

DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER

The Arkansas Protection & Advocacy (P&A) System

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"To passionately assist the lives of people with disabilities through education, empowerment and protection of their legal rights."

Disability Rights Center (DRC) collaborated with the Arkansas State Department of Health and the Brain Injury Association of Arkansas to present the 2nd Annual Partners in Brain injury Conference, 2009 November 17, 2009 at the Little Rock Metro Hilton on University Ave.

Over one hundred people included individuals who sustained and survived a traumatic brain injury, their families, caregivers, case managers, medical rehabilitation professionals, physicians, nurses, social workers, attorneys, educators, policy makers, therapists, state agency personnel and other public and private service providers enjoyed a full day of training and networking. Six Continuing education units were offered in nursing, social work, public health and education.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Jeffery Goldsmith, MD, MPH, Jack Kennedy Professor at the Dept. of Family and Preventive Medicine, UAMS, gave a heartwarming and educational presentation called "Coming Home Again". Dr. Goldsmith spoke about his life as a Physician before and after a traumatic brain injury. He and his presentation moved the audience and set the stage for the conference and how far we all need to go in recognizing TBI and the services needed for individuals with a TBI and their families. He said Arkansas needs to ensure there are appropriate services following the emergency room.

The conference then broke into a Professional Track and a Family Track and attendees could hear whatever they wished. Professional Track topics and presenters included Pediatric Brain Injury/Mary Aitken, MD. PhD; Sports Injury/Darryl Nesmith, MD; Waivers/Krista Hughes, MA; Life Care Planning/Carolyn Chambers, MS and Harry Ehrenberg, BS BA. A Pediatric Acquired Brain Injury focus group was held in the afternoon along with an examination for Certified Brain Injury Specialists. The Family Track included General Terminology/Rob McDaniel, MS; Self Advocacy/Nan Ellen East BA; Case Management/Carolyn Chambers MS; Education/ Lori Lamb, BS; Veterans/ COL Robert Mason, DMD; and Training for Employment/Eddie Miller, BSW.

The Conference was made possible by Sponsorships as follows: Platinum Sponsors were AR Rehabilitation Services and Baptist Health Rehabilitation Institute; A Gold Sponsor was Timber Ridge Ranch; **Silver Sponsors** were the AR

Dept of Health, Brain Injury Association of Arkansas, Disability Rights Center, Snell Prosthetics & Orthotic Laboratory; and Bronze Sponsors were Mr. and Mrs. Haskell L. Dickinson II, AR Fair Housing Commission, Bioness and the Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council.

Exhibitors also provided support for the conference and excellent resources for the attendees were: AR Children's Hospital, AR Relay Service, AR Residential Assisted Living Assoc., Brookhaven Hospital, Datapath Account Management Services, DHS Division of Aging and Adult Services, Easter Seals of AR, EmployAbility Project, Home Care Professionals, ICAN, Learning RX, The HBO Clinic and each sponsoring organization provided an exhibit booth. The Conference Planning Committee included Loretta Alexander, Nan Ellen East, Yousef Fahoum, Gary Graham, Mary Lou Lane and Tribble Moseley and will be looking for volunteer leaders for next year's conference soon.

For more information about traumatic brain injury, prevention, services and supports Partners in Brain Injury would like to help.

Contacts:

Disability Rights Center (DRC) at 501-296-1775, DRC is the Arkansas non profit Protection and Advocacy (P&A) System for people with disabilities and P&A for individuals with TBI for information, referral and legally based advocacy services Arkansas Department of Health (501) 280-4923 for system planning, information and TBI awareness Loretta.Alexander@arkansas.gov, and Brain Injury Association of Arkansas at www.brainassociation.com and 1-800-444-6443 for family and TBI survivor support, prevention, I.M. Brainy project, advocacy, information and referral and TBI awareness.

The PATBI Program (DRC) role in this conference was partially (50%) funded by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and otherwise funded by community sponsorships. The contents of this bulletin are solely the responsibility of the grantee and do not necessarily represent the official views of HRSA.