively correlated with improved employment, independent living, and community inclusion outcomes.[23]

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[17] Butterworth, et al. (2010). *StateData: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes, 2009.* Boston, MA: Institute for Community Inclusion p. 12.

[18] Ibid, p. 11.

[19] Butterworth, et al. (2010). *StateData: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes, 2009.* Boston, MA: Institute for Community Inclusion p. 21.

[20] Migliore, A., Grossi, T., Mank, D., Rogan, P. (2008) *Why do Adults with Intellectual Disabilities Work in ShelteredWorkshops?* Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 28(1), 29–40.

Migliore, A., Mank, D., Grossi, T., & Rogan, P. (2007). *Integrated Employment or Sheltered Workshops: Preferences of Adults with Intellectual Disabilities, Their Families, and Staff.* Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 26(1), 5–19.

[21] Mank, D. (2003). *Supported Employment Outcomes Across a Decade: Is There Evidence of Improvement in the Quality of Implementation? Mental Retardation,* 41(3), 188–97.

Murphy, S.T., Rogan, P.M., Handley, M., Kincaid, C., & Royce-Davis, J. (2002). *People's Situations and Perspectives Eight Years After Workshop Conversion.* Mental Retardation, 40(1), 30–40.

[22] Lachappelle, Y., Wehmeyer, M.L., Haelewyck, M.C., Courbois, Y., Keith, K.D., Schalock, R., Verdugo, M.A., & Walsh, P.N. (2005) *The Relationship Between Quality of life and Self-Determination: An International Study.* Wehmeyer, M.L. & Schwartz, M. (1998). *The Relationship between Self-Determination and Quality of Life for Adults with Mental Retardation.* Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, 33, 3–12.

[23] Ibid.

ADD has committed $4 million over 5 years to a consortium of five University Centers for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities to lead a self-determination national training initiative, the "National Gateway to Self-Determination." The purpose of this project is to enable self-advocates, family members, professionals, agencies, and University Centers to "scale-up" efforts that promote self-determination throughout the lifespan and thereby positively affect individual outcomes. One component is a focus on the relationship between self-determination and employment, as self-determination is an essential element for enhancing individual control and involvement in employment, and ultimately job satisfaction and success.[24] The Self Determination project is providing training related to self-determination, developing evidence-based practices, and supporting the translation of research into practice.

OTHER ADMINISTRATION ACTIVITIES

Demonstration projects: Later this year, ADD will be investing over $2 million in demonstrations related to improving opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to access competitive, integrated employment. These competitive grants will challenge applicants to develop and implement innovative public/private partnerships to improve employment outcomes for individuals with significant developmental and intellectual disabilities, and ensure improved access to integrated employment at competitive wages and benefits for such individuals, with a particular emphasis on assisting two groups: (1) youth and young adults transitioning from secondary or postsecondary school into competitive, integrated work, and (2) adults currently working in non-integrated facility-based supported employment settings to move to competitive, integrated employment settings. More details will be available about these funding opportunities later this year.

Longitudinal Data Collection: Data collection and analysis not only provides clarity, but as the old adage states, "What gets measured gets done, what gets measured and fed back gets done well, and what gets rewarded gets repeated." For over 20 years, ADD has supported the Institute for Community Inclusion at University of Massachusetts Boston to collect and analyze data on the nature of day and employment services for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities; the Institute's director, Bill Kiernan, will also testify today. This project has contributed greatly to our Nation's comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence employment outcomes at every level—individual, service provider, State and Federal policy level.

Research shows a correlation between States that are collecting data from multiple sources, including employment outcome data collected at the individual level, and higher percentages of individuals in integrated employment.[25] Frequent data collection at the individual level creates regular interaction between the State ID/DD agency and providers, helps providers take an active role in working towards a shared goal of increased employment by giving the entities who are implementing activities a sense of ownership in the goals, provides information about training and technical assistance needs on a timely basis, and can be used for better accountability with providers. The very process of the data collection efforts at the State level helps to improve employment outcomes in States.[26]

Community Living Initiative: ADD is an important partner, along with the Social Security Administration's Office of Employment Support and Ticket to Work Programs and the CMS Disabled and Elderly Health Programs Group, in the Community Living Initiative Employment Workgroup, led by the HHS Office on Disability. The workgroup goals include the development of options for workers with disabilities and/or chronic conditions to gain wraparound home and community-based services and supports to maintain employment, as well as to provide further clarification to stakeholders on how Federal policy and programs can help people with disabilities find and maintain competitive employment.

In closing, I leave you with a quote from a woman with a developmental disability, Ms. Susan Willis, who shared this insight with ADD as part of our recent listening sessions,

> "When meeting someone new, we almost always ask, 'What do you do?' A person's work seems to define who he or she is. It certainly gives people, especially those with disabilities, a sense of self-worth and confidence. With employment

[24] Association on University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) (2010). *National Gateway to Self Determination Training.* Silver Spring, MD.

[25] Hall, A.C., Butterworth, J., Winsor, J., Gilmore, D., & Metzel, D. (2007). *Pushing the Employment Agenda: CaseStudyResearch of High Performing States in Integrated Employment.* Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 45(3), 182–98.

[26] Butterworth, et al. (2010). *StateData: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes, 2009.* Boston, MA: Institute for Community Inclusion.

comes some level of self-sufficiency, and with that—independent living. Without a full- or part-time job at reasonable wages, none of this can be realized."

The Administration on Developmental Disabilities and the ADD network are striving to improve opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to access competitive employment in integrated community settings.

Thank you. I am happy to take any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you both very much for your testimony and for all the good work that you do.

We'll start our rounds of 5-minute questions. I guess to both of you, I'll start with Ms. Ruttledge. Ms. Lewis said employment is the expectation. It's what we expect of kids and expect of people, and it's first priorities.

If our first priority or goal is to make sure that kids with intellectual disabilities are put into some kind of a subminimum wage, sheltered workshop, that type of thing, where they just get there and they never get advanced, they never get challenged to move on, if that's our first priority, then that shortchanges a lot of kids, a lot of people. Shouldn't our first priority and our first goal be to say you need to be in competitive employment? That's where you need to go. But we need to start early.

Ms. RUTTLEDGE. Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. That's why No Child Left Behind, for all of its faults, had one good thing in it and that was to bring kids with disabilities along, and we're not going to lose that in the reauthorization, I can assure you.

Ms. RUTTLEDGE. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. But, Ms. Ruttledge, how can we get—in high school, especially—middle school, high school—get our schools working with VR to get these kids either college-ready or secondary or career-ready so that they're thinking not about a low expectation, but the highest expectation? Are the VRs ready to do this? Can they be implemented to do this? Can they work into this system? Do they have enough wherewithal to do that?

Ms. RUTTLEDGE. Thank you for that question. Having been the State director of a voc rehab program for the last 4 years, I think they are ready, and I think they're demonstrating their readiness. They're working together with their education partners at, as you were saying, the middle school level to identify curriculum, to identify role models in the community to come in and talk with kids. They're connecting with centers for independent living to create leadership programs. They're sharing strategies on how to be able to create work-based learning.

They're really our partners in programs like Project SEARCH where you have an internship opportunity for an entire academic year for students with intellectual disabilities who get the support of a school district, get the support of voc rehab and get the support of the employer, and we're demonstrating that that can happen early.

I also think that the bottom line is this needs to come from the youth themselves, and I think what you're seeing and what you're hearing across the country are folks saying that's what I want, that's where I'm going to be. And they're being able to be successful, because they're seeing themselves in those roles. They're not seeing themselves in what we would have expected 10 years ago, 15 years ago. They're seeing themselves in local stores, in commu-

nity colleges and in the communities being successful. And I think that's where it starts.

The CHAIRMAN. Very good. Ms. Lewis, do you have any thoughts on getting VR working with our middle and high schools to encourage kids with intellectual disabilities—all disabilities, but we're kind of focusing on intellectual disabilities here—to have high expectations and high goals and to work with them to help them achieve that in terms of being career-ready or college-ready?

That's what we're saying. That's what we're going to put in ESEA. I want to make sure it applies to all kids, and kids with disabilities, too.

Ms. LEWIS. Right. As Commissioner Ruttledge indicated, I think VR is a critical partner. When we have seen the States where the employment numbers have ticked up for youth with intellectual disabilities, it is really manifested in a set of partnerships that involve the school system, VR, and the State ID/DD agency, because over the long haul, we know that that's where many of the ongoing supports are going to come from.

I think the other important factor in all of this are the families themselves. I think that families and the youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities need to see those success stories. They need to believe that this is possible, and one of the issues that we face is we don't have enough success stories in the community for individuals to see themselves in those roles and understand what's possible, and I think that that's something that needs to happen.

As Commissioner Ruttledge indicated, I think what we hear from youth are higher expectations, what IDEA and ADA—we call that the IDEA/ADA generation—thanks to all of your great work—have higher expectations and it's incumbent upon us to make sure that the capacity is in the system to meet those demands.

The CHAIRMAN. I think on our next panel we're going to see some role models.

Ms. RUTTLEDGE. I think so.

Ms. LEWIS. I think you do. I think you have some great role models.

The CHAIRMAN. Both from the employer's standpoint and also from a young person's standpoint.

Ms. LEWIS. Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Isakson.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Chairman Harkin. You know I delivered the opening remarks, but I did not write them. So I don't take responsibility for the content, but I do have to repeat one part that I read because it was a troubling statement and then really ask a question of Ms. Lewis, if I can.

In this prepared remark, it said,

> "As the GAO has repeatedly noted for the better part of the past decade, efforts from the Federal level are far too disparate lacking coordination and coherence, ultimately leading to a confusing mess of inefficient programs. This stark reality is highlighted yet again in GAO's list of programs identified as high risk, in need of reform, a categorization that has been placed on Federal disability programs since 2003.

> "GAO claims these programs are high risk because, as stated in the report, they are grounded in outmoded concepts that have not been updated to reflect the current State of science, medicine, technology and labor market conditions."

Whoever wrote that was having a difficult day. But, anyway, let me ask you this question: What are some of the best practice models championed by State councils on developmental disabilities to strengthen and coordinate services to more individuals to obtain competitive integrative employment?

Ms. LEWIS. Well, I appreciate that question because I think that what we're seeing is this concept of employment first, literally, the employment-first policy. This is a strategy in which DD councils and university centers have been very engaged with State ID/DD agencies, the agencies that are responsible for Medicaid waivers for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as vocational rehabilitation in the school systems, to really prioritize employment as the first outcome that is expected in the performance measurement standards that are established, in the rate restructuring that individual States are going through, how are we going to prioritize involvement in competitive, integrated employment as the first priority.

Not to say that we are going to eliminate other options, but, first and foremost, if someone is receiving publicly funded services, we are going to say the expectation and the outcome should, first and foremost, be employment, and that should be the first consideration in the design of the systems.

For example, in the State of Oregon, the DD council convened a work group that then developed—the employment first policy for the State was adopted by the State DD agency as well as the vocational rehabilitation agency that set a performance metric of an expectation of an increase in competitive, integrated employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities of 5 percent a year. And so it is those very specific goals and expectations in employment first policy that will make a difference.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you very much. The real Ranking Member has shown up, but I'm going to keep taking the time anyway. [Laughter.]

Ms. Ruttledge, in following up on the conversation you were having with Senator Harkin about real employment and aspirations for those with developmental disabilities and intellectual disabilities, to shoot higher than some systems may—the way I took it is some people's expectations are actually lowered by the system.

Ms. RUTTLEDGE. Correct.

Senator ISAKSON. And then I heard a great statement about examples of people with disabilities who have exceeded. No criticism directly of either one of you, but I don't think—and I've done a lot with sheltered workshops, and my wife's a special education teacher. I chaired the State board of education, worked on IDEA and helped Senator Harkin on No Child Left Behind to make sure nobody was left behind.

But I don't think the institutions and the programs of government do a good enough job of looking for those role models to give those kids the vision of what they can do.

And I'll just give you one example of what I mean. There's a special that was done on PBS 3 years ago about a young man named Brad Cohen, who's the son of a good friend of mine, who has severe Tourette syndrome, yet he became the teacher of the year in public education in Georgia teaching reading with Tourette syndrome, and he now goes all over the country giving these can-do lectures on what you really can do, many times interrupted by the effects of Tourette syndrome while he's delivering the remark.

I think the department should look for ways to find those examples of people who have beat the odds and have done it, because, in the end, it's in the heart of the individual and the will of the parents as to how far they can go. It's not the institutions of government that will just automatically take them there.

So my statement is I think those role-model examples do far more to move kids forward with disabilities than any government mandate they should.

That wasn't a question. It was a statement, but I got his time, so I took advantage of it. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. And we are joined by Ranking Member, Senator Enzi.

Your opening statement's already been given, by the way, Senator Enzi.

Senator ENZI. I realize that, and I appreciate Senator Isakson doing that so I could be at another hearing at the first part, too, and I won't have any questions for these two witnesses.

The CHAIRMAN. OK. Well, thank you very much, Senator Enzi.

Sometimes it bears repeating, What are the key factors that increase the likelihood that young people with disabilities will be able to become competitively employed? What are those key factors that we ought to be thinking about?

I'm thinking about it in terms of reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, but also in terms of the Rehab Act and all the other things that we've done.

Tell us again what do you think those key factors are, when you get to young people, encouraging them? Role models. I think what Senator Isakson is talking about is vitally important.

Ms. RUTTLEDGE. Thank you for that question. From my experience, from what I've seen, the key factors are—indeed, it starts with high expectations. It's also developing opportunities, when the youth is still in school, for internships, for work experiences, to be able to see and connect with role models in the community, like the example that you gave.

I think that another key strategy, and one of the key factors, is that our personnel who are in schools, in vocational rehabilitation, in other support agencies need to know what the state-of-the-art is. They need access to those practices. They need an expectation that they're going to translate those practices into what really works in their classrooms and in their communities.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Ms. RUTTLEDGE. They need to have an opportunity to share those stories that you were saying. I think we have terrific stories that go on every day and we don't recognize it. And so I think that those are pieces.

I think that we need to really focus on student development. We need to provide opportunities for youth with intellectual disabilities to participate in things like service learning and to be able to really use their time in school to develop the skills necessary to be successful in employment.

I think we need to more actively engage with the business community earlier on. I think that's a key factor. When I was in Washington, businesses were the biggest supporter of summer youth work experience, because what they saw was an opportunity to bring youth with disabilities into their workplace and then they targeted them the same way Commissioner Lewis was sharing about how you find those next generation of talent. You find them when they're still in high school and you develop them, and you provide opportunities.

I think the last key factor is that we need to be able to set higher expectations of our system to perform better, and we need to accept nothing less than an increase in wages, an increase in hours, an increase in vocational goals that lead to a career, an increase in those opportunities that create that work experience while they're still in school that translates to that competitive, integrated employment. I think those are some of the key factors.

The CHAIRMAN. Very good. Thank you, Ms. Ruttledge. Anything to add to that, Ms. Lewis?

Ms. LEWIS. I think that there are very specific approaches for individuals that also are critically important. We know things like job shadowing, peer mentoring, internship experiences in the high school, person-centered planning for individuals with intellectual disabilities and really providing the opportunity for the individual themselves to express what their interests, passions, dreams and desires are critical, critical components.

And then the success stories we've seen, that has been a common theme, that families and team members across the school system, the VR system and the DD support systems have engaged in person-centered planning.

I also think access to postsecondary education as an option is a critical component of this. When we look at and talk to—again, anecdotally—families, what we hear is that we're still getting middle schools and high schools caught up on the expectations that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities can go to college, and the Higher Education Opportunity Act has enshrined that in Federal statute at this point in terms of that opportunity and that expectation, that individuals with intellectual disabilities can go to college. And, as I mentioned, that is an area of great growth, and we know that college experience makes a tremendous difference in terms of wages.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you both very much. I think those are both great closing comments, and we appreciate the work you do and thank you for your testimony today. We'll now move to our second panel. Thank you both.

On Panel II, we have Joan Evans, Randy Lewis, David Egan and Dr. William Kiernan. We'll introduce our panelists, but I will yield first to Senator Enzi for the purpose of introducing our first panelist. Then I will introduce the rest and then we'll go through the testimony.

Senator ENZI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm always pleased when we have someone from Wyoming on the panel, and we have an outstanding person from Wyoming who is the director of Wyoming Workforce Services, and she also serves as the director of the Carbon County Higher Education Center and has served as the interim director for the Wyoming Department of Employment. Thanks for being here.

The CHAIRMAN. Next is Randy Lewis, senior vice president of supply chain and logistics for Walgreens. Mr. Lewis' 19-year-old son, Austin, is on the autism spectrum.

As a result of his experiences, Mr. Lewis became an advocate for the employment of other individuals with disabilities. He began an outreach program through Walgreens which integrates individuals with disabilities into the workforce and has an ultimate goal of staffing 10 percent of Walgreens' distribution center production jobs with people with disabilities.

Then we have David Egan, a distribution clerk at Booz Allen Hamilton, responsible for mail and package distribution and communications at the McLean site.

He has been described as a trail blazer in the competitive employment of people with intellectual disabilities. He was selected as the first ever board member of the Down Syndrome Association of Northern Virginia. He also serves as a board member of Special Olympics Virginia.

One of Mr. Egan's goals is to achieve an environment where he and others with intellectual disabilities are empowered to contribute and become "one of us and not one among us."

Last, we welcome Dr. William Kiernan, director of the Institute for Community Inclusion, research professor in the Graduate College of Education and the McCormick School of Policy Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

Dr. Kiernan has broad experience developing and implementing training and model demonstration projects in integrated employment, inclusive education, recreation transition and systems change.

Dr. Kiernan holds several national offices in professional advocacy groups and is past president of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities and previously served as the president of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

Thank you all very much for joining us. Your statements will be made a part of the record in their entirety, and we'll start over here with Ms. Evans.

I ask you all to sum up—I know you've got a 5-minute timer, but if it goes over, I'm not going to bang a gavel or anything like that. So 5, 6, 7. Once it starts getting 8, 9, 10, 11, I get a little nervous. OK? So please proceed.

STATEMENT OF JOAN K. EVANS, DIRECTOR, WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SERVICES, CHEYENNE, WY

Ms. EVANS. Good morning, Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Enzi and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today before you on this very important topic.

My name is Joan Evans. I'm the director of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, and I'm especially grateful to have this chance to provide and share our experiences from Wyoming.

I have provided written testimony to the committee where much more detail about our efforts of the agency and our partners is discussed.

While the overall employment rate hovers near 10 percent, it is much higher for people with disabilities. In fact, the unemployment rate for this segment of the population has remained virtually unchanged, close to 65 percent for virtually two decades.

In Wyoming, our rate is slightly better. We have pulled together our limited resources to give us a 46-percent unemployment rate for people with disabilities. However, we recognize that there is still so much work to be done.

In Wyoming, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation falls under my agency. Over 700 of the 5,300 Wyoming citizens with disabilities each year successfully complete a training program or rehab program and enter the workforce with enhanced skills provided. For every dollar that we spend on rehab services, a client can earn $11 in taxable income.

I would like to share a couple of examples of what we feel is success for us in Wyoming. The first would be Healthy Families Succeed or our job-assist program.

In 2003, the agency formed a public-private partnership that utilizes data to identify individuals who are tied into multiple public service programs. The data demonstrated that 42 percent of State and Federal assistance resources are being used by about 3 percent of individuals.

It was further discovered that 20 percent of these individuals were vocational rehabilitation clients and could also benefit from services which include collaboration of State and Federal services. For example, job training, education, health care and affordable health insurance.

A second example would be our Wyoming Business Leadership Network and our recent partnership with Lowe's. A number of our clients are now entering employment through our two-time national award-winning Wyoming State affiliate of the U.S. Business Leadership Network.

Our Wyoming BLN is an employer-led coalition supporting best practices and promoting employment of people with disabilities. This past year, another innovative practice of our Wyoming BLN has been a joint project between the Lowe's distribution center in Cheyenne and the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services.

