

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. memo	To Mrs. Clinton from Karen Finney re: Americans with Disabilities (1 page)	07/25/2000	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 21400

FOLDER TITLE:

Disabilities Interview

2015-0275-S

rc2078

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
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- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

MEMORANDUM

TO: HRC
FROM: Press office
RE: Interview with WeMedia on disability issues
DATE: July 25, 2000

You are scheduled to do a 15-20 minute interview with WeMedia immediately following the ADA event with the President on Wednesday. The interview will be on camera and questions will be posed by broadcast journalist Bree Walker.

Purpose:

To address the disability community

Background:

The interview will focus on how well has the ADA has worked and what still needs to be done to improve the quality of life for Americans with disabilities and to continue to improve disabled Americans' access.

Two entrepreneurs, Jerome Belson and Cary Fields, who had worked extensively with disability organizations for more than 40 years, launched WeMedia in 1997. The first media property was WeMedia magazine, a glossy consumer lifestyle publication aimed at addressing issues of importance to the disability community in America. The bi-monthly magazine has won accolades for its editorial content and innovative approach to cross-disability issues. In December 1999, WeMedia launched www.wemedia.com, a comprehensive online resource for people with disabilities, their families and friends. The new website provides the disability community with targeted and comprehensive information and resources in the areas of finance, real estate, travel, news, sports, employment, technology, advocacy, and education. WeMedia is also the official webcaster of the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games. Between the website and the magazine, WeMedia estimates that they reach some 350,000 disabled Americans per month.

Your interview will be featured in the Oct./Nov. issue of WeMedia magazine and will run as a streaming video piece on the WeMedia website beginning Wednesday afternoon as part of the site's commemoration of the passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act, and will kick off WeMedia's newly launched Political Forum on the site's Politics and Advocacy section. Upcoming Forum guests include Senator Jim Jeffords (R-VT), Vice President Al Gore, Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Senator Max Cleland (D-GA). WeMedia's Politics and Advocacy section is committed to bringing to the disability community information about relevant issues and access to key decision-makers.

In general, most of the readers of WeMedia believe that ADA has been an important first step, but as we enter the digital age, there is more work to be done, and while technology has created greater opportunities, we also must remember that new questions apply. For example there is a pending issue as to whether or not the ADA should apply to the Internet. Supporters of ADA say yes, however, many in the Internet community fear the costs involved. An example of the application of the ADA to the Internet can be seen in a lawsuit that has been filed against the popular website, "Yahoo". Devices called "screen readers", used by the visually impaired actually read out loud, the text on a website. However, there are some sites that are programmed in such a way that the screen readers cannot read them, thus they are inaccessible to the user. ADA advocates would say that websites like Yahoo should make the required technical modifications to their sites so that the screen readers would work with their sites.

WeMedia may also ask you about a proposed memorial to the Willowbrook State School in New York (more background information follows).

You should also know that on Tuesday, WeMedia participated in an Expo sponsored by the Vice President highlighting the top 30 companies that promote access to technology for the disability community.

Bree Walker

Ms. Walker was a news anchor at San Diego's KNSD-TV (NBC) from 1997 – 2000. (She recently left following her separation from national sports caster Jim Lampley to spend more time with their two children.) Prior to KNSD, Walker worked as an anchor at KCBS and New York's WCBS. From 1984 to 1987, she anchored the top rated San Diego newscast. In addition, Walker served as investigative consumer reporter, breaking many national and local stories. She was awarded a Golden Mike for "Best Investigative Series" from the Radio and Television News Association. She also received a Sigma Delta Chi award for investigative reporting and a California News Press Association honor for public service reporting. Before moving her career into television, Walker held anchor positions in radio at KPRI and KGB in San Diego, KUDD and KYYS in Kansas City, and WKTU and WYNY in New York. She studied journalism at the University of Minnesota before starting her career in radio.

Walker is active in the disability rights movement, particularly with regard to visibility in the media. She is herself handicapped with malformed hands, in fact, several years ago she and her husband Jim Lampley were in the news regarding their decision to have children with the knowledge that her genetic disorder would most likely be passed onto her children, which it was. She has been recognized twice with the Media Access Award for "creating more media awareness of disability issues," from the California Governor's Committee in association with the President's Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities. She was also given the "Woman of Courage" Award by the Women's International Center. She remains active in San Diego community causes.

More information follows, including an article about WeMedia and background about the Willowbrook School.

SPORTS MEDIA/Richard Sandomir

Live From Paralympics, Online Coverage

At the Summer Olympics in Sydney, NBC Sports will carry 161 hours and MSNBC and CNBC will telecast 276½ more hours on cable.

Soon after, also from Sydney, Wemedia.com will Webcast at least 100 hours of the Paralympics, which are contested by disabled athletes.

This is not prime-time television, but Wemedia Corporation, which owns the Internet site and publishes *We*, a slick magazine for disabled people, from its downtown Manhattan office, is capitalizing on advances in streaming video to bring the Paralympics to computers from Oct. 18 to 29. After the Paralympics, the company plans to Webcast two events a month.

"We're trying to create access and mobility to watch the games for people nobody have cared about, and make it free to the world," Cary Fields, Wemedia's president, said. "The computer makes the disabilities disappear. It's the ultimate enabler."

