

# Family Matters

Spring 2008

***“You Are Invited...”***

**A campaign to bring insight and knowledge about the joys and challenges of raising our sons and daughters in our communities and how Family Support benefits us all.**

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Over the past several months we at Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change (MFOFC) have had many discussions about what we want to focus on over the next year. We have achieved great success with the implementation of Chapter 171 and we’re now asking ourselves questions like “How can we get and keep families involved with important legislative issues?” and “How can we continue to have an impact on our legislators at both a local and state level?”

Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change is launching a new campaign to inform legislators about family support. ***“You Are Invited...”*** will work to have every legislator invited by a family to witness their life and understand a human being in a different way. Our legislators need to hear personal stories and experience for themselves what our lives are like and how we meet the challenges that each day brings. We want them to see that along with all of our everyday challenges come the joys and gifts our children give to us. It is this very reason why we, as families, must continue to advocate not only for the continuation of a wide range of Family Support services, but also for increased funding. By getting this brief glimpse into our lives, we hope our legislators will also realize how important it is that Family Support should be directed by the needs of the family.

We believe that this campaign will help legislators have a better understanding of the meaning of—and the crucial need for—family support. ***Please join us to reach every Massachusetts state senator and representative to help them really understand what family support means to individuals with disabilities and their families. Invite your legislators into your home, to a family event, to a meeting that involves your child or in any other way that allows them to meet and spend time with your family. Help them to see that all families are different and have different needs. We are confident that the experience our legislators will have spending real time with our families will certainly make an impact on how they look at Family Support, bringing that memory to Beacon Hill when budget or other important issues arise.***

On page 11 of this newsletter, you will find instructions on how to obtain your legislators’ contact information. We would also like to keep you informed and updated with actions around the Budget for the fiscal year 2008-2009. Email your Regional Coordinator listed on the last page of this newsletter. For those who do not have internet access, the telephone numbers are provided as well. Please let us know the result of your outreach and visit from your legislator!

***“Revolutions begin when people who are defined as problems achieve the power to redefine the problem.”***  
**John McKnight**

On October 27, 2007, MFOFC hosted their first annual statewide conference, ***“Creating the Possibilities, One Voice for Individual and Family Support”***. Approximately 110 participants were in attendance, which included family members, state agency personnel and representatives of several family organizations. The conference agenda included messages from three keynote speakers and a selection of several morning and afternoon workshops. A break for lunch allowed time for networking and an opportunity to visit the many resource tables. Before beginning the afternoon workshop sessions, MFOFC conducted a short annual business meeting and the election of MFOFC Officers and Board of Directors for 2008. The day ended with a raffle and closing remarks from our President, Susan Nadworny.

Emily Murgo Nisenbaum, Southeast Regional Coordinator and one of MFOFC’s founders, began the conference with reviewing the history of MFOFC, which began in 1991 with the first Family Leadership Series and the initial introduction of a “Family Support Bill” into the legislature. In the past 17 years more than 2000 families have gone through the Series and Chapter 171 was finally passed into law.

MFOFC is like “the U.N. of family support”, she said. “We are cross cultural, cross disability and cross age.” She went on to say, “As an organization, we take a stand on different issues and have issued position statements. We are for closure of the institutions and against the use of aversive therapy. We collaborate with Mass Advocates Standing Strong and The Arc of Massachusetts on a common legislative agenda for a stronger voice for families. We also collaborate with DMR and MDDC. The more we speak with a clear, concise and compelling voice, the more we can achieve positive things for our family members.”

Our morning keynote speakers, Chris Peltier and Keith Jones, delivered inspirational messages giving a true meaning of what it takes to ***“Imagine Better”***. Through their messages, Chris and Keith helped the participants recognize that to ***Create the Possibilities*** for our children and family, we must ***Imagine Better***.

Chris Peltier is a MFOFC board member, the Family Support Director at United ARC in Greenfield, and a member of the DMR Statewide Family Support Council. As quoted in his speech, his claim to fame is being the father of his 15 year old son, Elijah. He also states, when talking about the current family support system, ***“We have what I’ve often called a Cadillac and skateboard system – either you hit it big or you scrape along.”*** Chris’ speech can be found on pages 7 through 10.