This pre-hire economic employment grant is part of a State-funded training program and was used for the first time to train individuals with disabilities. This training project takes people with the motivation to work in the warehousing industry and provides support necessary for them to accomplish the same production standards as their nondisabled counterparts as customized to the needs to Lowe's.

Another unique feature is the train-the-trainer model for management that will build capacity at Lowe's to provide a long-term diversity program within their company. Lowe's has a commitment

to this program and hopes the interns will be career Lowe's employees.

And I'd like to share a success story of one of our participants, Robbie Magill. Robbie is a 34-year-old individual with Down syndrome who receives services through our Wyoming Adult Disabilities Waiver program. His mother reports that when Robbie graduated from high school, even she was unable to see how he would be able to contribute in the workplace, despite the fact that she and her daughter had been disability advocates in the State for many years.

In 2001, Robbie embarked on an entrepreneurial business venture which ended up closing 5 years later, due to the economy. He tried several different positions and ultimately applied for a position in the newly-formed Lowe's project through the Wyoming BLN.

He was hired as an intern at $12.50 an hour with benefits, and yesterday Robbie finished his probationary period and will now be considered for permanent status at Lowe's.

His production rate has gone from 40 percent to 63 percent in just 3 short months. Robbie was quickly adopted into the Lowe's family where he is engaging in real work for a real wage, and the company is discovering the benefits of including people with disabilities in their diversity initiative. Since then, Robbie has told his mother that if she doesn't like her job, she could always come and join the Lowe's family.

Progress is possible. It just takes a coordinated effort across agencies, the private sector, utilizing people who can assist others in navigating the system.

In conclusion, our future efforts will include the formation of a State team with the alliance for full participation where the goal is to double the employment rate for individuals with disabilities by the year 2015.

Second, we need to explore disability employment initiative funding and benefits analysis, followed by further development and expansion of the Wyoming BLN vocational rehabilitation partnership, school-to-work transition activities, and, finally, public education on the benefits of hiring people with disabilities as will be highlighted in our Governor's Summit on Workforce Solutions to be held in June.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Evans follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOAN K. EVANS

Good morning. Chairman Harkin, Ranking Member Enzi and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important topic.

My name is Joan Evans, and I'm the director of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. I am especially grateful to have the chance to share our experiences in Wyoming.

President Franklin Roosevelt said,

> "No country, however rich, can afford the waste of its human resources. Demoralization caused by vast unemployment is our greatest extravagance. Morally, it is the greatest menace to our social order."

We live in a time of high unemployment, and this is especially true for people with disabilities. While the overall employment rate hovers near 10 percent, it is much higher for people with disabilities. In fact, the unemployment rate for this

segment of the population has remained virtually unchanged at 65 percent for two decades.

In Wyoming, our rate is slightly better, at 52.4 percent unemployment, as ranked by the University of Massachusetts at Boston Institute for Community Inclusion. However, we, too, still have a long way to go. Our rate of employment for persons with cognitive disabilities is also better than average with 37.1 percent employed in Wyoming versus 24.4 percent nationally.

Many people need long-term services or care specifically because of intellectual disabilities. The average lifetime cost for one person with intellectual disabilities is estimated to be $1,014,000 (in 2003 dollars). It is estimated that the lifetime costs for all people with intellectual disabilities who were born in 2000 will total $51.2 billion. These costs include both direct and indirect costs. Direct medical costs, such as doctor visits, prescription drugs and inpatient hospital stays make up 14 percent of these costs. Direct nonmedical expenses, such as home modifications and special education, make up 10 percent. Indirect costs, which include the value of lost wages when a person dies early, cannot work or is limited in the amount or type of work he or she can do make up 76 percent of the costs.

These estimates do not include other expenses such as hospital outpatient visits, emergency department visits, residential care, and family out-of-pocket expenses. The actual economic costs of intellectual disabilities are, therefore, even higher than what is reported.

I will not recite the many employment challenges facing people with disabilities, for we know that attitudinal barriers and negative stereotyping are among them, along with lack of accommodation. Although there are many challenges that persons with disabilities face as they look for work, there are also many effective programs and support services to assist them.

In Wyoming, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation falls under my agency. I would like to offer some examples of our successes.

WYOMING DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The public Vocational Rehabilitation Program continues to be one of the most cost-effective programs created by Congress. It enables individuals with disabilities to find gainful employment and become taxpaying citizens.

In fiscal year 2010, a total of 5,384 Wyoming citizens with disabilities received a broad array of services from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. More than a third of our clients have a psychiatric disorder, while one fourth possess orthopedic impairment, and 18 percent—the third-highest category—have an intellectual or cognitive disability.

The number served in 2010 represents a 30 percent increase from 2 years earlier. Of those, 1,372, or 26 percent, were referred to and received education and training from both in-state and out-of-state institutions.

On average, about 700 of these citizens each year successfully complete a training or rehabilitation program and enter the workforce with the enhanced skills provided. For every dollar spent on Vocational Rehabilitation services, a client earns $11 in taxable income.

These individuals are able to secure, regain or retain employment with estimated annualized earnings in excess of $13 million, and an estimated reduction in public assistance of more than a million dollars. Those savings might seem small compared to larger States, but in a State like Wyoming, with a population of only 563,000, these savings—and the number of people served and employed—is significant.

A variety of programs within this Division assist individuals with intellectual disabilities.

First, all eligible clients, regardless of their disability, have full access to a broad array of individualized services. To ensure that all disability groups have equal access to services, the Division has focused outreach efforts and staff training to provide services to individuals with Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI), individuals with Serious and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI), veterans with disabilities, and students with disabilities in transition from school to the world of work or other post-secondary options.

The Division utilizes its Supported Employment State Grant to maximize the available services to consumers that are most significantly disabled. By utilizing these funds, the Division increases the level of support that the client receives during the process of locating employment and provides individualized support once employment is obtained.

A second success story is our Small Business Development Program. Sales from vending machines throughout Wyoming's State offices have allowed the Division to create a Small Business Development Fund which helps clients meet their small

business start-up needs. This revenue is in addition to general Vocational Rehabilitation funding used to meet basic rehabilitation needs.

Under this program, the Division employs a full-time small business consultant who works with clients to develop viable small businesses by completing a business plan and securing funding. The Small Business Development program has been able to help launch a number of businesses, from those that fill a small niche to full businesses that have grown to the point of needing to hire additional staff. The program also assists clients in determining if a product is eligible for patents.

A third area to spotlight is helping students with disabilities transition from school to work. The Division employs a full-time Transition Consultant who works to strengthen partnerships between Vocational Rehabilitation staff and counselors in our high schools. As a result, we have seen a steady increase in the number of transition individuals who have applied for services. We are working toward a more seamless transition between each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and the Division's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to prevent any of our clients from missing out on critical services or becoming lost while navigating between the two systems.

Despite our successes, the increasing costs for medical services and evaluations, retaining qualified personnel and maintaining consumer training present mounting challenges to our Vocational Rehabilitation program. While we have been able to maintain our current level of services without having to enter into an Order of Selection, we are aware that other States have done this to meet their funding needs.

Another concern is that we have a limited number of individuals available to assist persons with disabilities in navigating the various employment and disability programs. Many citizens are reticent to start employment or look for employment out of fear that doing so may jeopardize their disability benefits or affect their eligibility for other programs. The Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Project provides valuable assistance in working with Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities on job placement, benefits planning, and career development. However, Wyoming has only one full-time employee and two part-time employees covering the entire State and trying to help more than 15,000 clients who may be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation's work programs.

DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES

Another area of success in Wyoming is our Disability Determination Services office, or DDS.

The Wyoming DDS adjudicated, or made a determination of benefits eligibility, for 4,973 Social Security disability claims during Federal Fiscal Year 2010 (FFY). Of these, 3,755 were initial claims. This means that these individuals are at the first level of applying for Social Security disability benefits. Out of the 3,755 initial claims adjudicated, 1,877 were determined eligible for Social Security Disability Insurance (Title II) and/or Supplemental Security Income (Title XVI). Therefore, these individuals received monetary benefits and medical benefits which include Medicare and/or Medicaid. The medical benefits allow these individuals to receive medical treatment for their impairments.

Intellectual disabilities—78 individuals with the diagnosis of intellectual disability were determined eligible for Social Security disability insurance and/or supplemental security income. Four individuals with the diagnosis of intellectual disability were denied. Thus, Wyoming DDS had an allowance rate of 95.1 percent for this diagnosis.

Autism or pervasive development disorder—34 individuals with the diagnosis of autism or pervasive development disorder were determined eligible for Social Security disability insurance and/or supplemental security income. Ten individuals with this diagnosis were found ineligible for social security benefits. DDS had an allowance rate of 77.3 percent for this diagnosis.

Borderline intellectual functioning—21 individuals with the diagnosis of borderline intellectual functioning were determined eligible for Social Security disability insurance and/or supplemental security income. Twenty-five individuals with this diagnosis were found ineligible for social security benefits. DDS had an allowance rate of 45.7 percent for this diagnosis.

Just recently, the Division received a Commissioner's Citation for superior customer service to disability applicants and implementing innovative approaches to improving the disability claims processing for Federal Fiscal Year 2009. The Division implemented the use of videoconferencing to conduct mental status examinations throughout the State, which was the first DDS in the Nation to use video conferencing for this specific purpose. The Commissioner's Citation is the highest

award that the Social Security Administration can bestow on an individual, group of individuals, or an organization.

Wyoming DDS also managed to maintain the highest productivity per work year in the Denver region during FFY 2009.

WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES DIVISION

The mission of this division is to provide funding and guidance responsive to the needs of people with disabilities to live, work, enjoy, and learn in Wyoming communities with their families, friends, and chosen support service and support providers.

This agency includes several programs:

- The Adult DD, Child DD, and ABI Waivers and the State Respite program assist individuals and their families in obtaining both natural supports and paid providers to aid individuals in their communities through either self-directed or traditional service delivery methods.
- The Early Intervention and Education Program provides assistance and oversight to the regional child development centers that serve young children from birth through 5 years of age with disabilities and their families across Wyoming.
- The Wyoming Life Resource Center is a State-owned facility that provides state-of-the-art care, learning and job opportunities for Wyoming residents with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities, brain injuries and long-term medical and therapeutic needs.

In addition to these functions, the Developmental Disabilities Division is working with the Alliance for Full Participation to form a State team that will seek to improve the number of good-paying jobs for people with disabilities. The Alliance for Full Participation is a formal partnership of leading organizations serving the developmental disabilities field that share a common vision to help create a better and more fulfilling quality of life for people with developmental disabilities.

This new State Employment Team is formed specifically in response to the Alliance's challenge to double employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Wyoming will join 31 others State teams at a national employment summit this fall.

Tyler—A Success Story In Navigating The System

Understanding the variety and complexities of programs that aim to help individuals with intellectual disabilities can be a challenge. Tyler, who has an intellectual disability, struggled to find steady income and a positive work environment.

"There were frustrations with paid services early on, and agencies were not very helpful," his mother, Jeanie Hede, said. "The services and systems were fragmented. They deterred progress. People on caseloads seemed to be just a number, a case."

After a few unsuccessful job placements, Tyler and his parents turned to a family friend for help. The mother of a friend of Tyler's worked at the State Department of Health's Wyoming Life Resource Center, which is Wyoming's only intermediate care facility for people with intellectual disabilities. Through his friend, Tyler landed a part-time job at the Resource Center performing janitorial duties and helping some residents with aquatic therapy. He proved his skills as a hardworking direct-care worker with the residents and he was made a permanent part-time employee. He was put through training and was eventually offered a full-time position.

The family was excited for Tyler to become a full-time employee but concerned that he would lose his Social Security income, Medicaid health insurance and the supported living services through the Adult Developmental Disabilities waiver that helped him live independently in his own apartment. After learning about the Medicaid Buy-in options, known as Employed Individuals with Disabilities, or EID in Wyoming, the family decided that Tyler should accept the full-time position, enroll in EID and pay the premium to keep Medicaid and waiver services for some support in the home.

Today, Tyler continues to succeed at his job and in his long-term life goals. He recently received his 5-year employee service award from the Wyoming Department of Health. He loves his job and looks forward to work each day because "it makes me feel good to help other people," he says.

According to his mother, Jeanie, "Success didn't come through an agency for Tyler." He needed an advocate to be a "mover and shaker . . . to explore connections and make the search personal."

"The personal approach with a possible employer made an enormous difference," she said. She believes that all people with ID searching for employment need an advocate, someone to use a personal approach to create "more buy-in from the potential employer."

Tyler got married last summer and moved from his apartment into a house with a big back yard. He wants to start a side business making leather gun holsters to earn a little extra income for the family.

With support and guidance from his mother and his wife, Tyler decided to quit the Adult DD Waiver and EID program in the summer of 2010 and accept the health insurance and benefits that come with his job at the Resource Center. He is no longer using any Federal or State programs to help him with routine life activities and models a strong work ethic that the Center wants to instill in other employees. When he needs help with day-to-day activities such as budgeting, paying bills or arranging his benefits or insurance, he now turns to his wife and his mother for some assistance.

"But mostly," he says cheerfully, "I am doing everything on my own."

WYOMING BUSINESS LEADERSHIP NETWORK

A number of our clients are now entering employment through a state affiliate of a national disability organization known as the US Business Leadership Network, which represents more than 5,000 employers. The USBLN recognizes and supports best practices in the employment and advancement of people with disabilities and preparing youth and students with disabilities for the workplace.

The Wyoming Business Leadership Network is affiliated with the national BLN. In 2009 and 2010, it won two national awards from the US Business Leadership Network for development of its statewide network. For the past 15 years, the Wyoming BLN and the State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation have partnered to help employers navigate the myriad of traditional service provider systems, which often operate in silos. Employers often give up because they don't understand the bureaucratic maze of systems and various uses of terminology. The BLN engages business in a non-threatening way and provides disability expertise for them, which is something the business world generally perceives as difficult to understand. The BLN is partially funded through contracts with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and private fund-raising.

The BLN also operates a youth mentoring program aimed at engaging businesses in eight school districts in Wyoming. Youths with disabilities are a particularly fragile group—among the most at-risk of the at-risk groups. A 2004 Harris survey reports that students with disabilities are twice as likely to drop out of school compared to their non-disabled counterparts. The Wyoming Department of Education reports that 50 percent of the incarcerated youth have a disability.

Years ago a business executive in Wyoming challenged our BLN to make sure that we were giving youth with disabilities exposure and connections to the real world of work. As a result of this employer challenge, the Wyoming BLN developed a program called MentorABILITY. This program solely uses employers from our State network to teach soft skills and mentor Wyoming's youth with disabilities to prepare them for the world of work once they graduate from high school. Since this is a hands-on experience, it engages youth and helps them to see the benefits of finishing their high school education, thus addressing those who might have initially dropped out of school. The MentorABILITY program bridges the business-education gap by directly involving businesses in the classroom.

Partnership With Lowe's

This past year another innovative practice of Wyoming's Business Leadership Network has been a joint project between the Lowe's Distribution Center in Cheyenne and the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, which offered a State grant to launch a paid Corporate Training Program for individuals with disabilities. This Pre-hire Economic Employment grant is part of a State-funded training program and was used for the first time to train people with disabilities.

This project takes people with the motivation to work in the warehousing industry and provides a training program to get them up and running at the same production standards as their non-disabled counterparts. The training was customized to the specific needs of Lowe's. Twelve individuals are currently being trained to work at a starting wage of $12.50 per hour with benefits including health insurance, which is a major concern for people with disabilities. Another unique feature is the train-the-trainer model for management that will build capacity at Lowe's to provide a long-term diversity program within their company. Lowe's has a commitment to this program with the hopes that these interns will land long-term careers within their company.

Robbie Magill—A Lowe's Success Story

Robbie Magill is a 34-year-old man with Down syndrome who receives services through the Wyoming Adult Disabilities Waiver program. His mother, Diane Magill,

reports that when Robbie graduated from high school even she was unable to see how he could contribute in the workplace. Both Diane and her daughter, Brenda Oswald, have been disability advocates in the State of Wyoming for years. Despite their knowledge and experience in the field, they were unsatisfied with the traditional routes to employment for Robbie. In 2001, they embarked on beginning an entrepreneurial business with Robbie through a grant from the National Down Syndrome Society to start his own video business.

Robbie has an amazing ability to work with electronic equipment and is forever assisting others with their TVs, computers and the like. Brenda and Diane hired a trainer for Robbie to assist him in learning the video production business. In a short time he was filming, editing and producing videos for various organizations in Wyoming. Unfortunately, the economy slowed down and they realized that Robbie's business would have to call it quits.

Five years later, after closing his business and trying a couple of different professions, Robbie applied for a position with the newly formed Lowe's project through the Business Leadership Network last fall and was hired as an intern at $12.50 per hour. Robbie began his work on December 1, 2010, and started working in the Appliances Department. He then found an opening in a different department at Lowe's, where he trained at Induction (Bulk) delivery. On March 1 Robbie will have finished his probationary period and will become a permanent Lowe's employee.

In his short time at Lowe's, he has gone from a 40 percent production rate to 63 percent in just 3 short months. He has learned complex tasks like recording off-standard time. His accuracy is excellent as well. One issue has been how slowly he walks to his station. The Lowe's Distribution Center is a huge facility, so Robbie and his trainer have been working on transportation issues within the warehouse.

Robbie is a charming man and was quickly adopted into the Lowe's family. He has plenty of friends on the floor and he has helped to make a positive difference in the workplace culture at Lowe's. The company is quickly discovering the benefits of including people with disabilities in their diversity initiative.

Robbie can't believe how motivated he is to come to work each day and how different his attitude is. The fact that he is engaged in real work, for a real wage and in a place where he feels accepted is spilling over into other areas of his life. Robbie recently became engaged and is looking forward to starting his own family. He and his fiancé are saving up for a honeymoon in Hawaii. It is interesting that he has the same dreams and aspirations that his non-disabled co-workers have.

Since then, Robbie has told his mother that if she doesn't like her job she could always come and join the Lowe's family. That's what we call success in Wyoming.

Progress is possible. It just takes a coordinated effort across agencies and the private sector, utilizing people who can assist others in navigating the system.

HEALTHY FAMILIES SUCCEED/JOB ASSIST

Another effort that is showing very promising results is a project that uses data to identify and help individuals who face employment issues and are using multiple public service programs. Until the formation of a public-private partnership in our State in 2003, this group of individuals was very difficult to find and hard to serve because they were often customers of several different agencies—agencies that weren't aware that they were dealing with the same clients. It was an inefficient use of public dollars and not adequately helping these individuals with their needs and moving them off public assistance.

The project, known as Healthy Families Succeed, was led by the Governor's Office, seven State agencies and HCMS Group Inc., a health information company. Healthy Families Succeed began with the creation of an integrated database called the Wyoming Health Information Network (WHIN). The directors of the seven agencies (including myself) contribute de-identified data to the database, guide the analytics produced, and oversee implementation of the program. Healthy Families Succeed was designed in response to the data finding that 3 percent of the individuals were using 42 percent of State and Federal assistance resources. It was clear that a concentrated effort to help this particular group could make a significant difference both in improving their quality of life and reducing use of public resources.

It was further determined there were four critical needs within our system that hindered this effort, including the need for:

- Better coordination of State and Federal services to fit family specific needs;
- Access to job training and education;
- Better coordination of primary medical/mental health care, and
- Affordable and accessible health insurance for working adults.

The goal was to help these families create personal plans to move toward self-sufficiency, addressing the issues tailored to the family needs.

Healthy Families Succeed was built with a phased approach, as we learned the important factors in the lives of Wyoming residents who are receiving assistance. The first phase, known as HealthAssist, focused on the health of the individuals. The second phase, known as JobAssist, focused on developing job skills while coordinating housing, transportation, education and other support services. The third phase (named Wyoming Healthy Frontiers) began late last year with the creation of a State-legislated pilot project providing health insurance coverage to the uninsured.

Once potential participants were identified through WHIN (those who were using two or more State services), 298 families in two counties were asked if they wanted to volunteer for a pilot program in which they would receive free assistance from job coordinators, advanced practice nurse and pharmacist clinicians who would provide intensive counseling to them and their families. As it turned out, 20 percent were also using Vocational Rehabilitation services—so there was a strong component involving individuals with disabilities.

Initial results from Healthy Families Succeed are encouraging. The pilot group of families, after 24 months, had improved stability, health and self-sufficiency, and the costs to the public decreased by $1,943 per person. Additionally, 80 percent of the volunteer families re-enrolled in the program. More than 50 clients are now enrolled in advanced education and job certificated programs.

Here are some other findings:

- The rate of employment increased from 33 percent at enrollment to 55 percent after 1 year.
- The rate of education completion increased from 24 percent to 44 percent.
- The rate of those who were either employed or undertaking education went from 43 percent at enrollment to 73 percent 1 year after enrollment.
- Self-reported self-sufficiency increased by 38.5 percent.
- Household earnings increased by 26.6 percent and take-home earnings increased by 52.5 percent.

Healthy Families Succeed won an Innovations in Government award in 2009 from the Council of State Governments.

The next steps currently under way are to expand Healthy Families Succeed statewide and implement the Wyoming Healthy Frontiers pilot project.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can point to some programs, projects and initiatives that are working. These include:

1. Collaboration of Effort—which may be easier in Wyoming because of our small population;
2. Leveraging our Resources—Business Leadership Network, public-private partnerships, State-funded training programs (Lowe's); and
3. Benefit Assessment—Social Security Disability.

Future efforts by our agency will include:

1. Involvement on the State Employment Team's work with the Alliance for Full Participation;
2. Explore information on the Disability Employment Initiative through the U.S. Department of Labor to improve access for individuals receiving Social Security at our one-stop centers;
3. Creating additional partnerships with businesses, the Wyoming Business Leadership Network and Vocational Rehabilitation using State training dollars;
4. Continue development of youth School-to-Work transition; and
5. Continued awareness education, including a focus on people with disabilities at our annual Governor's Summit on Workforce Solutions.

We hope our success stories provide a framework for building on a national discussion of ways we can help those Americans who are facing more than ordinary challenges in a most extraordinary economy.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Ms. Evans, and I'll turn to Randy Lewis.

Mr. Lewis, we've never met, but yesterday, in preparing for this hearing, one of my staff handed me a CD, a compact disc, from Walgreens. So last night, when I was finished, about 6 o'clock, I put that in my computer and I watched the NBC Nightly News, clicked on that, and I hadn't seen that, and I clicked on the ABC News and watched that.

Then I clicked on something called your speech to WERC. I don't know who WERC is, but I have to tell you, that 10- or 12-minute speech blew me away.

If any of you have not seen it, you ought to take a look at it. As I said, I don't know Mr. Lewis. I've never met him before, but I have to tell you, that 10 or 12 minutes was just mind boggling. What you have done with Walgreens and your approach and what you've shown as possible is nothing short of astounding. I just want to thank you for your great leadership.

I'd say to any of you, if you haven't seen that segment, I commend it to you highly. Isn't it about 10 minutes?

Mr. LEWIS. It may be a little longer, but thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I don't know. Whatever it was, I was so engrossed, I didn't watch the time, I was so engrossed by it. But welcome and please proceed and tell us about what you've done with Walgreens.

STATEMENT OF J. RANDOLPH LEWIS, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF SUPPLY CHAIN AND LOGISTICS, WALGREEN CO., DEERFIELD, IL

Mr. LEWIS. As you said, my name is Randy Lewis. I'm senior vice president with Walgreens. My responsibilities include our logistics network and 20 distribution centers which service our 7,500 stores across the country.

In 2003, we began planning a new type of distribution center with two objectives. We wanted it to be world class in terms of automation and efficiency and we wanted to have an inclusive workforce one-third of which would be composed of people with disabilities, and we wanted a sustainable model for other employers; that is, people with disabilities and without disabilities working side-by-side performing the same jobs, earning the same pay, held to the same standards.

The first of these centers opened 4 years ago in Anderson, SC, where almost 40 percent of our team members have a disability. The second of these opened in Connecticut 2 years ago. Almost 50 percent have a disability. These are our most efficient centers in the history of our company, and they're being driven by team members who prove every day that an inclusive workforce is safe, dependable and high performing.

And we've rolled this out, extended this nationwide to all 20 of our distribution centers where we now employ over 850 people with disabilities, almost 10 percent of our workforce, and we recently doubled that goal to 20 percent.

And we've extended this into our stores. Last year, in Dallas-Fort Worth, we started a pilot with our partners to find and train people with disabilities to fill 10 percent of our new store-opening positions, and we hope to begin to roll this out next year.

Now, no doubt this has changed people's lives, people like Thomas, who can have multiple seizures a day, who came to me in Connecticut and said he'd been looking for a job for 17 years without luck, or Darryl, a 50-something man with mental retardation who took his first paycheck home and came back the next day and asked a supervisor why his mom had cried when he showed her the check, or Angie, our terrific HR manager in Anderson who has cer-

ebral palsy, who made straight A's as an undergraduate and, in graduate school, had over 30 interviews, but not a single job offer, or Don, our customer-service representative in Connecticut who is deaf, who we hired not because of the paradigms we knew she would break, but because she was the best person for the job. And on and on and on, and we are fortunate to have them.

We have been astounded by the impact it's had on the rest of us. We've had to learn to treat each person as an individual, something we talk about in business, but often fall short of in practice. We've come to realize that disability is just a matter of degree, that we all share some level of brokenness, that we are more alike than we are different and that there is no them, just us.

And in discovering the completeness in others, we've discovered it in ourselves. We've learned that the satisfaction of our own success does not compare to the job of making others successful. This has made us better stewards of our work. More importantly, it's made us better parents, better spouses, better citizens. It's made us better people.

And we found this to be a movement of attraction, not coercion. When we met with our Dallas-Fort Worth store managers and asked them who would volunteer their store to be a training store, we hoped for 10 volunteers. Thirty-eight volunteered on the spot. And without prompting and not to be outdone, our Houston store managers launched their own initiative without even being asked.

But, no doubt, we employers need help. Firstly, we need help to overcome the fear that hiring people, hiring and employing people with disabilities will make us less competitive, that we'll make mistakes and be punished for it or that this will take too much effort, and we need help in finding and training people with disabilities for positions in our companies.

Now, for our part, we have opened our doors to other businesses, including our competitors, so that they may experience firsthand what an inclusive workplace can be. We conduct tours. We host workshops and boot camps, and we share learnings. Many have come and many have launched their own initiatives, companies like Lowe's, Best Buy, AT&T, Clark Shoes, GlaxoSmithKline, and we hope there are others.

So I come today to you with handwritten invitations from our team members in Hartford, CT, to come visit and see for yourselves that what we speak of today is not some distant dream. It is reality. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lewis follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF J. RANDOLPH LEWIS

Chairman Harkin, Ranking Member Enzi, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of employment opportunities for people with disabilities—including the remarkable women and men who enrich the Walgreens workforce and contribute to our service to families and communities.

My name is Randy Lewis, and I am senior vice president of Supply Chain and Logistics at Walgreens. In this role, I am responsible for the logistics network that serves our 7,600 stores in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. This includes 17 distribution centers, which employ nearly 10,000 full-time employees.

Walgreens is committed to offering and enhancing employment opportunities for people with disabilities. This commitment goes further than simply complying with our legal obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and I appreciate the chance to describe our experience at Walgreens. As I will discuss, we've learned that

broadening our workforce by employing people with disabilities is not only the right thing to do, but it also makes good business sense and has benefits that reverberate across our company and culture.

THE WALGREENS EXPERIENCE

Our experience began in 2003, when we were planning for a new-generation distribution center in Anderson, SC. Our objectives were straightforward: First, to build a center that was more productive than any we had ever built, with a new foundation of systems, machines and processes. Second, we wanted to have an inclusive environment where one-third of the workforce was made up of people with disabilities who might not otherwise have a job. But we also wanted a sustainable business model—an inclusive workplace where people with and without disabilities work side-by-side, earning the same pay, doing the same jobs and held to the same productivity and other workplace standards.

In the months preceding the opening of our Anderson distribution center in 2007, we worked with local agencies to train and attract people with disabilities for employment at the facility. Anderson was the first facility of its kind to employ a significant number of people with disabilities. Today, nearly 40 percent of the facility's workforce has a physical or cognitive disability, exceeding our goal.

Two years later we opened an identical distribution center in Windsor, CT, with the same design and workforce inclusion elements in mind. Similar to Anderson, employees with disabilities have been trained to work side-by-side with other team members—with the same productivity goals, earning the same pay. And like Anderson, nearly 40 percent of the workforce is composed of people with disabilities.

Shortly after opening our Anderson distribution center, we quickly learned that employing people with disabilities did not require all the technology and automation associated with our new design, and that it was applicable to all 17 of our distribution centers across the United States and Puerto Rico. In late 2007, we set a goal to fill 10 percent of the jobs at our distribution centers with people who have disabilities—or about 1,000 in all—by 2010. At the end of 2010, we had hired 850 employees with disclosed disabilities. We continue to move forward aggressively, and this past summer our front-line managers set a new goal to continue increasing the hiring of people with disabilities at our distribution centers by seeking to double our percentage over the coming years.

I say, without equivocation, that our expectations for hiring people with disabilities have been exceeded. We're now broadening our job opportunities for people with disabilities beyond our distribution centers. Last year we launched a pilot program in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area to hire people with disabilities for a significant number of service clerk openings at stores in the area. What led to this new pilot was a partnership between the Texas State vocational rehabilitation agency and our distribution center near Dallas that resulted in a successful spin-off training program for our stores in the area. Stores volunteer to work with local agencies in training candidates for store positions with the objective of employing them in one of our community stores. This pilot has proven to be successful and we will be rolling this out across the country in 2012.

Our experience illustrates the benefits of working in partnership with local organizations that serve people with disabilities. In fact, we have found that the variety of partnerships we have with State, county and non-profit agencies are crucial to our efforts to employ people with disabilities—they provide the tools and expertise to help those individuals succeed. Perhaps the success of our employees with disabilities will encourage service agencies and their supporters to focus on competitive employment opportunities and success.

We hope our efforts can open doors for people with disabilities in other businesses. So far, we have partnered with other companies such as Sears, Best Buy and Lowe's, which have since launched their own initiatives. We have thrown our doors open to other businesses that have interest in employing people with disabilities—we are happy to share what we've learned and our experiences. We have conducted tours and hosted "boot camps" where company managers can gain actual hands-on experience in an inclusive work environment. And this includes our competitors. The success of our employees with disabilities is too important not to share with other companies and interested parties.

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

To help other businesses benefit from our experience, and perhaps help efforts by policymakers to encourage employment of people with disabilities, let me walk through the most important lessons Walgreens has learned—and assumptions and biases we have shattered—as we pursued our commitment.

First, the biggest challenge was making the decision. We knew there would be obstacles and mistakes along the way. Will this work? Will we find qualified people? Can we train them to be productive and succeed in our work environment? What about the impact on other employees? Will it affect costs and productivity overall? Fear of the unknown and the risk of failure can be the toughest barriers in business, especially when people's lives and livelihoods are involved. Nobody wants to be blamed for good intentions with faulty outcomes. We knew that if we had to answer every "what if" before proceeding, we would never get started. So we decided to learn and adjust as we moved forward. In our experience, if businesses can garner the courage to cross the line and hire people with disabilities, then they will discover the same benefits we have.

Second, good partners are key. We found great partners in the community who could help us find and train potential employees. In Anderson, we worked with the Anderson County Special Needs and Disability Board who opened up and staffed a training center a year ahead of our opening to ensure that we had a pool of qualified candidates. In Connecticut, we worked with the State vocational rehabilitation agency, which coordinated across various providers to bring forth candidates and train them in our training center within the distribution center. In working across the United States, we learned that all potential partners are not the same in terms of resources, focus, the access to pool of candidates, energy and approach. The availability and our assessment of partners' abilities, resources and commitment weighed heavily in our site selection.

Third, we didn't have to create a lot of special accommodations to employ people with disabilities. We have been just as successful in employing people with disabilities at distribution centers without the most advanced technology like Anderson. It turned out that most of the steps we took to make work easier and more productive for people with disabilities made work easier and more productive for all employees. We have found that most of the special accommodations for people with disabilities cost less than $25 and is money spent wisely to result in a successful employee. For instance, one team member with obsessive-compulsive disorder was failing to make the productivity standard because he was fixated on how he was opening the box rather than on the number of boxes he was completing. Providing a simple card with the number of squares representing the number of boxes that he should complete each hour helped shift his focus, resulting in his success.

Fourth, we found that the "build-it-and-they-will-come" approach is not good enough. In other words, having an inclusive work environment, an accommodating workplace, and a welcoming attitude may be insufficient to attract people with disabilities to your workforce. Businesses may not have access to these potential employees because they're unaware of the service agencies or partnership opportunities. Or local agencies may not know about your commitment, they may not make employment a priority, or they do not have the resources to help their clients join the workforce and succeed there. Some people with disabilities who self-advocate may give up trying to find a job after facing repeated disappointment. We had to work harder than we expected to find applicants and work with partners to get them the necessary preparation and job training.

Fifth, we discovered we had our own invisible walls, including how we defined jobs, and how we interpreted laws and regulations. For example, would we risk violating workplace safety rules if we have a forklift driver who is hearing impaired? Would we risk violating equal opportunity protections if we advertise openly that we were seeking people with disabilities (without equal mention of other groups)? Sometimes the rules designed to protect people can seem like barriers to helping people.

Sixth, we underestimated the abilities of people with disabilities. We were told, and part of us believed as most people do, that people with disabilities could not work overtime . . . that certain people could not do certain jobs . . . that "they" could not adapt to new jobs and situations . . . and "they" could not perform time-sensitive, fast-paced, high-quality work.

We found these generalizations to be false. Our employees with disabilities showed that they can be successful in highly competitive environments and triumph over these biases every day. These are terrific employees and they meet and exceed the same performance requirements for all employees.

Seventh, for us and for those businesses we have partnered with, this is a movement of attraction not coercion. That is, we have had no problem in finding employees who want to be part of this effort. During our planning phase, as it became known throughout the company I received countless calls from employees in other areas offering their help. I can think of no better illustration than Monica Hall, who I met during my first visit to our Connecticut distribution center. She told me that she had been an assistant manager in one of our stores in Wisconsin when she

heard of our plans to open in Connecticut. She uprooted and moved her entire family to Connecticut to be part of it. When we asked our Dallas/Ft. Worth store managers for volunteers to serve as advocates and training stores, we hoped for 10 but got 38 volunteers on the spot.

Finally, it has changed us for the better. In our commitment to employing people with disabilities, great performance was something we hoped for. We have gotten it. We have been rewarded with a safe, dependable and productive workforce.

Along the way, we discovered another, more intangible but powerful benefit. That is the impact our commitment to employing people with disabilities has had on our work environment and on each one of us.

As you walk through these buildings, there is a sense of teamwork, common purpose and mutual respect unlike we had ever experienced. We set out to change the workplace but instead found that we were the ones who were changed.

We learned that working with people with disabilities requires that we view each person as an individual whose gifts may not be readily apparent. Treating each person as an individual is something we in business talk about, but fall short in actual practice. We have found that in making people with disabilities successful, it requires us to be so. As a result, we become better managers and leaders and we all benefit.

More importantly, no matter how different we seem, we are more alike than we are different. In going through the effort to unleash each person's gifts, we have discovered the completeness in all of us. There is no "them" and "us." For those directly involved, it is as if we have been awakened from our slumber of self. The satisfaction of our own success does not compare to the satisfaction of making those around us successful. This has made us better stewards of our work. And more importantly, better parents, better spouses, better citizens and better people.

BARRIERS TO ADDRESS

The committee has asked me to describe some of the barriers to employing people with disabilities. I'm not a policymaker, but in our experience, three areas may be worth examining:

- Regulations that are designed to help or protect people may hinder the hiring of people with disabilities, perhaps some accommodations could be made to allow companies to pursue these hires without risking sanction.
- People with disabilities who want jobs, and companies committed to hiring them, would benefit if additional resources were made available to help potential employees succeed in the workforce. Increased flexibility, access and funding for job coaches for long-term support for the organizations with whom we partner, or other mechanisms to use our own employees for job coaches for individuals, would be helpful in breaking down barriers.
- If the "fear factor" is deterring companies from expanding their hiring of people with disabilities, they might benefit from a national summit to share knowledge and information, practices that work, and problem-solving among companies, service providers, local, State and Federal agencies, non-profit and advocacy organizations, and researchers and academics. Walgreens would be happy to help and participate.

In fact, this morning I would like to present the committee with an invitation signed by our employees at our Anderson, SC, and Windsor, CT, distribution centers to come and visit them, see their work in action, and ask any questions you'd like. They'll tell their story much better than I can.

CLOSING OBSERVATIONS

For many of our employees with disabilities, Walgreens is their first full-time job. We've seen first-hand the improvements in their lives as they earn and receive recognition for a job well-done and build relationships with other team members. The stories are too numerous to mention them all here, but a few stand out for me:

- The man who has multiple seizures daily who came up to me and said that he had been unsuccessfully looking for a full-time job for 17 years until he was given a chance at our Connecticut site;
- The man in his 50s with cognitive disability who had never held a job, who showed his aging mother his first paycheck, and the next day asked his supervisor why she had cried;
- Our gifted HR manager who made straight A's in both undergraduate and graduate school, mailed out 400 resumes, got 30 interviews but not a single job offer;
- The hearing-impaired customer service representative who we hired not because of the paradigms we knew she would break, but because she was the best candidate.

I do not minimize the extraordinary challenges facing people with disabilities in joining the workforce. They may not have access to transportation, they may have difficulty with the application process, they may not interview well, they may not learn in the way we teach or along the same timeline as we are accustomed, and so on.

But the toughest challenge of all is when people with disabilities are seen as "them" and not as "us." A job can change that. A job is more than a paycheck; it is a source of dignity. The workplace can be a productive and fulfilling place—a place where people with disabilities transform their lives from the margins to the mainstream, and can be seen as the valuable and complete people they are.

Walgreens is fortunate to have made the commitment to invest in employing people with disabilities, people who make such an enormous contribution to our company, customers and community, and who succeed in pursuing their dreams and careers. And for those who have been directly involved, it has provided more meaning and satisfaction than we ever would have dreamed.

Thank you for the opportunity to tell our story.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Lewis. Again, I said I watched that presentation and what you've done there is just nothing short of miraculous.

Do we have a vote going on now? We just have one vote. Why don't we take a break right here. Mr. Egan, when we come back, we'll start with you. So we'll just run over and come back. Shouldn't take us more than 10 minutes or 12 minutes, something like that. So we'll just recess for about 10 minutes, be right back. Thank you.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. Sorry to break up all these animated conversations that are going on around here, but the committee will resume its sitting.

And I just recognize Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers who is here from Washington State. Representative, if you would like to come up and join us, just come up and join us here.

[Applause.]

Just sit anywhere you'd like Representative McMorris Rodgers: I've never done this before. Oh, come on. I know you are a great advocate, a great advocate, and we've been together on things in the past. I'm turning to Mr. Egan now, but do I understand that Mr. Egan's brother worked for you or something?

Mr. RODGERS. That's true.

The CHAIRMAN. Ah, very good.

Well, Mr. Egan, welcome to the committee. I have read your testimony. It's great testimony. And all the things you've done, again, you're a role model. No doubt about that. So please, if you could sum it up and please proceed, Mr. Egan. Welcome.

STATEMENT OF DAVID EGAN, BOOZ ALLEN HAMILTON EMPLOYEE, SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE AND GLOBAL MESSENGER, FORMER BOARD MEMBER OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS VIRGINIA (SOVA), BOARD MEMBER OF THE DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA (DSANV), BOARD MEMBER OF THE DOWN SYNDROME AFFILIATES IN ACTION (DSAIA), McLEAN, VA

Mr. EGAN. Thank you.

Good morning, Senator Harkin and members of the committee. Thank you for inviting me to testify at this important hearing.

My name is David Egan and I want to tell you about my career and what it means to me. I have been an employee of Booz Allen Hamilton for 15 years.