Keith Jones, a community activist, is also a strong advocate for quality independent living in the community and is the President and CEO of Soul Touchin' Experiences ([www.dasoultoucha.com](http://www.dasoultoucha.com)). Keith is also featured in the recently released documentary, "Including Samuel". Keith brought home Chris' theme of an enviable life as he has successfully created an enviable life for himself in his community. Keith reminded all of us that "nothing is impossible and families are the roots of change." He went on to say that, "Leaders are here, not up at Beacon Hill. If you don't do it, nobody else is going to do it."

**"Nothing is impossible and families are the roots of change."  
Keith Jones**

Although Assistant Executive Office of Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Jean McGuire was not able to attend the conference, she sent a message to the participants through her associate, Laurie Burgess.

DMR Commissioner Elin Howe and other staff from DMR joined us for the entire day. Commissioner Howe spoke briefly saying that the Department is trying to open up the doors for participant directed services, and to address the need for intermediate levels of services that fall between the *Cadillac and the skateboard*.

## ***Upcoming Events***

**Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council  
and The Arc of Massachusetts - 30th Annual Legislative Reception**  
Wednesday, March 19, 2008 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.  
Grand Staircase Hall, The State House Boston

### **Stone Soup Bringing Together a Community**

Hosted by MFOFC Northeast Region  
with assistance from DMR Northeast Training Center

Saturday, March 29 - 8:30AM - 3:15PM  
Boston University Conference Center  
Tyngsboro, MA

Conference details, Registration Form & directions can be found on  
<http://www.mfofc.org/events/index.html#march>

**If you do not have Internet access, please contact MFOFC at 1-800-406-3632.**

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# ***MFOFC Position Statements***

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## **AVERSIVE BEHAVIORAL PRACTICES**

Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change (MFOFC) condemns the use of punishments and “aversives” on persons with disabilities. We call on state agencies to investigate the widespread mistreatment of people with disabilities through such “professional” practices.

These extremely punitive physical and psychological techniques are illegal when inflicted on non-disabled persons and/or animals. But, when used on people with disabilities, they are called “treatment” or “aversive therapy.”

Aversive therapy is a shameful response to severe behavioral challenges, and it has never been scientifically proven to be a permanently effective behavioral strategy. It is used to suppress symptoms rather than to deal with the root cause of the undesired behaviors.

The use of aversive therapy psychologically affects persons administering the altering procedure and those observing this treatment. Passive observation by professionals, paraprofessionals, staff and caregivers can breed acceptance of punitive measures. They are at risk for thinking of aversives as a legitimate form of corrective practice that they find useful for various behavioral challenges they encounter.

Passive observation by individuals with disabilities who are in the vicinity of aversive therapy or punitive techniques being used on their peers also creates in them the misconception that such punishment is acceptable. It is logical for them to fear that caregivers or staff may use it on them. The consequent dread of its use and resulting loss of trust can be devastating. The individual’s helplessness in such situations jeopardizes his/her right to a sense of security and well being, replacing it with a sense of helplessness and/or despair.

MFOFC believes that the use of aversive therapy and punitive behavioral techniques should be immediately discontinued and declared illegal in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

***Unanimously adopted by MFOFC Board of Directors on August 29, 2007***

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# ***MFOFC Position Statements***

## **STATE FACILITIES POSITION PAPER**

The position of Massachusetts Families Organizing For Change is that all six remaining state institutions operated by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Retardation be closed permanently. The funds yielded by the closure must be redirected to ensure high quality, individualized community support and service options.

The number of individuals living in these facilities has been steadily declining since the initiation of the 1970's international deinstitutionalization movement. Consistent with best practices, the Commonwealth currently supports more than 30,000 individuals with disabilities living in the community. Fewer than 1,000 individuals continue to live in the institutions that are still in operation (Fernald Developmental Center, Glavin Regional Center, Hogan Regional Center, Monson Developmental Center, Wrentham Developmental Center and Templeton Developmental Center) at an annual cost in excess of \$160 million dollars.

We are sensitive to parents and relatives who accepted institutionalization for their family members at a time when few other options were available. State services have evolved so that individuals can be supported to have meaningful lives in their communities—this is happening all over Massachusetts.

MFOFC believes that all individuals have the right to live in the community. We support the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in closing the remaining six state institutions operated by the Department of Mental Retardation. As stated earlier in this paper, it is crucial that funds from the institution closings be redirected into the community system to support individuals served by the Department of Mental Retardation.