Employment of people with intellectual disabilities is a small business decision and a social responsibility. This is a familiar topic for Senator Harkin, who, many years ago, employed Dan Piper, an individual with Down syndrome to work at his district office in Iowa.

Chairman Harkin is a pioneer in the employment of people with intellectual disabilities, and I was honored to be the first one to receive the Dan Piper Award.

The CHAIRMAN. Very good. Congratulations.

Mr. EGAN. Thank you.

I'm going to talk about my job, how I got started, how it works and how people with disabilities can succeed on the job. My goal is to discuss how to promote the competitive, inclusive employment in our communities.

I want to be one of us and not one among us. What does that mean? That means I'm accepted in a group. It means that people respect me. They have expectations and they believe in me. It means that people acknowledge that I have skills and that I can contribute to the goals of a business.

Let me tell you how it all started for me and why I'm able to succeed. It did not all happen suddenly. It took many years to prepare. All through my journey, there are very special people—my family—one of them, my mom, is behind me—my neighbors, friends, teachers, coaches and mentors who made a difference in my life. It takes a team, and they all helped me overcome obstacles.

Inclusion starts at home. In my family, I was taught that work is part of life.

It was hard for me to accept the fact that I have Down syndrome, but it became easier when I discovered that I was not alone. I know that I have a disability, just like many others in this world, but my disability does not get in the way when I train and compete in Special Olympics sports. It is not an obstacle when I learn and perform. It is not a barrier when I take the bus to go to work, when I earn my paycheck every 2 weeks. My disability is not an obstacle, and I can think of all the things that I can do.

Transition from school to work started for me with an internship as a clerk in the distribution center during the summer of my junior year in high school. The internship did not include transportation. My family and I discussed our options and my mom started training me on taking the bus to work. I have now successfully been taking the bus now for the past 15 years.

My first supervisor was great. She took it upon herself to teach me everything there was to know about being a clerk in the distribution center. She believed in me. She wanted me to fit in, and after the summer internship, she asked me if I wanted to stay and become a staff employee.

She taught me how to fill out my time sheet and establish a routine for the day. I learned to use the computer systems and follow the instructions ensuring that clients get their packages. I also learned to work in the supply room when I had down time.

I am treated like all other employees. I receive benefits, time off and an annual 360-degree assessment. Like everyone else, I go to compulsory training and participate in all-hands meetings and corporate events. The company cares about my personal and professional development.

I also made many friends at work and one of them is Greg, a senior employee in the distribution center who knows me well and has been my role model for the past 15 years. He truly cares about me and gives me guidance.

At Booz Allen, everyone, from the senior managers to most junior employees, help each other succeed. I feel like I am part of a team.

My company offers me more than a job. It is a career. The CEO of Booz Allen Hamilton, Dr. Shrader, has stated,

> "Work provides more than a paycheck. It brings dignity and community. When businesses open job opportunities to men and women with disabilities, everyone benefits—the individual, the company and society at large."

My firm is special, not just because they employ me, but because they help me succeed, and they also support the causes that are important to me, like Special Olympics and the Down Syndrome Association and The Arc. They encourage me to volunteer and be a national advocate for people with intellectual disabilities.

I enjoy my after-work activities in the community as an advocate promoting awareness that we are capable people.

Inclusion also means that I have to give back to the community. When I was 12 years old, I was dreaming of winning the race in Special Olympics. I still like the competitions and want to win many races, but, now, I dare to dream about changing the way people think of us, changing the perceptions, opening doors for people to shine and overcome their disabilities, not only in sports, but in the workplace and at all levels of our society.

Mrs. Shriver, the founder of Special Olympics, believed in human dignity and inclusion. In her address at the 1987 World Games in Indiana, she said to the athletes,

> "You are the stars and the world is watching you. By your presence, you send a message to every village, every city and every Nation. You send a message of hope and a message of victory. The right to play on any playing field, you have earned it. The right to study in any school, you have earned it. The right to hold a job, you have earned it. The right to be anyone's neighbor, you have earned it."

She has inspired people around the globe to become believers and follow in her footsteps.

Our oath in Special Olympics goes like this: Let me win. And if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt. And each and every one repeat with me: Let me win.

ALL. Let me win.

Mr. EGAN. And if I cannot win——

ALL. And if I cannot win——

Mr. EGAN [continuing]. Let me be brave in the attempt.

ALL. [continuing]. Let me be brave in the attempt.

We need to change the world together, and we are. It is my role to demonstrate abilities, and it is our role, as a team, in this room, to make this happen.

Now, I want to ask all of you do you want to dare to dream and imagine the possibilities? Dream with me of a world where people are respected and encouraged to succeed, a world where people with intellectual disabilities are fully accepted and have great friendships.

In summary, our goal is to make sure that all people with intellectual disabilities can launch successful careers. To achieve that goal, we need strong family and community supports, good education and social skills, internships during high school and seamless transition from school to work showing that we can achieve, because people have high expectations and value our contributions. We need mentors in the workplace, supervisors who are willing to take a risk and invest some time to teach us new skills to help us learn.

This is what it means to have an inclusive workforce. This is how we fulfill our social responsibility, and it makes a good investment. And our Nation, and the world, will be a better place for all of us—and you will not regret it—a place where people with intellectual disabilities do not have to hide and are fully accepted.

Thank you. Thank you all.

[Applause.]

[The prepared statement of Mr. Egan follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID EGAN

SUMMARY

(1) Good morning Senator Harkin and members of the committee. Thank you for inviting me to testify at this important hearing. My name is David Egan and I want to tell you about my career and what it means to me. I have been an employee of Booz Allen Hamilton for 15 years and I believe that improving the employment opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities is a smart business decision and a social responsibility.

(2) Employment of people with intellectual disabilities is a familiar topic for Senator Harkin who many years ago employed Dan Piper, an individual with Down syndrome to work at his district office in Iowa. Chairman Harkin is a pioneer in the employment of people with intellectual disabilities and I was honored to be the first recipient of the Dan Piper Award. I met the Piper family then and feel a special bond with Dan and the chairman as his mom told me that we had a lot in common.

(3) I am here to tell you my story but I am also here **to be the voice** of many who are seeking to be valued members of our society. I am going to talk about my job; how I got started; how it works; and how people with disabilities can succeed on the job. **My goal is to discuss how to promote competitive, inclusive employment in our communities.**

(4) **I want to be "One of us and not one among us."** What does that mean? That means that I am accepted in a group. It means that people respect me. They don't ignore me. They ask for my opinion. They have expectations. They believe in me. It means that people acknowledge that I have skills, I am valued and that I contribute to the goals of a business.

(5) People with intellectual disabilities have dreams; we want to be included; we want to be a part of the community. We want employers to hire us and we want to be useful members of our society; **because, we want to show OUR ABILITIES and to contribute to the goals of the businesses we work for.**

(6) **Let me tell you how it all started for me and why I am able to succeed.** It did not all happen suddenly. It took many years to prepare. All through my journey, there were very special people: my family, neighbors, friends, teachers, coaches and mentors who made a difference in my life; **It takes a TEAM. They all helped me overcome obstacles.**

(7) **Inclusion starts at home.** In my family, I was taught that work is part of life. Early on, I helped with family chores and I was not excused because of my disability. On the contrary, I engaged in all of the activities: the fun ones and not so fun.

(8) It was hard for me to accept the fact that I have Down syndrome, but it became easier when I discovered that I was not alone. I know that I have a disability just like many others in this world (9) but my disability does not get in the way when I train and compete in Special Olympics sports. It is not an obstacle when I learn and perform; (10) it is not a barrier when I take the bus to go to work; when I earn my paycheck every 2 weeks. **My disability is not an obstacle; I think of all the things that I CAN DO.**

(11) Transition from school to work started for me in high school with an internship at the WildLife Federation and then at the Davis Center vocational training. However, the best internship was with Booz Allen and Hamilton.

(12) I started as a clerk in the Distribution Center during the summer of my junior year. There was a program called the "BRIDGES program" sponsored by the Marriott Foundation to encourage employers to have interns with intellectual disabilities to try working and exploring job opportunities. That was a great experience.

(13) In June 1996, the high school called my mom to ask if I was willing to intern at BAH during that summer. However, there was one condition: I had to be able to get to work on my own. The internship did not include transportation. My family and I discussed our options and my mom started training me on taking the bus to work. She went with me a few times showing me how people get on and off and that I understood some basic security in crossing the roads and making sure I knew where to take the bus and where to get off. It took a week and then I was completely on my own throughout the summer. I have taken the bus now for the past 15 years.

(14) My first supervisor, Felicia was great. She took it upon herself to teach me everything there was to know about being a clerk in the Distribution Center. **She believed in me.** She wanted me to fit in and after the summer internship, she asked me if I wanted to stay and become a staff employee.

(15) The Fairfax County public school sent a job coach to help out, but that did not work out too well. Felicia did not want to have a middle person to show me the ropes. She taught me how to fill out my timesheet and establish a routine for the day.

(16) Later in my career, I had another supervisor, Showanda who preferred to have a job coach from Service Source to teach me new skills. I learned to use the computer systems (VIPER) and follow the instructions of a manifest, ensuring that clients get their packages. I also learned to work in the supply room when I had down time.

(17) I am treated like other employees at BAH. I receive benefits, time off, and an annual 360 degrees assessment like everyone else. I go to compulsory training and participate in All Hands meetings, and corporate events. The company cares about my personal and professional development.

(18) I also made many friends at BAH. And one of them is Greg, a senior employee in the Distribution Center who knows me well and has been my role model for the past **15 years. He truly cares about me and gives me guidance. At BAH, everyone from the senior managers to the most junior employees help each other succeed. I feel that I am part of the team. BAH offers me more than a job, it is a career. (18)**

(19) The CEO, Dr. Shrader, has stated:

> "Work provides more than a paycheck. It brings dignity and community. When businesses open job opportunities to men and women with disabilities, everyone benefits—the individual, the company and society at large."

(20) **My firm is special**, not just because they employ me **but because they help me succeed**. They support the causes that are important to me, SO, DSANV, ARC and the VA Alliance. They encourage me to volunteer and be an advocate for people with intellectual disabilities.

(21) I enjoy my after work activities in the community as an advocate promoting awareness that we are capable people. As a Board Member of Special Olympics Virginia, I put forward a motion requesting that SOVA hires a person with intellectual disability on their staff. **It is economically hard but the right thing to do and I am proud to say that SOVA now** hired a person with disability on their staff. **Inclusion also means that I have to give back to the community.**

(22) When I was 12, I was dreaming of winning the race in Special Olympics. (*I still like the competition and want to win many races.*) But **now, I dare to dream**

about changing the way people think of us, changing the perceptions, opening doors for people with disabilities to shine and overcome the disabilities not only on the court but in the workplace and at all levels of our society.

(23) Now I want to ask all of you. **Do you want to Dare to dream and Imagine the PossABILITIES?** Dream with me of a world where people are respected and encouraged to succeed: a world where people with intellectual disabilities are fully accepted and have great friends. We need to change the world **and we are.** It is my role to demonstrate abilities and it is **OUR ROLE** as a team to make it happen.

(24) Adults with intellectual disabilities can be successful. We have a **message to share**, a message of hope, a message of determination to succeed and reach full potential. Slow learning and unique problems that we have are not barriers to success.

(25) **They may be obstacles but they can be overcome with open hearts and minds.** We are able to succeed if given the right motivation and placed in an accepting environment that helps us thrive.

(26) **Employing people with intellectual disabilities is a smart business decision and a social responsibility.**

(27) In summary, our goal is to make sure that all people with intellectual disabilities can launch successful careers. To achieve that goal, we need strong family and community support, good education and social skills, internships during high school and a seamless transition from school to work showing that WE CAN achieve because people have high expectations and value our contributions. We need mentors in the workplace, supervisors who are willing to take a risk and invest some time to teach us new skills and help us learn. This is what it means to have an inclusive workforce. This is how we fulfill our social responsibility and make a good investment. Our Nation and the world will be a better place for all of us: a **place where people with disabilities do not have to hide and are fully accepted.**

Thank you.

First I want to thank Chairman Harkin and the members of the committee for dedicating a full hearing on a topic that is dear to me: *Improving Employment Opportunities for People with Intellectual Disabilities*.

This is also a familiar topic for Senator Harkin who many years ago employed Dan Piper, an individual with Down syndrome to work at his district office in Iowa. Chairman Harkin is a pioneer in the employment of people with intellectual disabilities and I was honored to be the first recipient of the Dan Piper Award. I met the Piper family then, and have felt a special bond to Dan and the Chairman ever since. I believe that we all share a lot in common with our outlooks and values.

I am here to tell you my story, but I am also here to be the voice of many who are seeking to be valued members of our society. I will tell you how it all started and why I am able to succeed. I will also share some thoughts on the challenges that affect people with intellectual disabilities; and furthermore, some strategies and recommendations to overcome those challenges.

My journey to employment took many years of preparation. All through the years, there were very special people: my family, neighbors, friends, teachers, coaches and mentors who made a difference in my life; **it takes a TEAM. They all helped me overcome obstacles**.

Adults with intellectual disabilities can be successful employees. I and many others like me have demonstrated that we can contribute in the workplace. However, there is a lot more that we can do to make it easier for people with intellectual disabilities to showcase their abilities. A lot more needs to be done so that people like me are not confined in institutions and limited to working in sheltered workshops. When people are successfully employed, they contribute to the well-being of our society rather than becoming a burden.

Preparation for work and inclusion starts at home. In my family, I was taught that work is part of life. Early on, I helped and I continue to help with family chores. I was not excused because of my disability. On the contrary, I engaged in all of the activities: the fun ones and the not so fun. It is with family, school, and community that the ball got rolling. I learned then that I was in charge of my attitude, and **I am in charge of my life**.

When I was younger, it was hard for me to accept the fact that I have Down syndrome, but it became easier when I discovered that I was not alone. I know that I have a disability just like many others in this world, but my disability does not get in the way when I train and compete in Special Olympics sports. It is not an obstacle when I learn and perform; it is not a barrier when I take the bus to go

to work, when I earn my paycheck every 2 weeks. **My disability is not an obstacle; I think of all the things that I CAN DO.**

I started learning about work in high school with an internship at the Wild Life Federation, and later at the Davis Center, a vocational training program. However, the best internship was with Booz Allen Hamilton. I started at Booz Allen Hamilton when I was a junior in High School as a clerk in the Distribution Center. There was a program called the "BRIDGES program," sponsored by the Marriott Foundation to encourage employers to have interns with intellectual disabilities to try working and exploring job opportunities.

In 1996, the high school called my mom to ask if I was willing to intern at Booz Allen Hamilton that summer. However, there was one condition: I had to be able to get to work on my own. The internship did not include transportation. My family and I discussed our options and my mom started training me on taking the bus to work. She went with me a few times showing me how people get on and off. She made sure I understood some basic security in crossing the roads and that I knew where to take the bus and where to get off. It took a week and then I was completely on my own. I have been taking the bus now for the past 15 years.

My first supervisor, Felicia, was great. She took it upon herself to teach me everything there was to know about being a clerk in the Distribution Center. **She believed in me.** She wanted me to fit in and after the summer internship, she asked me if I wanted to stay with the company and become a staff employee. The Fairfax County public school system sent a job coach to help out, but that did not work out too well. Felicia did not want to have a middle person to show me the ropes. She taught me how to fill out my timesheet and establish a routine for the day.

Later in my career, I had another supervisor, Showanda who preferred to have a job coach from Service Source to teach me new skills. I learned to use the computer systems and follow the instructions of a manifest, ensuring that clients receive their packages. I also learned to work in the supply room when I had downtime.

I am treated like other employees at Booz Allen Hamilton. I receive benefits, time off, and an annual 360 degree assessment like everyone else. I go to compulsory training, participate in all-hands meetings, and attend corporate events. The company cares about my personal and professional development.

I have also made many friends at Booz Allen Hamilton. One of them is Greg, a senior employee in the Distribution Center who knows me well and has been my role model for the past 15 years. He truly cares about me and gives me guidance. At Booz Allen Hamilton, everyone from the senior managers to the most junior employees help each other succeed. **I feel that I am part of the team.** Booz Allen Hamilton offers me more than a job, it offers me a career.

The CEO, Dr. Shrader, has stated,

> "Work provides more than a paycheck. It brings dignity and community. When businesses open job opportunities to men and women with disabilities, everyone benefits—the individual, the company, and society at large."

My firm is special, not just because they employ me **but because they help me succeed as an individual**. In addition, they support causes that are important to me. They encourage me to volunteer and be an advocate for people with intellectual disabilities.

I enjoy my after work activities in the community: I was selected to be the first self-advocate serving as a board member for the Down Syndrome Association for northern Virginia (DSANV) and then last year, I was also elected to be the first self-advocate on the Board of the Down Syndrome Affiliates in Action (DSAIA). These associations are important because they create awareness and provide support to parents, families, children, and adults with Down syndrome. It is like an extended family where we care about each other and make sure that all members reach their full potential.

The DSANV this year has worked on the following issues:

1. Learning Program—Our work in teaching both students and parents and educators about strategies and effective ways of helping individuals with Down syndrome learn and grow.

2. The ABLE Act—This is critical legislation for individuals with Down syndrome to live a full life, just like any other individual. The bill will allow individuals with disabilities and their families the opportunity to save money to help pay for things like education, housing, travel, community supports, and training, without disqualifying them from critical benefits such as Medicaid. These needs are critical to both employment and community inclusion. This bill will reach out and support more than just individuals with Down syndrome. It will end discrimination in the area of tax-sheltered accounts and allow for every family to save effectively for their chil-

dren. I hope that you Senators will look into this bill and help see it to a successful passage.

3. Outreach into the Hispanic community—This is an important initiative in helping the Hispanic population advocate for their rights within the Down syndrome community.

4. Employment—We are surveying the current status of employment and making sure individuals with Down syndrome have access to jobs and also opportunities to find their dream jobs.

My other extended family is Special Olympics. I am an athlete, a Global Messenger, and an advocate. I want to promote awareness and show that people with intellectual disabilities can be capable and productive people. Special Olympics at the local, State, national, and international level is instrumental in building confidence in athletes. The mission of Special Olympics is to provide opportunities for young and old to shine in competition, building an environment for families to celebrate the successes of their sons and daughters. That mission has not changed in the past 40 years since Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded the movement. She believed in people and her message is a message of hope, human dignity and inclusion. In her address at the 1987 World Games in Indiana, she said to the athletes:

"You are the stars, and the world is watching you.
By your presence, you send a message to every village, every city, and every nation.
You send a message of hope and a message of victory.
The right ***to play on any playing field***, you have earned it.
The right ***to study in any school***, you have earned it.
The right ***to hold a job***, you have earned it.
The right ***to be anyone's neighbor***, you have earned it."

She has inspired people around the globe to become believers and follow in her footsteps. Her message is a message of hope and opportunity. Our oath is: "Let me win, if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

Special Olympics programs are great promoters of inclusion, with programs like Healthy Athletes, Young Athletes, Unified Sports, Global Messengers, and Best Buddies. All of these programs help us, the athletes, to set objectives and work towards achieving simple and big successes.

As a former board member of Special Olympics Virginia, I put forward a motion requesting that SOVA hires a person with intellectual disability on their staff. **It was economically hard, but the right thing to do, and I am proud to say that SOVA has now** hired a person with a disability on their staff. **Special Olympics means a lot to myself, my siblings, my family, and so many others**.

I started competing at age 8. While I learned to swim in my neighborhood pool with my sisters, I only gained confidence when I joined Special Olympics. I also learned to play on a team when I started playing basketball and I had to pass the ball rather than run with it. I enjoy many sports, I used to do speed skating, track and field, but now I play soccer, basketball, and enjoy softball with my brother on a unified team Special Olympic team. Special Olympics also connects me to the world. I was very lucky to participate in the international Global Congress events in the Netherlands in 2000 and in Morocco in 2010.

I learned that people in the world have more in common than we think. When I was younger, I was dreaming of winning every race in Special Olympics (*I still like the competition and want to win many races*). But **now, I dare to dream about changing the way people think of people with intellectual disabilities, changing perceptions, opening doors for people with disabilities to shine and overcome their disabilities, not only on the court but in the workplace and at all levels of our society**.