***Adopted by MFOFC Board of Directors on February 1, 2008***

# *Family Support is Priceless!*

## A Message From Commissioner Elin Howe

I am so pleased to have the opportunity to share DMR's perspectives on the importance of family support in the MFOFC newsletter. I have always been a strong proponent and believer in the importance of family support serving as Commissioner in New York State in the early 1990s. I saw then the enormous benefits and impact of family support services for both the individual with a disability as well as the whole family. Responsiveness to individual family needs, access to flexible supports, and empowering families and individuals to be key decision-makers about the supports and services that will be most helpful to them, are central to quality family support services.

During my first six months as the Commissioner at DMR, I have had the opportunity to meet and hear from hundreds of family members at town meetings I held across the state and at the MFOFC conference in October 2007. Families shared their personal stories with me and told me of the importance of having a staff resource to help them navigate the service system and to identify community resources to plan for the transition of their children into adulthood. I am continually impressed by the commitment, resourcefulness and energy of parents to obtain the most helpful supports for their family member and to promote meaningful and quality life experiences at home, school, work, and in the community. It reinforced for me the importance of the partnership DMR must have with families in order to support and foster opportunities for all individuals to be active, valued and contributing members of their communities.

As I plan for the future with the senior staff here at DMR, I have identified the growth of the family support budget as an important priority. We recognize the growing need for family support services and the benefits of providing this supplemental assistance to families to enable them to support their family member at home. We have heard the concern from families about the inconsistency in how family support resources are currently allocated, and in response, we are working on the development of a standardized need assessment process that will be used to help make these decisions more consistent and equitable statewide. In addition, we would like to work toward establishing a minimum threshold of family support resources that we can make available to families based on our fiscal resources. DMR is also working on the development of Home and Community Based Support Waivers for adults which I believe can provide more flexibility to individuals and their families in tailoring services and supports to meet their needs.

I am very committed to working pro-actively within DMR and with our colleagues at the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to support the implementation of Chapter 171 of the Acts of 2002, "An Act Providing Support to Individuals with Disabilities and Their Families." Continually seeking ways to obtain input and consultation from families and individuals about ways that we can provide supports and be more responsive to individual/family needs is important as we work together to enhance our system of supports and strengthen our partnership. I value the opportunity to work with the members of DMR's Statewide Family Support Council. The perspective of families is critically important in helping DMR to identify and develop services, programs, and policies that evolve to meet the changing needs of families and are responsive to the growing cultural and ethnic diversity of families across the Commonwealth. DMR has created a task force to focus on the challenges and unique planning needs for young adults with complex medical needs. In response to concerns raised by families around gaps in the school year DMR is pleased to share with you that we intend to once again make funding available to family support agencies to offer vacation programs. These are examples of DMR's commitment to being responsive to family needs. DMR will continue to strive to make family support a reality for more families.

# *Imagine Better*

by Chris Peltier

Good morning – it’s nice to see everyone here on a Saturday morning! The lovely introduction from Susan mentioned some of the roles I play in life, but my primary claim to fame is being the father of a soon to be 15 year old boy with autism named Elijah. This is literally true – strangers will come up to me on the street and start talking, and I’ll think “they must know me from all my work at The Arc”, or “they must want my opinion because I’m clearly a man of taste and distinction” and the first thing they say is “hey, you’re Elijah’s dad!” Yep, that’s me. I guess there are many worse things to be known for.

Elijah and his sister Sarah are the joys of our life, and Elijah in particular continues to lead Laurel and I on a long and often very strange journey. Often times all we can do is look at each other and shake our heads. I love to tell stories about Elijah, and a couple of very quick stories might help to give you a sense of our lives together. One of his current fascinations is with personal hygiene products – by the way, if anyone is ever out in the Amherst area and needs lotion, conditioner, deodorant, whatever, please stop by – we have one of the world’s definitive collections and we’re running out of storage space! One of the first phrases Elijah learned to use in a sentence was “I buy” The latest twist on this is that he’s learned to use Google very adeptly, but what he’s usually searching for is “blue Colgate mouthwash – strong anticavity protection” Another example of life with Elijah is a month or two ago we were all wrestling and tickling after dinner, which he really enjoys, and all of a sudden he just stopped, looked up at the ceiling and in a weird, high pitched voice went “OOOOOOOOOOOOOOO ...not good” Laurel and I started looking around for the mother ship coming in for the pick up! Obviously it’s not all roses – there are times when he cries for 2 hours in a row because some little detail wasn’t right, when he doesn’t sleep for two or three nights in a row or occasionally when he whacks or pinches one of us, but all in all we couldn’t be more pleased with life with Elijah.

In preparing for this session, I went back to a talk I gave about 8 years ago at The United Family Convention in Western MA and looked at some of the questions that we had then about Elijah and his future, questions like;

- how can we create a place for Elijah?
- how can we help him find his niche, or create supportive community around him?
- can we create or be part of a change in the service system that would give him a chance at what one presenter I heard recently calls an “**enviable life**”? Isn’t that a great phrase? Not a passable life, or a minimally acceptable one, but an enviable life – one anyone would want to live.

Some things have changed since that talk 8 years ago – Elijah has gone from being non-verbal to speaking in sentences, although the experts said he would never talk. He changed from being a little skinny stick-figure boy into a 6 foot, 250 pound young man – it’s like the joke with the gorilla - “where does a 250 pound boy with autism sleep?” But as much as some things have changed, many of the questions I mentioned a minute ago about Elijah and his future remain, although some clarity seems to be emerging through the use of a lot of imagination and a little elbow grease.

The title of this opening section of the program this morning is “**Imagine Better**”, and I want to get back to this theme of the importance of imagination in both our individual lives as families and in looking at the service system in a minute, but first, before we can “imagine better” we have to take a quick look at where we are, at where we’re starting from. Let me say before I launch into this that my primary experience as both a provider and recipient of services has been in the DMR family support system, and I have only a little understanding of what those of you in the DPH or DMH or other communities might be experiencing, although I’m guessing that the landscape for you might not be too dissimilar to what I see when I look at the

service system.

First, in looking at our current landscape I want to say that I feel like we're at a crossroads in the family movement in Massachusetts. I know it's fashionable to say things like that in these kinds of presentations, but in this case I really believe it's true! We're in the middle of a real and discernable lull, a time of seeming lethargy where it's become increasingly difficult to motivate people or mobilize parents – even around crucial issues which directly impact their families! Let me give you an example – as part of the budget cycle last year the legislature cut family support funding across the board by 30%, a cut that was passed along directly to families in the form of allocation cuts. That means that a family who might have gotten an allocation of \$1,000 the year before could only get \$700 in flex funds this year. Sue mentioned that I run a family support program out in the western part of the state, and we serve about 140 families a year – here's the amazing thing to me - *not one family called me to complain!* Where's the outrage? Where are the families saying "Whoa, you gotta be kidding me"! We're keeping our child with severe disabilities here at home and saving the Commonwealth hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, and now you cut my already totally inadequate respite allocation by 30%?" Luckily this cut has since been restored, but what this story reveals to me is a fundamental truth about families – that we're often so grateful for any assistance at all that it's difficult to mobilize us to ask for more or better. Don't get me wrong – there's something noble and good about gratitude and the ethic of shouldering our own burdens, but we can't let this blind us to the need for asking systemic questions about adequacy and sufficiency.

We have to somehow recover some of the drive and the passion in the family movement. Most of us in the room this morning are benefiting from the advocacy of previous generations of families – in a phrase I really like, *we're standing on the shoulders of giants* – people who fought for and passed 766, the ADA and Chapter 171 – and some of those people are in the room - I want to particularly recognize Lou and Emily Nisenbaum who I think of as mentors and examples for all of us, but who's going to build on their accomplishments? Who's going to solidify their legacy? Let's face it these guys aren't getting any younger! I can't help but feel that we're not doing our part, and I want to challenge those of you who are family members this morning to get involved, step up to the plate, pull up your socks, whatever metaphor you choose, but we need your help and commitment to continue a strong and vital family movement on behalf of the people we love.

Second, in looking at our current landscape I see a chronically underfunded family support system that's under an enormous amount of pressure from years of new referrals without new resources. What's even worse is that every year it seems we have to rally and fuss and write letters to the legislature to maintain the inadequate funding that we've got, and this equation has to change. Many people are getting decent supports in spite of this pressure, but the stress on the system which serves more than 13,000 families in the Commonwealth is growing every day. If you happen to be one of the few hundred families statewide with a DOE/DMR prevention grant, or one of the 80 families who will qualify for the new autism waiver, resources are plentiful – if not, you're often left struggling for a couple of hundred dollars of flex funding and hopefully a case manager or advocate to talk to when things get tough. We have what I've often called a Cadillac and skateboard system – either you hit it big or you scrape along, and to keep my transportation metaphor going, we need to develop a lot more Yugos, a range of intermediate services that so many families need to be well supported.