Now I want to ask all of you. **Do you want to dare to dream and imagine the possABILITIES?** Dream with me of a world where people are respected and encouraged to succeed, a world where people with intellectual disabilities are fully accepted and have great friends. We need to change the world **and we are**. It is my role to demonstrate abilities and it is **OUR ROLE** as a team to make it happen.

Some successful strategies that will help promoting and implementing competitive integrated work settings include starting early in the educational system to mainstream students and offer them internships in high school and then during vocational training. Give employers incentives for employing people with intellectual disabilities. Expand public transportation or other means of transportation, as many cannot depend on family or friends to get to work on a regular basis.

The barriers to employing people with intellectual disabilities are rooted in perceptions and stereotypes. Our group of adults range in capabilities like the general population, and therefore not all of us need to be in sheltered workshops or enclaves

with full supervision. These environments are needed but not sufficient. If families are exposed to healthy and safe employment settings, they will be willing to take a risk like my family did and work in the competitive mainstream work environment.

Another barrier has to do with the concern that employers have with the cost of accommodations. However, many adults with intellectual disabilities do not have expensive accommodation needs, but rather need a mentor and a supportive supervisor. We understand the routine and adjust to it quite well.

The policy conclusion needed is to encourage employers to hire more people with intellectual disabilities and one-size-does-not-fit-all, but there are many jobs that fit both the needs of the employee and the employer. I strongly believe that it is a good business decision and a social responsibility. It is an important investment that grows.

Adults with intellectual disabilities can be successful. We have a **message to share**, a message of hope, a message of determination to succeed and reach our full potential. Slow learning and unique problems that we have are not barriers to success. **There may be challenges ahead, but they can be overcome with open hearts and minds.**

Adding us to the roster is not enough; you need to **INCLUDE us in all aspects of the business**. We are determined to succeed and reach our full potential. Our passion, persistence and patience will make us walk the path, to overcome the obstacles in the journey, and to forge new paths for people with intellectual disabilities.

We, the people with intellectual disabilities, have a place in society and in the workforce; we serve, we contribute, we are reliable, caring, consistent, and predictable. Those among us with Down syndrome can lead normal lives with the help and support of family and community. We are able to learn if taught with patience. We are able to succeed if given the right motivation and placed in an accepting environment that helps us thrive. Include us in all aspects of life, in your plans and in your decisions, and you will not regret it. Then our Nation and the world will be a better place for all of us: **a place where people with disabilities do not have to hide and are fully accepted. We need help, but not pity. We hope that we are valued and treated with dignity**.

In summary, our goal is to make sure that all people with intellectual disabilities can launch successful careers according to their potential. To achieve that goal, we need strong family and community support, good education, social skill development, internships during high school, and a seamless transition from school to work, which will show that WE CAN achieve success and make valuable contributions. More effective public transportation would make it easier for individuals to be self-sufficient in getting to work on a daily basis. We also need mentors in the workplace, supervisors who are willing to take a risk and invest some time to teach us new skills and help us learn. This is what it means to have an inclusive workforce. This is how we fulfill our social responsibility and make a good investment. Our Nation and the world will be a better place for all of us: **a place where people with disabilities do not have to hide and are fully valued and accepted**.

ATTACHMENTS

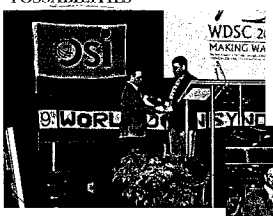
IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

"A Smart Business Decision and a Social Responsibility"

David Egan

Senator Harkin & Dan Piper

Trail Blazers



Dan PiperAward

Dan Piper's family

Dan Piper's brother & David

My job: A Clerk in the Distribution Center

- How I started
- How it works
- How to succeed
- How to promote inclusive employment in our communities

"One of Us and Not One Among Us"

I contribute to the goals of a business

- I am accepted in a group
- People respect me
- They ask for my opinion
- They have expectations
- They believe in me
- I am valued

2/24/2011

We have dreams

2/24/2011

How it all started

My family

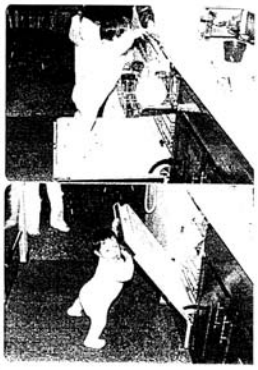
2/24/2011

imagine the POSSABILITIES®

Inclusion starts at home

Work is part of life

I engaged in all of the activities: the fun ones and not so fun



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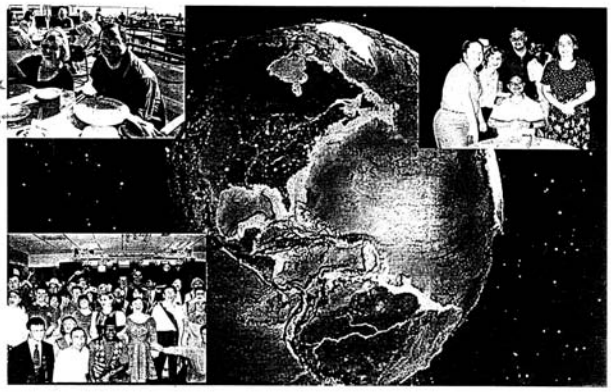


Down Syndrome

I am not alone

2/24/2011

Individual Medley at State Games

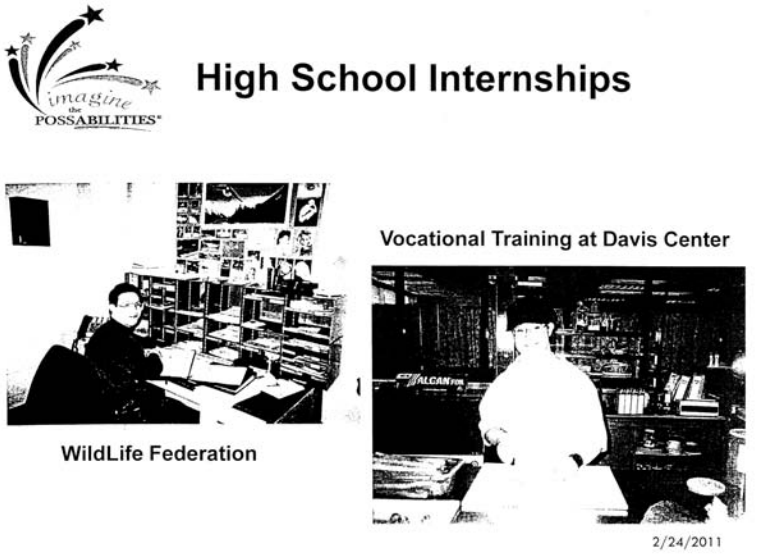
Special Olympics Swimming Competition

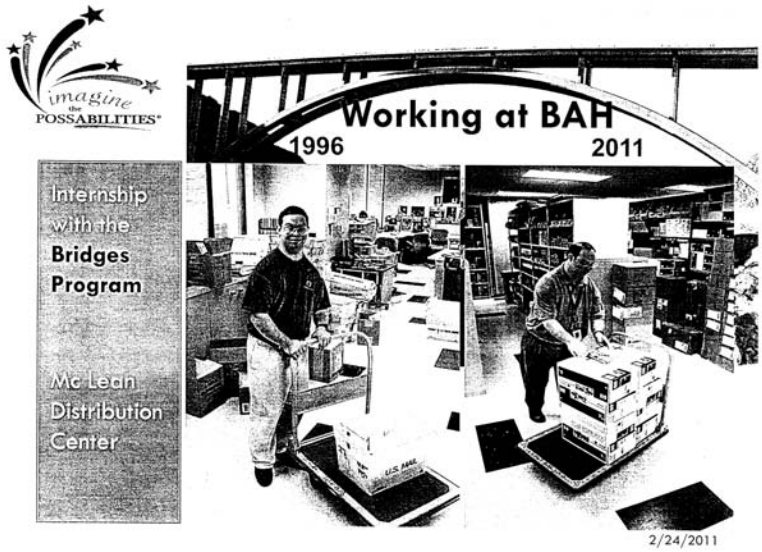
2/24/2011

I think of all the things that I CAN DO

We are capable people

2/24/2011


imagine the POSSABILITIES
High School Internships
WildLife Federation
Vocational Training at Davis Center
2/24/2011


imagine the POSSABILITIES
Working at BAH
1996
2011
Internship with the Bridges Program
Mc Lean Distribution Center
2/24/2011

imagine the POSSABILITIES

Transportation

A critical condition

- Getting to work
- Taking the public bus
- Crossing the streets
- Arriving on time

2/24/2011

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Felicia believed in me

My coach at work. She showed me how to succeed on the job and learn new skills

2/24/2011

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Opportunities to learn new skills

- Communications and Systems
- Supply Room

2/24/2011

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Supporting Clients

2/24/2011

I am treated like everyone else

- Benefits
- Time off
- 360 annual assessment
- All Hands Meeting
- Corporate Events

2/24/2011

Friends at Work

Greg my mentor

Derek my supervisor

2/24/2011

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I am part of the Team

Dr. Ralph W. Shrader
Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, and President

"Work provides more than a paycheck. It brings dignity and community. When businesses open job opportunities to men and women with disabilities, everyone benefits – the individual, the company and society at large"

2/24/2011

imagine the POSSABILITIES®

My firm is Special

BAH is an international management technology consulting firm that believes in the causes that are important to me and the spirit of service

2/24/2011

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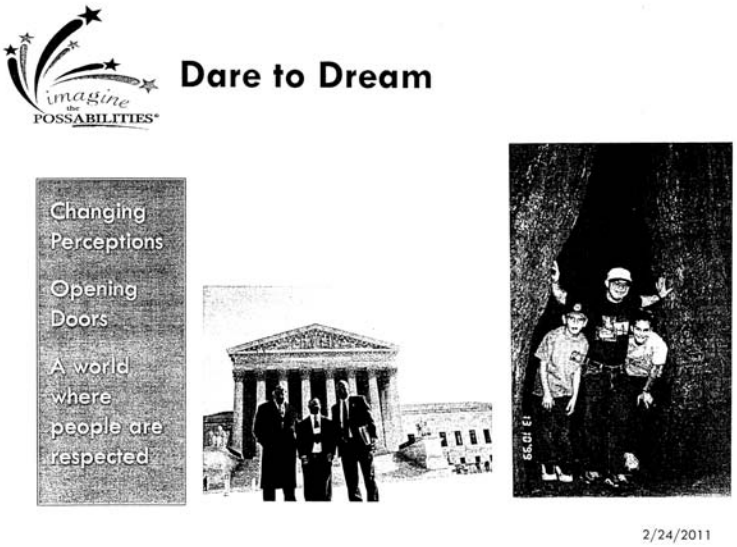
Advocacy
ndss
BUDDY WALK
Special Olympics
DOWN SYNDROME
ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA
Special Olympics
ALLEN & HAMILTON
DTTP
2/24/2011


imagine the POSSABILITIES
Dare to Dream
Changing Perceptions
Opening Doors
A world where people are respected
2/24/2011

imagine the POSSABILITIES

A message of hope

2/24/2011

Overcoming the Obstacles

2/24/2011

A smart business decision and a social responsibility

People with intellectual disabilities do not have to hide and are fully respected and valued

2/24/2011

Inclusive Workforce requires

Key elements for improving the employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities

- strong family and community support
- good education and social skills
- internships during high school and a seamless transition from school to work
- transportation made easy
- people who have high expectations and value our contributions
- mentors in the workplace
- supervisors who are willing to take a risk and invest some time to teach us new skills and help us learn.

This is a social responsibility and a good investment

2/24/2011

THANK YOU

QUESTIONS??

The CHAIRMAN. Took our breath away. That was a great testimony. Thank you very, very much. I have to say, I noticed Mr. Lewis listening very closely to that. I hope he's not planning a corporate raid on Booz Hamilton now.

[Laughter.]

Dr. Kiernan, welcome again. Thank you for all you've done in the past, and your statement will be made a part of the record. Please proceed, Dr. Kiernan.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM E. KIERNAN, Ph.D., DIRECTOR AND RESEARCH PROFESSOR, INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION, UNIVERSITY CENTER ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, BOSTON, MA

Mr. KIERNAN. Thank you very much. It's quite a challenge to follow my three colleagues on the panel here. I'm feeling somewhat daunted about the task, but, in fact, what I want to do is thank the committee for focusing on this issue and for continuing the investment in expanding employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

As you can see, the room is full, and many people are engaged. We all believe that this is the challenge that's ahead of us and one that we will take on.

I'd like to refer to my report for the documentation of the data that we presented, but highlight three points that I think are important, one of which is expectations. We've talked a lot about expectations, and I'm wondering whose expectations we're talking about.

When the National Longitudinal Survey surveyed students with disabilities as to their expectation as they were transitioning from school to work, fully 86 percent of those students said, "yes, I expect to work."

In another survey, 63 percent of individuals who were currently in sheltered employment had an expectation that they would go to work. So the expectation exists. The delivery and the promise is our responsibility.

Additionally, I would like to share a little bit of an observation on some of the workforce. As we look at current unemployment rates today, they can be somewhat daunting to us, and, in fact, the Federal Reserve and the Bank of Boston published a report just recently noting that 10 percent more people were available in the labor market than there were jobs in 2010.

The Federal Reserve's forecast—now, we know there are always risks in forecasts, but their forecast is that there'll be 15 percent more jobs than there are workers in 2018, and the largest portion of the workforce at that point will be individuals over the age of 55. What significance does that have?

In order to maintain productivity in the workforce there are accommodations that we've naturally made for the older worker that will be in some ways an asset to persons with disabilities that will allow them greater access in the workplace. Universal design will become a strategy that will facilitate access to jobs.

And the third piece that I will share with you is that there is tremendous variability in State systems. We have been collecting

for many years the data on employment outcomes for persons with developmental disabilities nationally, since 1988.

Employment rates across the States range from 4.5 percent to 65 percent. What does that tell us? It tells us that there are some really significant islands of excellence that exist within the States. It's up to us to capture those and to make them go to scale, so that we can demonstrate that things can be done effectively.

Let me switch and move to the area that I think my written testimony had spent a fair amount of time on, and those were the area of practices. And there are three areas that I'd like to highlight, for practical considerations.

One is for those youth who are transitioning and moving from school into adult life, and there are certainly some effective practices that were initiated by Higher Education Act that looked at postsecondary opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities. While just starting, it is a program initiative that has significant promise in demonstrating that students with intellectual disabilities can participate in 2- and 4-year schools. The *think college.net Web page documents 250 such programs.*

Additionally, the opportunities to capitalize upon the Edward M. Kennedy legislation that establishes national service as an opportunity for persons with disabilities and AmeriCorps as being a chance for people to develop some skills around employment, receive a stipend and then also be eligible for an educational allotment, an experience that will basically build those soft skills that lead to success in employment.

For those individuals who are currently employed in industries and segregated settings, it's up to us to provide opportunities to offer training and technical assistance, so that the providers that are offering those services can convert their programs and facilitate movement of those individuals out of those programs and into employment. Many of the programs are interested in making that happen.

And the last element that I'll mention is for the worker who's already employed, the areas of emphasis around increasing earnings and increasing hours worked.

There are some policy considerations that Senator Enzi noted in his introductory statement that I would like to highlight. One is clearly the passage of the Workforce Investment Act and the opportunities that are available in that through the Rehab Act and transition as a focus in rehab, and clearly the youth services under the Employment and Training Administration has internship programs for youth.

The second area is looking at national service and the expansion of the areas we talk about as a possibility for part of the transition experience for youth into adult.

The third area is an increased FMAP, an expansion of the reimbursement from the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services, CMS, that would allow programs to be reimbursed at a higher rate for those individuals who are in employment.

Clearly, the indication of success in these efforts will be that it will reduce expenditures over time by rewarding and encouraging placement employment efforts by the State developmental disabilities agencies.

Let me just highlight one other area that I think is really important, Employment First. Twenty of the State developmental disability agencies partner with the State employment leadership network of the Institute for Community Inclusion. The National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services has been working for over 5 years in defining what Employment First is.

It's placing the emphasis on employment as the desired outcome, of the presumption that people can work as opposed to they cannot work, and the desired outcome is competitive, integrated employment. That means wages paid by the employer at or above the minimum or prevailing wage rate, allocation of benefits, the opportunities for interaction for persons with disabilities with coworkers who are not disabled, the chance for advancement and employment on a full-time basis.

My goal is not terribly different than Mrs. Shriver's goal that you quoted at the opening of this hearing. I think our challenge is to have the labor-force participation rate for persons with and without disabilities be the same. That rate is currently 71.9 percent of the workforce. That should be our goal for persons with disabilities as well. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Kiernan follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WILLIAM E. KIERNAN, PH.D.

Chairman Harkin, Ranking Member Enzi and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am William E. Kiernan, Ph.D., Research Professor and Director of the Institute for Community Inclusion, a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities located jointly at the University of Massachusetts Boston and Children's Hospital Boston.

The ICI is one of 67 such centers that make up the Network of University Centers of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities and are part of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD). Our center has worked extensively in supporting the employment of persons with disabilities and has been involved in supporting postsecondary opportunities for youth with developmental disabilities under the work of the Consortium to Enhance Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities funded by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, expanding employment options for persons with disabilities served by State public Vocational Rehabilitation and Developmental Disability agencies in several States and enhancing the capacity of the local One-Stop Career Centers supported by the Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) of the State Departments of Labor. I am pleased and honored to have been asked to comment on the identification of successful strategies to increase workplace participation for persons with developmental disabilities and to explore barriers that may limit those opportunities.

I have organized my verbal presentation around the three questions that were sent to me by the committee. Additionally, I am submitting written testimony including some more specific suggestions as to areas where policy as well as practice changes could be made to support increased workforce participation by persons with developmental disabilities of all ages.

I would like to begin my written presentation with a brief overview of employment status of persons with disabilities nationally and consider some of the challenges and opportunities that can influence the workforce participation of these individuals. Following this I will address each of the committee's questions.

CURRENT STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Over the past decade it has become more apparent that there will be a shortage of workers to meet employer demands. Even given the current economic downturn, with the declining birth rate as well as the aging of the current workforce, most industries are realizing that their growth will more likely be limited in the long term by the declining labor supply and not the economy in general. A recent report published by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston (November 2010) notes that in the

New England region while there are 10 percent more workers than there are positions to fill in 2010, there will be 15 percent more jobs to fill than workers available in 2018. About one third of these jobs will be entry level or lower skilled jobs, those that would be suitable for young workers or workers without considerable employment experiences such as persons with developmental disabilities. These positions can serve as the gateway to career development for persons with disabilities in the coming years.

The aging of the workforce will also be a factor in the employment of persons with disabilities in the future. By the year 2018 the cohort of workers over the age of 55 will increase to 23.9 percent of total workforce, the largest single age group in the labor market. Additionally, in that same time period there will be more than 50.9 million jobs either replaced or created with the vast majority, two thirds replacement positions, creating an excess of demand over supply for the workforce of 2018 (*http://www.bls.gov/oco/oco2003.htm#Labor%20Force*). The service occupations will have a replacement need in excess of 7.6 million in this 10-year period. While it is difficult to predict the level of acquired disability resulting for the normal aging process, the older workforce will mandate that employers look to accommodations for these workers to both maintain productivity as well as maintain a workforce in general. The accommodations that will most likely be effective will be those that will also have applicability to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Interesting enough the approaches to supporting the current older worker as well as the re-engagement of the retired older worker are more similar than dissimilar to those utilized in accessing the untapped labor pool of workers with disabilities. Workplace modifications and accommodations that are universally applicable to the diverse workforce of today, older workers, workers with disabilities and immigrant workers, offer promise for employers to have a qualified workforce in the coming years.

However, when considering the workforce of today and the current impact of the recession there are some considerable areas of concern that must be addressed. Despite the somewhat more optimistic projection of the future that were just presented, there are populations where the labor force participation rate is and has been quite low as in the case of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities where 8 out of 10 are not in the labor market. Coupling the apparent declining labor supply with the low labor force participation rate for persons with disabilities (nationally 34.9 percent of working age adults with any disability and 23.9 percent with a cognitive disability were employed in 2009 compared to 71.9 percent for working age adults without a disability as reported by the American Community Survey), there are some clear inconsistencies in both expectation and perception of this current and potential labor resource.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported the unemployment rate for people with disabilities, meaning those who are not working and are actively seeking work, for December 2010 at 14 percent compared with 9 percent for people without a disability. Additionally, during the same period only 21 percent of all adults with disabilities participated in the labor force as compared with 69 percent of the non-disabled population (December 2010 Current Population Survey). Correspondingly, for those individuals with disabilities who are employed their earnings are considerably less than the earnings for persons without disabilities. According to the 2009 American Community Survey, on average people with any disability earned 30 percent less from work annually than average amount earned by people in the general population and people with a cognitive disability earned less than half what the general population earned from working.

In considering the impact of unemployment for all persons, the consequence is often a life in poverty. Again as noted in the American Community Survey (2009), only 13.4 percent of those persons without a disability live in households below the poverty threshold while 26.5 percent of those having any type of disability live below the poverty threshold. For persons with intellectual disabilities who are receiving SSI that percentage rises to 42.3 percent living below the poverty threshold. Data collected by the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston in its annual data collection report (*StateData: the National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes 2009*) estimates only one in five persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities served by the State Developmental Disabilities agencies received integrated employment services in 2009 (N = 114,004) (Butterworth, Smith, Hall, Migliore & Winsor, Winter, 2011). Close to 80 percent were served in facility-based and non-work settings (Butterworth et al., 2011). There has yet to be a year since the start of this data collection effort in 1988 that more persons with developmental disabilities have been served in competitive integrated employment than sheltered and non-work settings. In fact, the percentage of per-

sons with intellectual and development disabilities in competitive integrated employment served by State Developmental Disability agencies has shown a decline over the past 10 years (from 24.7 percent in 2001 to 20.3 percent in 2009). In line with the stagnant growth in the percentage of persons with developmental disabilities served in integrated employment, those States able to report the allocation of funds for day and employment programs noted a reduction in the percentage of total funds allocated to integrated employment from 2001 (16.6 percent) to 2008 (11.6 percent), a 30 percent reduction.

There has been considerable discussion about the status of earnings and wage payments for persons in competitive integrated employment as well as sheltered employment. Data on earnings collected in 27 States through the National Core Indicators project (NCI, 2008–9) report that the average weekly earnings of those consumers served in facility-based work settings was $29.00 per week while for those in competitive integrated employment the average weekly earnings were nearly 4.0 times that, or about $111.00 per week. Those individuals with developmental disabilities served in supported individual and group placement earnings were somewhat less at $97.00 and $69.00 respectively. It should be noted that most work about 15 to 17 hours per week.

When considering the rates of labor force participation nationally, the percentage reported has the effect of masking the variances that exist across States. The ICI data collection of State Developmental Disability agencies has consistently shown great variability from State to State when reporting the percentage of persons served in integrated employment, from 4.5 percent to 86 percent at an individual State level. This variability is reflective of how States have embraced the concepts of employment and the priority that is placed in policies, procedures and practices within an individual State. It should also be noted that this variability across States is not just within the State Developmental Disability agencies but also the Vocational Rehabilitation agencies even though the Vocational Rehabilitation system has a strong national base legislatively and programmatically.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Over a period of several years when the focus was on care and protection the expectations of the public were that the goal of any service was to support and "hold from harm" persons with disabilities. With the emergence of the self-advocacy movement and the growing emphasis upon self determination and consumer-directed services, there is an increasing interest in hearing what persons with disabilities are expecting for themselves. In a number of studies it is clear that persons with disabilities are anticipating that they will work and want to work. Data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS2) note that 86 percent of students with disabilities who are of transition age definitely believe that they will work in their adult years. When adding in those that feel they will "probably work" that percentage moves to 96 percent.

Similar research findings (Migliore, Grossi, Mank & Rogan, 2008) report that for those individuals who were in sheltered workshop settings 63 percent indicated that they would prefer to be employed outside of the workshop. Again when adding in those who thought they might want to work outside of the workshop that percentage moves to 74 percent. In contrast to these data, 8 out of 10 staff employed in facility-based programs felt that such programs are needed for persons who have difficulty or are unable to maintain employment (Inge, Wehman, Revell, Erickson, Butterworth & Gilmore, 2009). These inconsistencies between expectations and perceptions challenge programs to maintain a "presumption of employability" for all persons served and also to have a sharper focus on competitive integrated employment as the primary or preferred outcome. This lack of focus on employment was noted in research conducted by the ICI when reporting how employment staff was spending their time on the job. The predominance of their time (more than two thirds) was spent in workshop supports, non-work supports and travel with slightly more than 1 percent spent in job development. This time allocation can be reflective of the lack of emphasis on employment as the goal for those served in many sheltered workshop settings (now frequently referred to community rehabilitation programs).

While the message from consumers with disabilities is clear, practices seem to be inconsistent with that message; persons with disabilities are expecting to work, those that are exiting school as well as those in sheltered setting, yet many of our practices and plans do not reflect these wishes. As will be seen later, the adoption of practices such as "employment first" and the expectation that competitive integrated employment is the primary or preferred outcome are strategies that States

are beginning to embrace more aggressively as they plan supports and provide services to and with persons with disabilities.

The inconsistencies noted above have led many State Developmental Disability agencies to consider adopting an employment first policy. This policy is an outgrowth of the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) efforts with its 20 State members. For many States the adoption of employment first comes with a change in the way that they provide or purchase services and supports, their relationship to service providers and their development of policies and procedures that presume that employment is the primary or preferred outcome.

Employment first has evolved over the past 5 or more years and has been defined as:

> . . . policies, procedures and practices that embrace the presumption of employability focusing resources and efforts on supporting access to and maintenance of integrated employment by persons with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities.

Employment first has a set of guiding principles (see Attachment A) that provide a broad framework for States and organizations that seek to embrace employment. It should be noted that employment first is a gateway to employment but that the outcome of employment first is increased labor force participation rates for persons with disabilities such that they are earning wages in a competitive integrated employment setting. Competitive integrated employment, as an outcome, reflects work that:

- is compensated by the company at the minimum or prevailing wage,
- provides similar benefits to all,
- occurs where the employee with a disability interacts or has the opportunity to interact continuously with non-disabled co-workers,
- provides opportunities for advancement, and
- is preferably full-time.

The adoption of employment first as the guiding strategy and competitive integrated employment as the primary or preferred outcome at a State level will require that State agencies be clear about what types of services they are seeking to purchase or provide for their consumers, that the current service providers are prepared to seek and support persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities in finding and maintaining employment and that the documentation of the services provided is consistent with the principle and guidelines associated with employment first. Changes in expectations, practices and outcomes measured are essential if we are to see an increase in the level of labor force participation for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The following section will address some of the successful strategies for implementing competitive integrated employment, consider some of the barriers that exist for persons with disabilities and also some of the policies that should and could be considered to see an increase in the labor force participation rates for persons with developmental disabilities.

Question 1. What are successful strategies for implementation of competitive integrated work settings for persons with intellectual disabilities?

Answer 1. In considering some of the successful strategies for implementing competitive integrated work for persons with intellectual disabilities it is useful to look at persons with disabilities who are transitioning from school to work and adult life, those who are currently in sheltered employment or facility-based non-work settings and those that are employed in typical work settings but could be considered as underemployed.

A. Transition From School to Postsecondary Options and Employment

In the past 5 years there has been a considerable increase in the level of effort in supporting students to move from school to employment. Research for more than three decades has shown that those students who have an employment or work experience while in school are more likely to be engaged in work after they leave school (Hasazi, Gordon & Roe, 1985). Studies have documented that work experiences and internship experiences have served to provide students with solid experience in the area of developing the soft skills to employment as well as developing a better understanding of their role in the workplace upon graduation. More recently there has been a recognition that there is a need to be more expansive in our perception of transition and to consider that the final years of eligibility for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities can be more dynamic including the continuation of learning in postsecondary settings such as 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education (Grigal & Dwyre, 2010).

The growing recognition that students with intellectual disabilities can learn from and effectively participate in postsecondary settings as part of their transition process has led to considerable interest in several States in engaging Institutions of Higher Education in offering courses and learning experiences in these academic settings either as part of or after the completion of their eligibility for IDEA (Grigal, Hart, & Migliore, 2010). Over a 15-year period the percentage of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in postsecondary settings has increased from 8 to 28 percent (Newman et al., 2010). In 2010, the Higher Education Opportunity Act funded 27 model demonstration programs serving students with intellectual disabilities in postsecondary settings in 24 different States. There are some emerging data that are indicating that for those students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who participated in postsecondary education there was a greater labor force participation rate upon leaving the setting (Migliore, Butterworth & Hart, 2009). Additionally the earnings of those students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who participated in these programs were 73 percent greater than those youth who did not participate in postsecondary education (Migliore et al., 2009).

This early effort while showing some promise has also shown that the expectation for student with intellectual and developmental disabilities are more likely to be considered for sheltered and non-work programs by schools in their transition years. The NLTS wave 4 data using 520 students with intellectual and developmental disabilities reports that the most frequent employment goal was competitive (46 percent) followed closely by supported employment (45 percent) and then sheltered employment (33 percent four times greater than other students with disabilities) and only 25 percent considering postsecondary education. Additionally, 73 percent of parents in a study conducted by Griffin, McMillan and Hodapp (2010) reported a lack of information or guidance from schools about postsecondary education for their children. Training of secondary and transition personnel about options for postsecondary is important (Grigal, Hart & Migliore, 2010).

There are some brighter signs that postsecondary education is becoming more established with more than 250 Institutions of Higher Education in 37 States reporting that they offer programs for student with intellectual and developmental disabilities. More than half of these are in 4-year schools with about 38 percent in 2-year institutions and the remainder in vocational technical schools. The Think College Web site *www.thinkcollege.net*, a site that reports on activities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in postsecondary settings, averages over 5,000 hits a month and serves as a clearinghouse for postsecondary education-related resources.

In addition to the postsecondary options in transition there is an opportunity to reorganize the final 4 years of education for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities capitalizing upon the resource that exist in Education, Labor, National Service and Vocational Rehabilitation. With the anticipated passage of WIA, transition from school to employment and adult life will become a core area of responsibility for the public Vocational Rehabilitation system. The additional stimulus monies available to several State agencies (Education, Labor and the public Vocational Rehabilitation Agency) were focused, in part, upon the youth population and assuring that these youth enter and remain in the workforce. These highly focused resources are of short duration but are of sufficient magnitude that they can significantly impact how transition from school to work and adult life is addressed in selected communities. Though the stimulus money is of limited duration, the issue of transition is not and the additional resources through the Workforce Investment Act, the Rehabilitation Act, the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America law (expanding volunteer services and service leading to employment) and the recently published Higher Education Act regulations (creating opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities to complete their entitlement to education in a postsecondary setting) can become part of an expanded strategy for establishing a comprehensive transition service at the State level.

As was noted earlier there is clear evidence to show that students with disabilities who have an employment experience in school are more likely to be employed in their adult years. Additionally, with the focus on youth in WIA and the addition of transition from school to employment and adult life, now part of the Rehabilitation Act, there is a significant opportunity to revise the way services and supports are provided to youth with disabilities as they exit school. The integration of service leading to employment (the Edward M. Kennedy National Service law), the options for completing education entitlement services for some youth with disabilities in a community college, college or university setting, the use of training resource through community colleges can all serve as a platform to revise the transition process so that students with disabilities upon exiting school are directed toward employment

and not non-work options in their adult years. One of the relative strengths of WIA has been the percentage of young people with disabilities utilizing the WIA funded youth services and better integration of such services with transition activities would be of major benefit.

Partnership agreements including schools, the public Vocational Rehabilitation agency, One Stops, Community Colleges, Universities and community rehabilitation providers can lead to a more robust transition planning process and the development of programs and services that link postsecondary settings with community colleges and volunteer services that may lead to employment for youth with disabilities.

B. For Those in Sheltered Settings or in Non-work Programs

The primary day and employment delivery system in most States is the Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP). These programs are typically not for profit entities that frequently provide a range of services and supports to persons with disabilities. Many of these CRPs offer employment and training services including non-work facility-based and community-based services as well as sheltered employment and integrated employment (see Appendix B for definition of these terms). The ICI has for more than 20 years collected data on the employment services and supports provided to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities nationally. These data show that on average the CRPs serve somewhat over 170 (67 percent serving less than 200 individuals) persons with disabilities with most (about 80 percent) persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (Inge et al., 2009). About one in five persons served are in integrated employment settings with the remainder in facility-based work and non-work as well as community-based non-work settings (Butterworth et al., 2011). In a current study of CRPs nationally, the ICI has identified a potential list of 12,307 CRPs and has randomly selected 4,000 to survey. Of this number and as a result of our initial outreach it has been determined that about 25 percent of the original list are programs that no longer exist or are not providing employment services. Given this, we are anticipating that there are about 9,250 CRPs nationally. Once this study is completed, in several months, added details of the nature of CRPs and the services and outcomes provided will be available.

The primary purchaser of the CRP services is the State Developmental Disability agency. In response to the interest on the part of the State DD agencies to see an increase in the number of persons served entering integrated employment many States are adopting the guiding principles of employment first. Twenty State DD agencies now belong to the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN), a joint program of the ICI and the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disability Services (NASDDDS). This annual membership organization allows the 20 member States to focus their interests and learn from each other as to effective policies, procedures and practices that each of the members is doing that might be able to be adopted by a member State. The training and technical assistance provided by ICI and NASDDDS as well as the policy efforts are focused around increasing the labor force participation rates for persons served by the State DD system.

As a result of the SELN activities over the past 6 years, a number of practices have been identified that support increased employment emphasis at the State level. Through the provision of technical assistance to the CRPs more effective services leading to competitive integrated employment are being encouraged. Other efforts of the SELN address issues of State policies and contractual language that should be adopted to encourage changes in the provision of services by CRPs. SELN has adopted a framework for employment including: (1) mission and goals, (2) identification of champions for employment at the State and local levels, (3) funding mechanisms and contracts with providers emphasizing employment as the preferred outcome, (4) training and technical assistance, (5) collaboration and outreach to other employment and training stakeholders, (6) flexibility in use of funds and (7) data collection and reporting (Hall, Butterworth, Winsor, Gilmore, Metzel, 2007). It is adherence to these seven areas that has assisted the member State in moving toward a more concentrated focus on employment as the primary or preferred outcome for the clients served.

Several States are now changing the outcomes of the services that they are purchasing and expecting that the contractors (in most instances CRPs) will be able to provide services to clients that will lead to integrated employment and not a continuation of facility-based work and non-work services. States are offering training and technical assistance to these providers to change the way that they have been offering services and assisting the programs to convert their services to meet the contractual interests of the State DD agency. In addition to the training and TA offered some States are exploring incentives and differential reimbursement struc-

tures for competitive integrated employment outcomes. What is apparent is that the clearer the message about the outcomes the clearer the realization of the desired outcome.

C. Those in Employment but not Full-Time or Needing to Change

As the data have shown for those individuals who are in competitive integrated employment the earnings while at or above the minimum wage are often low in total as the number of hours worked is in the 15-hour per week range typically. There is a growing interest in encouraging accessing jobs that are closer to full-time and also supporting job advancement for persons who are currently served in competitive integrated employment. Job placement for many persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities is not the end of a process but the beginning of the career. There will be occasions when assistance will be needed to advance in a job, increase hours, change jobs, adapt to workplace changes in tasks or structures or just for a job change. The strategy for accessing those services should not be a reapplication but rather a continuation of services and supports without interruption or delay. For those individuals who are eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services postemployment services would be available immediately and prior to the time of crisis. For those in the DD system similar services should be available. Such services may be able to be funded through waivers, State resources, VR or employment and training resources. The need for rapid response and immediate support is essential.

As in the case of the pathway to employment being facilitated by postsecondary opportunities this same pathway may be an avenue to job advancement for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Postsecondary options can be self-funded, funded though VR or even funded through the place of employment. These options should be considered as we look at how to support the individual with a disability in developing his or her career path.

Question 2. Barriers to Employment: What are the barriers to employment for persons with disabilities?

Answer 2. The barriers to employment can be systemic in nature and/or unique to the individual. As has been noted earlier there are some clear indications that the current high unemployment rates have made the employment of persons with disabilities more challenging. What has also been noted is that the national demographics are all pointing to a shortage of workers in the coming decade.

One of the systemic barriers to employment is the strategies that have and continue to be utilized to find jobs for persons with disabilities. While studies have documented that the family and friend network is a very effective strategy in finding employment for persons without disabilities, this network is not utilized as often for persons with disabilities. Additionally, with the massive changes in technology the advertisement of job openings is more often through the Internet than word of mouth or print. The capacity to search electronically all Web pages and create lists of job openings sorted by knowledge, skills and abilities is already in use in some labor sectors. The reliance on cold calls, personal network and print searches are no longer the primary ways that employers utilize to identify or reach potential employees, they are using the Internet and on-line job systems. It is crucial that the job developmental efforts of the employment and training systems (public and private) embrace the technology that exists and more aggressively match individual interests and skills to labor market demands.

There are a number of other barriers to employment that according to Migliore et al., 2009) can be grouped into seven categories: (1) long-term placement, (2) safety, (3) work skills, (4) social environment, (5) transportation, (6) agency support, (7) disability benefits and (8) systems of service. This list outlines many of the challenges that persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities face when considering employment. However, it should also be noted, as was stated earlier, expectation can play a significant role in employment. For some individuals the expectation of employment as a realistic outcome, particularly those who are responsible to the transition process and the employment and training activities, can seriously impact employment outcomes. Other challenges are the limited expertise among staff in schools and CRPs in understanding effective practices in identifying employment options, making job matches and supporting individuals using natural supports as much as possible. There is a considerable training and technical assistance effort that is needed at both the school and adult service levels.

As noted by Migliore, et al., 2008 some of the concerns about safety and consistency in work schedules are among the top tier of concerns for families. In certain families where both parents are working or in those settings where the individual with intellectual and developmental disabilities is residing in a community resi-

dence there are concerns about working second shifts, part-time employment and job transition that can cause providers to discourage employment. Parental concerns about harassment, bulling and risks to independent travel can all raise concerns and apprehensions on the part of families. Another major concern is the loss of friends and the apprehension about meeting new people and making new friends for persons with disabilities when entering work.

Some of the more systemic concerns include work skills and the perception that the tasks will be too difficult. Often when there is a problem with the skills and tasks required this is reflective of an inadequate job match. When job accommodations and job modifications are made seldom is the level of work skills an issue for persons with a disability in the work setting. In some instances there may be occasions when job tasks will change or new technology or procedures are introduced and as a result there will be some need for training and retraining but in many instances this can be accomplished by the company and in others with the assistance of an employment training specialist.

A common concern involves transportation and the lack of adequate transportation for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities to get to employment. A number of studies have considered this barrier and while it is present do not feel that this was a primary concern for many (West, Revell & Wehman, 1998). Often the issue of transportation is the identification of local resources, either public or private that can assist. In some instances the issue of transportation may restrict some job areas but this appears to be less of a challenge for those in urban and suburban areas.

Agency support reflects both a lack of flexibility in providing necessary supports as well as limitations in the skill level of the personnel who are to provide supports. There have been a number of studies identifying the level of expertise of staff in the employment support areas. As was noted earlier, for many there is not a great deal of time spent in the job development process and many staff feel uncomfortable in being the sole source of support for the consumer in a work setting. This issue is tied more to the lack of skills training expertise on the part of the staff as opposed to availability of staff supports.