Third, in looking at our current landscape I see a service system still struggling to give families a real voice in the design and implementation of the services which are so crucial in their lives. One of the real accomplishments of the past several years for Mass Families was the passage (with many allies) of Ch 171, also known as the Individual and Family Support bill. This legislation basically mandates that people being served by the seven named state agencies actually have some say in the shape of the services they receive.

Passing this bill was a landmark achievement, but it's an open question as to how effective the implementation of this bill has been, and how much it has really served to change the culture and practice of the individual state agencies. Even within DMR, which has more of a history of including families in service planning, the pendulum seems to be swinging away from family direction and control, and back to more centrally managed services often based on the requirements of various waivers either in place or being applied for. We need to recommit to the principals of Ch 171, and recover a vision of families as experts, as the people who know what they need and when they need it, and then trust them to do the right thing.

Fourth and finally, when I look at the service system I see, inexplicably, a system, which still has around 1,000 people and \$170 million dollars wrapped up in institutional settings. In looking back on my address from 8 years ago, one of the strong themes for action was the need to band together and do the advocacy necessary to facilitate the closure of these outdated and inefficient models of care, and 8 years later not much has changed. On the positive side, there is a commitment on the part of DMR and the executive branch to close at least some of the remaining sites, but the issue is now tied up in the courts, which could drag the process along for years. I want to stop and say I can't imagine what it must be like for a parent or family member who was pressured and convinced to put their son or daughter in an institution in an era when that was "the thing to do", and I hear their fear as they consider a move to the community system after all these years – I don't think those of us who are also families can be hard-hearted about their experience. The fundamental truth, however, is that people belong in their communities - as long as people with disabilities are shut away and segregated as "other" they will continue to be objects of fear, or scorn or pity and those days are simply gone. We need to recommit and intensify our efforts to gently (with a compassionate eye towards these individuals and families) but firmly relegate these outdated models of care to the past where they belong.

I want to get back to the theme of imagination I mentioned a few minutes ago – one of the primary reasons we're here today is a real desire to "imagine better" for our family members and the people we love, and this tool of imagination is crucial both in creating a vision of what "better" means in our individual families, and in looking at the service system as a whole. Let's start with families – I once heard someone describe one of the key roles of families as "keepers of the vision" and I love that description – if we don't dream about successful outcomes and an enviable life for our kids, than who will? That's our job, and our imagining is crucial for our kids because the consistent message they get from our culture is that they can't do anything, that they're not worth anything and we have to be the ones to tell them over and over again *yes you can, and yes you are!* Now, of course imagination needs to lead to exploration and planning and implementation if it's going to bear fruit, but the whole process begins with a vision of a life that's rich and full of possibilities. I want to go back to the Elijah story for a moment, and I use our example not to say in any way that we've arrived or got the answers – we're still very much on the journey – or to say that your vision should be anything like ours, but simply to illustrate the power of imagination.

Very soon after we started trying to answer the questions about Elijah's future that I told you about a minute ago we began to be convinced that the answers regarding an enviable life for him lay in community. In imagining a rich and full life for Elijah, we wanted him to be part of a community which cared for him (and would care for him after Laurel and I are gone), where he had a place, where his support would not primarily be based on paid staff (although that would have its place) but be a natural outgrowth of community life together. We had no idea of how to pull this together, or even where to look for examples, but we had the beginnings of a vision and that's where all of us as families have to start. We spent the next 6 years talking with people, exploring options, visiting existing communities and programs and working to refine our initial vision in light of this new information we were gathering. We continued to imagine what the infrastructure

would need to look like to make this vision of community a reality for Elijah, and then about a year and a half ago we had the opportunity to buy a much larger house that, while it needed a lot of work also had the space to try out some of the things we were thinking of. We had been talking for a couple of years with another family from our church about our vision for community, and it was a vision that resonated with them as well and they ended up becoming our housemates for a year along with another single friend and helping to pilot this project. This family recently moved out to buy their own place, but we had a great year together and learned an amazing amount about what it means to live in community and what it might take to do this in some sustainable way for Elijah. Many things are still really uncertain, and we have a long way to go in converting our vision into reality but we feel like we're on the way, that we're moving towards our goal of the life we imagined for Elijah. Without first imagining what an enviable life might look like, however, we would have had no idea what we were looking for or how to even get started. Everything starts with imagination!