The fear of loss of benefits has been often raised by staff, families and consumers. While there are a number of work incentives that are available (Plans for Achieving Self Sufficiency [PASS], Impairment Related Work Expenses [IRWE], 1619(a) and 1619(b)) not all of these apply to all SSA beneficiaries. The inconsistency in SSDI and SSI benefits and incentives has long served to make the decision to consider employment complex for many. In addition to the cash and health care benefits, concerns about loss of housing, food stamps and other benefits must be dealt with. The attempt to utilize benefits counselors has begun to address some of these concerns but there remains a great deal of misunderstanding of the availability of benefits and the impact that earnings will have on individual benefits.

Question 3. What policy conclusions should we make toward the goal of increasing employment?

Answer 3. Policy considerations are necessary not only at the Federal level but the State and local levels as well. The following offer some suggestions as to policy changes that could be considered that would enhance the labor force participation by persons with development disabilities.

A. At the Federal Level

With the *passage of the Workforce Investment Act and correspondingly the Vocational Rehabilitation Act*, the role of transition for students with disabilities will clearly be a focus for VR. The emphasis on facilitating the movement of students with disabilities into employment and away from sheltered work or non-work programs will be reinforced by the decision more than 10 years ago by VR to not count sheltered employed as an outcome for the rehabilitation system. The engagement of VR in the schools and the creating of a more effective relationship between VR and schools will be essential as VR assumes more of the responsibility for transition. Identification of *effective collaborations between VR and education and the development of model demonstration to replicate those practices in a select number of States* will be an effective way of scaling up the VR role in the transition process.

Both youth and adults with developmental disabilities can benefit from the *programs available through the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration*. The considerable investment in youth services through summer employment and part-time work while in school can play a central role in providing youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities an opportunity to have a real work experience. Such an experience can offer a chance for the student to develop more specific work interest and a better understanding of how he or she relates to

co-workers and managers in a real work setting. For the adult with intellectual and developmental disabilities having access to the resources at the One Stop can offer a link to labor market information and job openings that may not be available through other programs. *The involvement of the youth with One Stops can also be part of the transition process from school to work.* Data show that youth with disabilities who participate in ETA youth programs perform as well as youth without disabilities. Increasing the access to and enrollment in these programs by youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities can serve to expand employment options for such youth.

While the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) has its primary focus national service and volunteerism, with the passage of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America law, the opportunities for national services have expanded considerably. CNCS has and continues to support increased access to national service by persons with disabilities through the National Service Inclusion Project at the Institute for Community Inclusion. A second project, Next STEP, supported by CNCS, is demonstrating how national service can be a pathway to employment for persons with disabilities. The opportunities to learn through national service are many. The skills acquired through national services match what research tells us are factors that contribute to success in employment for persons with disabilities. *National service can and should be an option for those students who are transitioning from school to employments as well.*

The State Developmental Disabilities agencies have relied heavily upon the reimbursement for services provided through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Through the use of waivers States have been able to encourage the development of supported employment services for persons served through the State DD systems. Some States have aggressively embraced the presumption of employability and the adoptions of policies, procedures and practices that reflect that employment should be the focus of the services offered to all consumers. The challenge in many States is the need to create additional incentives for the community rehabilitation providers to focus more attention and effort on assisting persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities in entering and remaining in employment. Through an enhanced reimbursement rate to State agencies reflecting an increased rate of reimbursement for persons who are served in integrated employment, initial data are showing that considerable *savings to the State as well as CMS can be realized over a 10-year period for one individual served ($42,000 for the State and $18,000 for CMS per individual over a 10-year period—see Appendix C).* Incentives provided to States through an enhanced Federal Financial Participation rate can yield increased employment rates as well as savings to both the State and CMS.

Continue to dedicate resources in Higher Education that will support the accessing of postsecondary education leading to employment by students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In 2010 the U.S. DOE funded 27 model demonstration programs and a national technical assistance center involving 24 States as part of the development and expansion of postsecondary education for students with intellectual disabilities (authorized by the Amendments in the Higher Education Opportunities Act (HEOA) of 2008). Such a nascent program must be clearly identified, developed and not merged into a larger program as proposed by the President's budget. Should this attempt to increase the postsecondary opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities be placed within a larger program the focus of the program on students with intellectual disabilities will most assuredly be lost.

This effort has also been supported by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities in their support of Think College, a project that provided mini-grants to University Centers on Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs) to support State level strategic planning, development and implementation of postsecondary education options. Ongoing and cross agency support of this effort and an identification of Institutions of Higher Education currently or interested in supporting postsecondary options for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities supports a more comprehensive transition as well as work preparation effort for these students.

Consistency with Social Security Work Incentives and streamlining the Ticket to Work incentives: There are clear inconsistencies at the Federal level regarding the expectation of persons with disabilities to become part of the labor force in their adult years. Some of these are reflective of the eligibility determination processes for Social Security Benefits as well as health care benefits. The criteria for eligibility for cash and health care benefits are closely tied to the documentation that the applicant is not able to work and will not be able to work over an extended or perpetual period of time. Once the determination of eligibility for benefits is made, it is highly unlikely that individuals with disabilities will consider work given that the

consequence to having earnings above Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) may or are perceived to place those benefits in jeopardy.

While SSA has attempted to support return or entry to work for beneficiaries, the complexity of rules relating to benefits for the individual are considerable. Compounding this fact is that there are different rules for those on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and those on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). Many attempts have been made to have the use of work incentives and the rules that guide their use be consistent across all beneficiaries. Such a policy change would create a great deal more incentive for the SSDI beneficiary to consider return to work. The role of the Ticket, a concept with merit but again complex in its implementation, should also be streamlined so that providers and others interested in supporting the return to work for persons with disabilities could benefit from the payments available through the ticket.

B. At the State Level

Not all policy change will occur at the Federal level. At the State level there is a clear need to have a consistent message that there must be a presumption that persons with disabilities can work. States are now developing policies, procedures and practices that place the focus of services and supports on employment first and that the services and programs provided should have as their primary or preferred outcome competitive integrated employment. The end result of employment first will be an increase in the labor force participation rate for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities *having wages that are at or above the minimum wage, benefits that are consistent with other workers* in the place of employment, provide opportunities for *interaction on a continuous basis with co-workers* without disabilities, have a *potential for advancement* and employed preferably *full-time*. The adoption of the employment first guidelines at the State level will influence the nature of the services purchased by the State DD agency and also send a clear message to the provider system as to what outcomes are desired. As was noted earlier changes in reimbursement rates, reporting requirements and data collection can serve to reinforce the States adoption of employment first as the base of its practices and programs.

For many States the delivery system for day and employment services is the not-for-profit community-based organizations, typically referred to as community rehabilitation providers. Many offer a range of services and are seeking ways to increase the employment rates for the persons served. Currently for those in facility-based programs, earning is extremely limited. *In States that have been successful in adopting employment first or a similar policy they have also coupled this effort with supports for training and technical assistance to these providers.* For some CRPs the adopting of an employment focus is a considerable change in the way that they do business. For those interested in changing or converting their service from a facility-based service to an employment and training service leading to placement in a competitive integrated jobs, training of staff, changes in practices and development of new staff roles and areas of emphasis is essential. *Resources at the Federal level to support program conversions can facilitate the adoption of employment first polices and assist the provider system in changing how they provide services.*

An area for considerable change at the State and local level is in the area of transition from school to employment and or postsecondary education to employment. For many students the final years of school are often colored by watching classmates graduate, continuing the same or similar curricula and little discussion about roles in adult life including community living and employment. *The process of transition must be one that involves many resources, begins early and builds upon the inclusive educational experiences that many students with disabilities have now in school.* The period between the adult eligibility for services and the educational entitlement to services is often a time of concern for both the student and the family. The redefining of the final 4 years of entitlement to include options that prepare the student to enter the workforce may include an experience in a more age-appropriate postsecondary setting, real work and or volunteer experiences and a focus on developing some employment and job skills while in school; in the summer and also in the transition years. *Transition should be viewed as a multiyear planning and learning process, one in which the student will gain more experience about employment, independence and also experience a sense of accomplishment.* As was noted many students who are nearing the end of their high school experiences are anticipating entry into the labor market. The preparation for this should be a restructuring of the transition planning and implementation process so that resources at the postsecondary level (2- and 4-year institutions of higher education as well as technical schools), national service and part-time employment can be part to the learning and serve as the gateway into employment. *The goal of transition should*

not be into a non-work or segregated setting but, as the student has experienced, an inclusive setting that has the option for employment, earnings and social inclusion as the end of the transition effort.

As was noted in Commissioner Lewis testimony "what gets measured gets done, what gets measured and fed back gets done well, and what gets rewarded gets repeated." Data collection at the State level can serve as both a way of documenting progress as well as providing information to consumers, families, State agencies and others about the outcomes of programs that are serving persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Data collection is essential to documenting and measuring change and also identifying practices that are effective.* It is crucial that States be able to document outcomes of services and to report on the rates of labor force participation by persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities served at the local, State and national levels.

What is clear in a number of studies noted in this testimony as well as in other studies is a critical *need to train staff in the schools to be more effective at transition planning and in the community rehabilitation providers* regarding strategies for job development, job analysis, job modifications and on-site supports. The level of skill in the personnel who are charged with identifying, accessing and supporting persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities is limited. Most pre-service training efforts at the teacher preparation levels do not address issues of transition and transition planning and in the adult services most job development and employment training specialists have little if any initial or on-going training. *If we are to be successful in supporting persons with disabilities in accessing and maintaining employment then staff skill level must be increased.* Training in transition planning and transition services for educators should be incorporated into pre-service training as well as professional development training for educators at the secondary levels. Some States are identifying transition training competencies and moving toward certification or credentialing in transition planning for educators.

At the community rehabilitation provider level, training of staff at a State and program level is essential in the areas of job development, job assessments, employment customization and job supports. The pending development of a College of Employment Supports that will parallel the College of Direct Support Professionals at the end of this year will serve to increase the capacity of staff in community rehabilitation programs who are charged with assisting persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities in entering employment. *This training should be considered as a service that is supported through training monies in Vocational Rehabilitation, DOL Employment and Training, the Administration on Developmental Disabilities and CMS.*

Engaging employers in both the training and hiring processes, while not a public policy issue, can be an effective way of addressing both the employer's future workforce needs as well as to access the natural environment of the workplace for training. *Employers can serve as a training resource offering internship and apprenticeship options for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.* Utilizing the natural setting of the workplace as a training environment can create a very strong training experience for persons with disabilities. Employers in many industries have used the natural setting as a training environment through apprentice and internship opportunities for persons without disabilities. Similar strategies can be used to train persons with disabilities in natural work settings.

Technology has played a role in facilitating a stronger match between a job and an individual with a disability. Technology from a labor market perspective is playing a more central role in job development and applicant and employer matching. The traditional approaches of job development, identification of labor market needs and linking clients to a potential job has been highly labor intensive and not reflective of the way employers seek employees. *The use of a real-time demand data system will create immediate matches of the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) of the job applicant to the KSAs as presented in the job postings.* The capacity to identify all job openings in a designated area (local, sub-state, State, regional or national) on a daily basis will assure that the industry demands are current. *The ability to sort experiences, interests and preferences of the clients served and the matching of those to the needs on the demand side has not been done to date.* The development of the strategies as well as the implementation guidelines, policies and practices can be done on a national level and will facilitate adoption at local, State and national levels and thereby streamline the job development process for providers and persons with disabilities.

CONCLUSION

The challenges are many as are the opportunities but it is clear that our expectations and practices need to be realigned and the approaches to supporting persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and for that fact all persons with disabilities, will yield gains not only for the individual and the public sector but the employer as well. The changes in the labor market in the next decade offer a significant opportunity for persons with disabilities to take their rightful place as employees and contributing members to society in the same proportions as do those without disabilities.

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ATTACHMENT.—APPENDIX A: EMPLOYMENT FIRST GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Employment first has evolved over the past 5 or more years and has been defined as:

> . . . policies, procedures and practices that embrace the presumption of employability focusing resources and efforts on supporting access to and maintenance of integrated employment by persons with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities.

APPENDIX A: EMPLOYMENT FIRST PRINCIPLES

Employment First: is a service delivery strategy regarding the use of public funding for persons with disabilities, including persons with the most significant disabilities, which effectuates on a systemic basis the principles set out below. The

strategy supports the primary or preferred employment outcome of competitive, integrated employment for persons with disabilities including those with the most significant disabilities. The strategy includes the issuance and implementation of policies, practices, and procedures promulgated through Federal and State statutes, regulations, and/or operational procedures, including policies, practices, and procedures requiring that systems have a statutory responsibility to provide services that align their reimbursement practices, policies and guidance to incentivize, encourage and fund services and supports that lead to competitive, integrated employment.

The **Employment First** strategy shall be implemented consistent with the following principles:

1. Disability is a natural part of the human experience that in no way diminishes the right of individuals with disabilities, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, to achieve the four goals of disability policy—equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency.
2. Self-determination and informed consumer choice are essential elements in all programs and service options.
3. Work for pay (employment) is a valued activity both for individuals and society. Employment provides both tangible and intangible benefits. Employment helps people achieve independence and economic self-sufficiency. Employment also gives people purpose, dignity, self-esteem, and a sense of accomplishment and pride.
4. Work is physical or mental effort directed toward production of goods, the provision of services, or the accomplishment of a goal.
5. All individuals, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, should enjoy every opportunity to be employed in the workforce, pursue careers, and engage actively in the economic marketplace.
6. Individuals with disabilities, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, should be empowered to attain the highest possible wage with benefits and be employed in the most integrated setting appropriate, consistent with their interests, strengths, priorities, abilities, and capabilities.
7. Individuals with disabilities, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, should enjoy a presumption that they can achieve competitive, integrated employment with appropriate services and supports.
8. Employment-related training services and supports should be provided to assist individuals with the most significant disabilities to become employed with a priority for competitive, integrated employment.
9. Based on information from the employment marketplace, employment-related training services and supports should target areas of present and future workforce growth. Input from employers is critical to effectively direct employment-related training and services.
10. Service providers are expected to use best, promising, emerging practices with respect to the provision of employment-related services and supports.
11. Technical assistance should be available to service providers for the purpose of expanding and improving their capacity to provide supported employment, customized employment, and other services and supports that will enhance opportunities for competitive, integrated employment consistent with best, promising and emerging practices.
12. Supports should be provided for as long as needed with a focus on use of natural occurring supports as much as possible.
13. There is a need for a seamless system of services, supports and funding involving all agencies responsible to provide services if we are to increase options for competitive, integrated employment. The seamless system must include the establishment of infrastructures and resource allocation (staff time and funding) that reflect the preference for competitive, integrated employment.
14. Exploitation of workers with disabilities is abhorrent and workers should enjoy meaningful and effective protections against exploitation.

APPENDIX B: DEFINITIONS OF DAY AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Integrated Employment

Integrated employment services are provided in a community setting and involve paid employment of the participant. Specifically integrated employment includes: *competitive employment, individual-supported employment, group-supported employment, and self-employment supports*.

- Competitive- and individual-supported employment refers to individuals who work in an individual job, typically as an employee of the community business.

• Group-supported employment refers to groups of individuals who work in integrated job settings typically as part of an enclave or mobile work crew. In general group supported employment applies only for group sizes of eight or fewer.

• Self-employment refers to small business ownership that is controlled or owned by the individual. It would not include a business that is owned by an organization or provider.

Community-Based Non-Work

Community-based non-work includes all services that are focused on supporting people with disabilities to access community activities in settings where most people do not have disabilities and does not involve paid employment of the participant.

• Activities include general community participation, volunteer experiences, or using community recreation and leisure resources. The majority of an individual's time is spent in the community.

• This service category is often referred to as Community Integration or Community Participation Services.

Facility-Based Work

Facility-based work includes all employment services which occur in a setting where the majority of employees have a disability.

• These activities occur in settings where continuous job-related supports and supervision are provided to all workers with disabilities.

• This service category is typically referred to as a Sheltered Workshop, Work Activity Center, or Extended Employment program.

Facility-Based Non-Work

Facility-based non-work includes all services that are located in a setting where the majority of participants have a disability and does not involve paid employment of the participant.

• These activities include but are not limited to: psychosocial skills development, activities of daily living, recreation, and/or professional therapies (e.g., occupational, physical, and speech therapies). Individuals may participate in community activities, but the majority of an individual's time is spent in the program setting.

• Continuous supports and supervision are provided to all participants with disabilities.

This service category is also referred to as Day Activity, Day Habilitation, and Medical Day Care programs.

APPENDIX C: COST SAVINGS

IMPLICATION OF ENHANCED FFP RATE FOR INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR STATES

The following outlines possible implication for an enhanced Federal Financial Participation rate of 90 percent of costs incurred for States as consumers enter and remain in integrated employment as opposed to the annual estimated 50 percent FFP. There are a number of simple assumptions made for purposes of illustration. These assumptions include: (1) the average cost of facility-based employment on an annual basis is $10,000 (no adjustment taken for annual increases in this figure) and (2) there is on average a $2,000 annual reduction in the cost of supporting an individual consumer in integrated employment until this reduction reaches a minimum of $2,000 annually. There are no estimates made on the return on investment (ROI) through taxes paid or reduction in Social Security payments as a result of earnings. These measures will clearly increase the net savings in public resource should they be included. The totals presented reflect the savings per individual.

Years	Facility Based annual costs [3]	Integrated Employment Annual Costs [2]	Cost Savings [1]
1	$10,000	$10,000	$0
2	10,000	8,000	2,000
3	10,000	6,000	4,000
4	10,000	4,000	6,000
5	10,000	2,000	8,000
Sub totals	**50,000**	**30,000**	**20,000**

Years	Facility Based annual costs [3]	Integrated Employment Annual Costs [2]	Cost Savings [1]
CMS (90 percent FFP for IE only)	**25,000**	**27,000**	**(2,000)**
State	**25,000**	**3,000**	**22,000**
6	10,000	2,000	8,000
7	10,000	2,000	8,000
8	10,000	2,000	8,000
9	10,000	2,000	8,000
10	10,000	2,000	8,000
Sub totals	**50,000**	**10,000**	**40,000**
CMS (50 percent FFP)	**25,000**	**5,000**	**20,000**
State	**25,000**	**5,000**	**20,000**
10 Yr Total	**100,000**	**40,000**	**60,000**
CMS	**50,000**	**32,000**	**18,000**
State	**50,000**	**8,000**	**42,000**

[1] Amount of reduction in costs between costs of integrated employment and facility-based employment based on one individual entering and remaining in integrated competitive employment.
[2] Total costs to CMS and States utilizing a 90 percent FFP rate. This rate is used for years 1 thru 5 only. The regular FFP rate (estimated on average to be 50 percent) is utilized in years 6 through 10.
[3] Average annual costs of facility-based employment with no enhanced FFP rate. No annual adjustment in costs from year to year are taken here.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I think that's a good summation, Dr. Kiernan, and maybe I'll start with you, sir, 5-minute rounds here.

Oh, I'm sorry. Did you have to preside?

Senator FRANKEN. Mr. Chairman, I just have to preside at noon, so I think I'm good.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, OK.

Senator FRANKEN. I think if you did 5 and the Ranking Member did 5 and——

The CHAIRMAN. You're next.

Senator FRANKEN. I did 5——

The CHAIRMAN. You'd be OK. All right. Fine. We'll move ahead that way then. I was ready to yield to you my time right now, but that's OK.

Senator FRANKEN. Want me to take it? I'll take it.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. You know, you better take it, because you've got to get over and preside.

Senator FRANKEN. Let's talk about—some more about whether I should take it.

The CHAIRMAN. Oh, OK.

[Laughter.]

For 5 minutes.

Senator FRANKEN. You know, I have to admit, I had three hearings happening at one time, and last night, Mr. Egan, I read your testimony and I had to be here. In reading it last night, it was spectacular, and then in hearing and seeing you give it, equally spectacular. And so I just had to be here.

It seems like one of the big issues here is the difference between sheltered workshops and competitive, integrated employment, and I guess I'll open it for everyone, but I wanted to ask you, Mr. Egan, because you're the one—you're in a fully competitive, integrated employment situation, as you testified so eloquently.