Imagination is also crucial in looking at our system of care. It's so easy to get caught up in what is, in the way we've always done things, to be satisfied with the status quo - but my encouragement to you this morning is to have the vision and the creativity to imagine better!

**Imagine** a family support system with something approaching adequate funding, where new families mean new resources, where legislators and other state leaders realize the importance of these supports and where we don't have to fight every year to hold on to the little we've got.

**Imagine** a truly individualized and responsive service system that doesn't try to squeeze everyone into cookie cutter models, but which encourages choice and creativity, listens to people's hopes and dreams and imaginings and then gives people a place at the table as resources are allocated and their services are designed.

**Imagine** a family support system where families have true portability with both their core and flex resources to work with the organization that best meets their needs

**Imagine** an employment system for people with disabilities that focuses on real work and creating valued roles for people in their communities rather than wasting their days in segregated settings.

**Imagine** a family support system with a range of graduated and intermediate levels of support truly designed to offer families the support they need to keep their kids at home, rather than our current Cadillac and skateboard system.

**Imagine** a world in which all people with disabilities live and work in their home communities as valued and contributing members, where everyone has a place and a role, where there are no more institutions that shut people with disabilities away, either for their protection or for ours.

These things I've proposed this morning seem ambitious, to say the least! But they and many other goals can be accomplished if we have the courage and tenacity to imagine better, and then put our visions into practice. Every major accomplishment we can think of flowed from an individual or a small group of people with imagination and a dream, and I guarantee you that there were a crowd of people around each of these visionaries saying things like "you're wasting your time", or "this will never work", or "it's not practical". Our family members, the people that we love, deserve a chance at an enviable life – let's commit this morning to work together to imagine better, and then do the hard work of planning and advocacy needed to make these visions a reality. Thank you.

***“Pay heed to the dreams and visions you've been given. They are NOT merely idle thoughts or wishful musings. With faith, trust, hope and perseverance, they CAN become your reality! The key is to take action on the dream or vision, ever moving confidently toward its' realization.” Anonymous***



# ***Flexible Family Support***

## ***Your Voice is Important***

### ***What is Substantial Consultation?***

A copy of the law and information regarding **Chapter 171, An Act Providing Support to Individuals with Disabilities and their Families**, can be found on the MFOFC website ([www.mfofc.org](http://www.mfofc.org)). The purpose of this law is to give individuals with disabilities and their family a voice in crucial decisions being made about their lives. The law requires each named state agency to develop an annual Individual and Family Support plan with specific objectives and with substantial consultation from individuals and families. The state agency should also make this plan easily accessible to families.

If you cannot find the plan on their website, contact the state agency liaison.

DMR-Margaret Van Gelder: (617) 624-7764  
DPH-Suzanne Gottlieb: (617) 624-5979  
MCB-Sandra Daly: (617) 626-7480  
MCDHH-Stanley Potrude: (617) 740-1611,  
TTY (711-617) 740-1750

MRC-Betty Maher: (617) 204-3631  
DMH-Marion Freedman-Gurspan: (617) 626-8081  
Masshealth-Annette Shea: (617) 573-1751

As written in the law:

**"Substantial consultation"**, may include, but shall not be limited to, the following activities: meetings and discussions with persons with disabilities and chronic illnesses and their families to determine their needs and concerns; public hearings to review draft individual and family support plans developed in response to this section to be held with adequate public notice on a regional basis throughout the commonwealth not less than 90 days prior to the scheduled date of plan submission; issuance of a draft plan sufficiently in advance of a hearing to permit the submission of written comments; public availability of written comments within each region not less than 60 days in advance of the plan submission date.

***It's important to know who your legislators are and how to contact them. To obtain this information, follow these instructions:***

- Go to: <http://www.mass.gov/legis>
- Click under *Legislators* on Wards/precints/elected officials
- Type in your address and click Find My Election Information
- Browse the page to find the Senator and Representative for your district

**For those who do not have Internet access, please contact MFOFC at 1-800-406-3632. We will send any information you need by mail.**



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**Visit us on the web  
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### ***Please Support***

Massachusetts Families  
Organizing For Change

Your donation will help us continue to  
make positive change.

Please make checks payable to  
***MFOFC*** and mail to  
PO Box 61—Raynham, MA 02768

*“Never doubt that a small group of  
citizens can change the world.  
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*  
Margaret Mead