A couple of months ago, I visited a community rehabilitation program in Minnesota called AccessAbility, and I was just blown away by the positive energy from people in the room who were happy to have a job. They were in what I call a sheltered workshop.

Do you have strong opinions on—and then I'll open it to everyone, but I'd like to ask you first, Mr. Egan. Do you think that by being in a competitive, integrated employment that you just get a lot more out of it?

Mr. EGAN. I could say that I do get a lot out of it. And if you really do see the people behind me are probably the real examples of why this is very important to them because it provides opportunity for them and to grow within the company and to hold a job.

Senator FRANKEN. And, clearly, you have done that and you have moved up and you are evaluated along with everybody else, you're brought into meetings.

Your mentor, tell me about him a little bit.

Mr. EGAN. Well, in my talk, I mentioned—his name is Greg and he has been quite a bit of a role model for me. I know there are many others like him, but what strikes me the most is that he doesn't mind joking around with me a little, so I don't mind that.

It really shows that—when you have an individual working in a corporate company, you want to make sure that there's someone there that can offer guidance and support.

Senator FRANKEN. And someone joking around with you shows that he respects your sense of humor, that he says that you get what I'm saying.

Mr. EGAN. Absolutely. He's not here, but I can tell you he's probably hearing this hearing about now.

Senator FRANKEN. And would you say he's funny? When he's joking around with you, is he funny?

Mr. EGAN. Is this for the record?

[Laughter.]

Senator FRANKEN. Yes. No. We'll strike it.

[Laughter.]

Mr. EGAN. Thank you.

Senator FRANKEN. OK. You don't have to answer on that one.

Mr. Kiernan, do you think his mentor is funny? No.

When I went to this setting, the sheltered workshop, I was blown away by the positive atmosphere, and what I read was only a third of people with cognitive disabilities are employed. Obviously, we want to get as many employment opportunities as we can. Is there a place for sheltered workshops or do you believe that all employment should be in competitive, integrated settings?

Mr. KIERNAN. Let me answer it in a couple of ways for you. As we talked about regarding Employment First, there should be a presumption of employability for everyone. And so the presumption is that, in fact, everybody can work, and I think that's the starting point. That's the sense of expectation that we had talked about before.

In the longer term, would we have people who are in sheltered employment? One of the things that—and I think Mr. Egan had commented on it—the advantages for him are the advantages of not just necessarily getting a paycheck, but also having the opportunity to have friends and interactions and have, frankly, the inter-

actions that he just had with you and the sparring back and forth, but having a set of relationships and associations, that's what we're looking for within the competitive labor market.

What we would find is that the difference in earnings, for the most part, between those folks in segregated or sheltered employment and those folks in competitive, integrated employment is fourfold. Those are data from the National Core Indicators that show that, in fact, there's much more of an opportunity for people to earn more money, to be more part of the social fabric.

Now, I haven't answered your very specific question: Is there a place for sheltered workshops in the long-term?

The State of Washington was the State that, in fact, is demonstrating that 65 percent of the people who are served by that State agency are in integrated employment, and their focus was really on getting to that goal by facilitating and helping the providers move to a point that they offered those services and they allowed people to advance and to move into employment.

So their strategy, which is a sound strategy, was to take the system and move it forward. How they did that was by changing some of the contractual language that they use and saying, "This is what we want to purchase." These are the types of expectations. What we talked about before. This is what the students who are coming out and graduating from school are asking for, I fully expect a job.

This is what 63 percent of the participants in the study who worked in workshops are saying, "I expect to go to work." And so that's what we're seeing—go for those expectations, can they work.

Now, the other question is that the older worker in the workforce is really changing the way the industry is supporting workers in general and maintaining productivity. Some of the strategies that are used to support people with intellectual disabilities in the workplace are the same strategies or very similar strategies that are used to support the older worker.

So is it a foreign place to do that? No, it's not really. In fact, for many industries—I'm sure that Randy Lewis would probably be able to support this in his experiences with the diversity of workers who are in the workplace—the expectations are that a victory would be when the labor force participation rate for people is the same, which is 71.9 percent.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator FRANKEN. OK. Mr. Chairman, thank you for letting me go first. I really appreciate it, and thank you to the Ranking Member as well, Senator Enzi.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Enzi.

Senator ENZI. Well, I want to thank everybody on this panel for serving and Mr. Egan for stealing the show.

[Laughter.]

Mr. EGAN. Well, what can I say.

[Laughter.]

Senator ENZI. You were an outstanding witness, but we do have somebody on the panel from Wyoming, so I've got to direct some questions that way—and just recently the governor signed a bill that consolidated the Department of Employment and the Workforce Services and Ms. Evans has been made the head of that.

Congratulations.

Can you tell me a little bit about how this consolidation will make it a little more user-friendly for individuals with intellectual disabilities?

Ms. EVANS. Thank you, Senator Enzi. That's an excellent question, and, yes, we're going through many changes in Wyoming combining our Department of Employment and our Department of Workforce Services.

The goal here is to be accessible to our constituents, and there is confusion, and that carries over into our disabled population. How do you actually access the services?

We have just recently reorganized the agency to really serve two main purposes, clients and businesses on one hand and compliance on the other. And so how can we separate those services so that they can be integrated and work together even within our own agency? And I think there's much important work that can be done even within our own agencies at a very grassroots level to make our services accessible.

For instance, our Vocational Rehabilitation Division will now work exceptionally close with our Employment Services Division and with our Unemployment Insurance Benefits Division, so that their policies, their procedures they overlap, they understand what each other do, so clients don't have to know, Oh, I bet I qualify for these services. I should go here. You can go anywhere and then we can direct you to the place that you need to be.

That approach, I think, will really serve all clients, not only our clients who are challenged with a disability. I think we will see some very significant results from this effort.

Senator ENZI. I think with your background that you're the perfect person to coordinate all of that, too. So I do think it'll make a significant difference.

Can you tell me a little bit about the partnership that you helped form with Lowe's?

Ms. EVANS. Absolutely. This is an example of really leveraging resources from the public and the private sector. We're using our relationship with our U.S. BLN affiliate, the Wyoming BLN, that receives partial funding through our Vocational Rehabilitation Division and also accessing a State-funded program called the Workforce Development Training Fund, which our legislature put into place to support businesses either to train employees before they're actually hired, which we call pre-hire, or for incumbent-worker training for employees who just need to upgrade their skills.

This particular pool of money was our pre-hire money and it was used to support the training and services on site at the Lowe's distribution center. So there's actually an individual that's working on site at Lowe's to not only work with the individuals who are selected to be employed through this program, but then, as I mentioned, be trained—train the trainer. In other words, train employees at Lowe's to be able to problem solve long-term.

So as issues come up—and Mr. Egan mentioned having that support there on site through a mentor or some form. And so these train-the-trainer programs will enable individuals to problem solve long after that specific job coach or the person that's funded through the grant program is gone, and I think that's the key to

providing some long-term mechanism to support the employment into the future.

Senator ENZI. Thank you, and I will have questions for all of you. I'll have to submit some of them in writing because of the amount of time that we have.

Mr. Lewis, I want to thank you for your presentation and the efforts you've made with your company to get them to do more, and I like your goal of 20 percent inclusion in employment. Can you share some of the challenges with that and any Federal law or regulation that interferes with what you're trying to do?

Mr. LEWIS. Well, I wouldn't pretend to be an expert on policy. I think that's—Our job is to open up opportunities. But what I see in our business community is fear and sometimes it's well-intentioned laws and policies that tend to get in the way.

Can I hire a deaf person to run a forklift? Some people interpret regs to say I cannot do that. Can I advertise that I'm actually looking for people with disabilities? Can we do that without discriminating against other groups? Can I say we want to hire 20 percent? Is that a quota? On and on and on.

I think what happens is people inside companies, people who go into human resources, people who go into law for altruistic motives, to help other people, find themselves in a position to see the risk in hiring people with disabilities. So some of the things that we put out there with well intention are misinterpreted and get in the way.

But, on the other hand, what businesses need—on the positive, the acts of commission, I think, public policy can engender is help us find candidates, help us train candidates, because businesses first see, Gee whiz, I can't spend a penny more to hire a person with a disability if it costs me more to train them, if it costs me more to find them.

Most employers have the attitude, I'm open if they'll just come. I will build this field of dreams and I'll be completely open, and then they wonder why nobody shows up.

There are invisible walls that we have built around our companies whether it be filling out the applications, whether it be access to be able to get there at work during hours that we need people to work or off shifts or how people interview or—well, on and on and on, but the biggest fear is people with disabilities can't do the job, and we've got to set examples of that.

Now, I will comment on the sheltered workshop. I'm kind of like the pastor who is asked by his parishioner, "Is tithing 10 percent of gross or net?" And I'm like that pastor who said, Either.

There's lots of emotion around the sheltered workshops. I think there's a place for sheltered workshops, just like I think there is for employment in businesses like ours. I think there are people who are in sheltered workshops who would work very well out there in the commercial world and we need to help them get there.

But if it comes to a choice for my son sitting at home by himself or being in a sheltered workshop, it's an easy decision. It's not an either/or.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I thank all of you for your expertise, and we'll be calling on that a lot more so that we can get this right as soon as possible. Thank you.

I think Senator Blumenthal has to leave also shortly, so I'll recognize Senator Blumenthal.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR BLUMENTHAL

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I particularly want to thank the Chairman and the Ranking Member, Senator Enzi, for their leadership on this issue, and I look forward to working on the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as expected in this Congress.

I don't need to reemphasize—and I won't because I'm really here to listen to you—the importance of this issue, and especially its importance at a time of economic stress when higher unemployment rates exist among folks with disabilities.

I want to thank all of you for being here, but particularly Mr. Egan, and I was going to ask you whether you think Senator Franken is funny. But since he's gone I won't ask you to answer that.

The CHAIRMAN. Make that for the record, too.

[Laughter.]

Senator BLUMENTHAL. But I want to thank you for being here, sir, and for the model that you've provided to so many others. I join Senator Franken in saying that your testimony is spectacular. But as powerful as it is, I also found extraordinarily powerful the testimony that Mr. Lewis offered.

In reading it, I am just tremendously impressed by the lessons that you offer to other employers. I want to thank you for the distribution center that you have in Windsor, CT, which has employed 40 percent of its workforce with people with disabilities.

And I was especially impressed by the line in your testimony that reads,

> "It turned out that most of the steps we took to make work easier and more productive for people with disabilities made work easier and more productive for all employees,"

and that the special accommodations, as you called them, for people with disabilities, for the most part, cost less than $25, and, as you say, is money spent wisely to result in a successful employee.

So my question to you is—and speaking to the other employers of the world—if they cared nothing about the humanitarian or the moral issues here, and they said to you, It was very powerful testimony, but my shareholders care only about the economics, what would you say to them?

Mr. LEWIS. Strictly speaking from the hard-line capitalist view of enriching our shareholders, I would say we have proof that it's dependable, safe and high performing, and it's an untapped resource.

But also talking to the capitalist side that we are also citizens and our shareholders want us to be responsible to our communities. So this is a win/win. This is not an either/or situation either. And they will benefit.

I will tell you that we have developed the best management. In those buildings with the highest percent of people with disabilities is our best management we have in our company, because they are

forced to deal with people as individuals. That has made them better managers and more effective leaders.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Blumenthal.

Mr. Lewis, Senator Blumenthal just touched on the fact that it costs about $25 per employee to do an adaptation. When we drafted the Americans With Disabilities Act, there is a portion in there that provides that employers are to provide reasonable accommodations. Then we wrote report language to lay out what we meant by reasonable accommodations.

And then we provided—and not too many people know this—we provided a tax credit of up to $5,000 for any business that has to make a modification to a workplace or to a site to accommodate accessibility for employment of people with disabilities. Not too many people know that that's still in there, the $5,000 tax. So when you say $25, that's really a minor modification.

I think it was Dr. Kiernan who said that many of the modifications that need to be made for people with intellectual disabilities, maybe physical disabilities, are the same that might apply to older workers. And so, in that context, I'm just, again, looking for your views on whether or not we need to do more in terms of this accessibility or do employers just need to look to you and to other examples of what needs to be done?

It doesn't seem like there are many resources out there for an employer—especially a small employer. You're a big employer, but a small employer—to really know what they can do and what they can access in terms of making modifications. Could you just talk a little bit about whatever kind of modifications you had to make or continue to have to make?

Mr. LEWIS. Well, I would give us a grade of maybe a B−, maybe a C+ as far as accessibility, after seeing some of the things that are being done in universal design.

We started out with trying just to make it easier for everybody. That means we limited the reach, so you didn't have to reach so far, that you didn't have to reach so high, that we had adjustable work surfaces. We eliminated the words on the screens and replaced those with graphics.

I would say that we probably could do better for people who have challenges with sight or people that are limited in wheelchairs. We could have done better on that. And that's something we've learned.

As far as your comment about knowing that there are tax credits, I think you are exactly right. People don't know, and so they put up that idea, I'm going to have to make all these accommodations. The deaf people are going to be asking for these special screens that I can't afford, and on and on. It becomes a defense mechanism against the hiring.

But I think the accommodations that are outlined in the ADA are very good. They've made us better. Certainly, we're more accessible, and it's moved us in the right direction. I think we can go further.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Egan, looking back, when you first started into the workforce, tell us a little bit about that. I mean, what did your parents think about that? I mean, how did they feel about you

going out to integrated workforce and getting into the competitive employment? What was that like when you were a younger—You're a young man now, but when you were really young, what was that like for you at that point in time?

Mr. EGAN. Well, I could tell you that it started very early in my childhood development, when I had to do family chores around the house, and because of that I was not excused because of my disability. On the contrary, that also would help you in the long run when you're looking for jobs at how to be hired or employed.

The CHAIRMAN. So your parents were very encouraging to you.

Mr. EGAN. Absolutely they were. And I think that's what all parents need to do—for their sons and daughters to do the same as well.

The CHAIRMAN. I think what I'm looking at here is the expectation of employment. And getting that we kind of come back to the sheltered workshop issue. I think Mr. Lewis is right. It's not either/or.

But there's a movement out among the disability community, and sometimes they're way ahead of us policymakers. And that is to change the presumption about employment—to change the presumption from that of, Well, you have a disability. We have low expectations. You'll just be fortunate if you can get into a sheltered workshop. We have to change that expectation to saying, Wait a minute. Everybody's got some kind of disability. Nobody can do everything. What are your abilities? How do we build on those abilities?

And the expectation is that you're going to enter the workforce. You're going to enter that competitive workforce out there. So we want to build our education system around that in our elementary and secondary education so that kids with disabilities have that expectation.

Now, I'll be honest with you, I'll bear a little bit here that I've wrestled with this myself because people said, "Well, Harkin, you might be setting people up to fail if you set expectations too high and people can't get there."

Well, I said, "You know, kids are the same." I was just saying that to Senator Enzi—I said, "Kids are the same. I don't care whether they're disabled or not, sometimes they need a good swift kick in the rear," you know, and they need to be pushed on or they will tend to seek the lowest kind of common denominator.

And so that's why I think not setting up kids to fail, but setting them up with the confidence they need and the assurance that they can achieve better things. Everyone can achieve a little bit more. Everybody can do something a little bit better. And I think we have failed in our education system and in our career opportunities to really provide that kind of stimulation to young people with disabilities.

So the disability community is moving on this. What's up to us as policymakers is to figure out how we do it on the education side—How we figure into our education system and other systems a connection to make sure that kids with disabilities have all of the basics that they need either for career or college, and then to build into our VR system and others a connection with the schools for this kind of training. Then we have to build with the private sector.

We have to get the private sector really involved in this. And thank God we have some great leaders out there in the private sector moving ahead on this.

This fall, beginning this October, Dr. Kiernan, beginning this October, states—any State that wants to implement the Olmstead Decision—I don't need to tell you all what that is, the Olmstead Decision—to provide for supportive services for people with disabilities will get a 6-percent bump-up in their FMAP.

I am predicting that a lot of States are going to do that. First of all, they have a constitutional obligation to implement Olmstead, except this court carved out and said, however, "if you can't afford to do it, we don't expect you to do it."

Well, now, with this 6-percent bump-up in FMAP, I think States will have a lot of encouragement now to really implement Olmstead, which means that a lot of people with disabilities now are going to have much higher expectations, not only in their living, but in getting to work and getting jobs. I think we have to start getting ready for that.

That's going to happen this October, and so that's why I feel strongly about both in ESEA reauthorization, and in WIA that we think about this and we try to implement policies that will get these kids ready and young people ready for competitive employment and for retraining.

We have a lot of people coming into living arrangements where they may have been in an institution and they're going to come out of that institution and they're not going to be content to sit around. They want to go out and do things. They want to do things like Mr. Egan's doing, and so we have to have the retraining, voc rehab retraining for people like that also.

To me, this is the challenge for us, and that's why I wanted to have this hearing, to kind of get the ball rolling on this to figure out what we, as policymakers, need to do to make the environment better for the private sector to know that they're going to have young people who are ready for competitive employment or people who have been retrained, who are now coming out of institutions that will be living on their own in integrated settings because of what's happening in October—in the private sector—to know that we're implementing those policies and to let the disability community know that we're moving ahead on a policy basis to make sure that that education and training is there. So that's really kind of where we're headed.

I didn't mean to go on so long, but I just thought that it was important for everyone to know here what's happening this October and what's going to happen in the year after and the year after when more and more people are going to be having access to community-based supports, supportive services.

And I think one of our witnesses, maybe the first one, said that even with the costs of supportive services, we had positive economics outcomes, even with supportive services, that for every dollar invested, we got back, I think, $1.46 or something like that, even with supportive services.

Many times, people who want to work—and I don't know—I didn't see this on your presentation that I watched on the CD, Mr. Lewis, but a lot of people with disabilities can go to work, but they

may need something in the middle of the day. They may need something where they need some support or something during the day, but if they don't have that, they can't work.

I've often told the story about my nephew, who's quadriplegic, but he has a nurse in the morning who gets him ready to go to work and then a nurse at night takes care of him, and that's all well and good. He got injured in the military, and the VA picks up those costs, but how about people that weren't injured in the military? So without those supportive services he couldn't work. And there are a lot of people that can't work without some supportive service that's out there.

I don't know if you have those kind of things in Walgreens or not, Mr. Lewis, where people who may need something during the day, may need a little bit of time off, maybe need someone to come in and help them with something during the day, if you have that kind of a situation that's confronted you.

Mr. LEWIS. I suspect—I can't cite a specific example, but I know that if that were needed, we would try to accommodate that. That was part of the thing going in, how could we have a sustainable model and do this? All people are different. There's a saying in the autism community that says once you've seen one person with autism, you've seen one person with autism.

The CHAIRMAN. That's right.

Mr. LEWIS. And that extends to all disabilities.

The CHAIRMAN. Exactly. Exactly.

Mr. EGAN. Senator, I'd like to add one comment to that.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Mr. EGAN. When I first started, I started in the Bridges Marriott Program Foundation that provides internships. So my question to you is where are the internships involved in that process?

The CHAIRMAN. Good point. We need both private-sector internships and more internships around here, too, perhaps. Is that what you're saying?

Mr. EGAN. Yes. Corporate companies could also step forward and hire interns then.

The CHAIRMAN. Very good.

Mr. EGAN. It's very rewarding.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Evans, I didn't get a chance to quiz you, but congratulations, and Wyoming is sort of a stellar example of getting people with disabilities employed. I think you are one of the top in the Nation, if I'm not mistaken, and so we look closely at what you're doing in Wyoming. Congratulations on that.

Dr. Kiernan, thank you again for all of your work in the past and giving us the data and the information we need.

Mr. Egan, it's been a delight having you here. Thank you very much for what you've added to this hearing and what you've added to our knowledge base.

Mr. Lewis, I thank you for a great example of what you've done with Walgreens. We've just got to get you Xeroxed or something.

[Laughter.]

Mr. EGAN. Maybe that could be a good company to hire people with disabilities.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. That's right. Exactly.

Well, if there's nothing else—Do any of you have anything else to add? The record will stay open for 10 days for other comments or questions from other Senators who could not be here, and, with that, the committee will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:14 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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