Wemedia's plans for the 18-sport Paralympics are ambitious: three separate daily feeds of 12 hours of live events, feature and studio coverage, from 7:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. Eastern, which would be repeated for the next 12 hours.

"Track and field and swimming

and velodrome cycling could all be starting at once, and you can go to one for two or three hours, then switch to another," said Rick Gentile, the executive producer of Wemedia Sports, who served in the same position at CBS Sports.

In addition to shifting among three video feeds, there will be a second screen offering a continuous flow of accompanying information.

"We have a blank slate — an entire network to program," said Gentile, who was a top programming or production executive during CBS's telecasts of the 1992, 1994 and 1998 Winter Olympics. "And with three feeds, we'd better be good. A lot will depend on our Web site boys to synchronize it all together."

Wemedia tested its technology in April at the Paralympic sailing trials and plans more tests next month at the track and field and swimming trials. The quality of the Webcast depends on the abilities of the computers receiving it as well as on the equipment Wemedia uses to transmit the video. Nonetheless, the quality of streaming video in general seems to improve on an almost daily basis.

"A few weeks ago, I would have

said TV is TV, but this is different," Gentile said. "What works on TV doesn't necessarily work on the Web. Pictures and graphics are smaller. But on a laptop, where you'll have one box with a moving picture, we can synchronize graphics in a way that makes this unique."

Wemedia's primary goal is to expand the presence of the underexposed Paralympics — and bring new members to its Web site, which will add a much larger sports news and information component today. But it also intends to spread the gospel about the extraordinary skills of the thousands of athletes who are blind, paraplegic, amputees or mentally retarded or have cerebral palsy.

Charlie Huebner, executive director of the United States Association of Blind Athletes, doubted that Wemedia would face a shortage of events.

"We have 300 to 400 local, regional and national events within our own organization," he said. "Wemedia is helping parents and kids find out what events are out there."

Arthur Pincus, the vice president for content of Wemedia Sports, added: "There are basketball tournaments, rugby, tennis tournaments, sailing regattas, skiing and expedition-adventure events. There's no

question we'll have enough to do two events a month."

Olympic viewers are accustomed to network features about athletes that often strain to find the obstacle family tragedies or melodramatic woes that formed them.

"Here every story smacks you in the face," Gentile said. "They're all remarkable. At the dock where the athletes get on the boats, many have to be picked up or hoisted into the boats. Then you see 30 empty wheel chairs and prosthetic arms and legs on the dock."

To advocates of the disabled, Wemedia's sports strategy fills a long-overlooked void and will provide broad recognition for their athleticism.

"It's crazy to think only disabled people will watch disabled events," said Deborah Bonsack, executive director of America's Athletes With Disabilities, which promoted 190 disabled sports events last year. "People need to think of disabled sports as sports played by people with different physical compositions."

If Wemedia finds viewer success in Webcasting the Paralympics and other events, she said: "Folks will have a shift in opinion. You'll hear

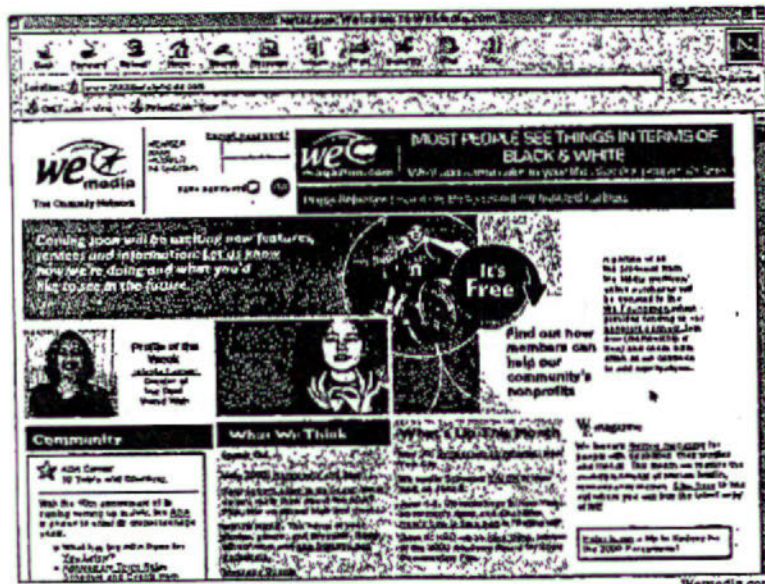
people stop and say, 'How does that amputee swimmer do that?'"

Andrew Imparato, president of the American Association of People With Disabilities, said: "Too often, the public view of people with disabilities is a charity model, that we need to raise money for them. But the Paralympics and Special Olympics show disabled people achieving well beyond what people with disabilities are supposed to be able to do."

He cautioned that many disabled people — as well as those who are able-bodied — cannot afford a computer and cannot view the Webcast of the Paralympics.

But with the United States television rights, on top of its world Web rights deal, Wemedia has a TV strategy. It is seeking a cable partner for daily reports, and a broadcaster for a post-Paralympics special.

"We want the Webcast to enhance the broadcasts," said Jay Rosenstein, the vice president for programming of Wemedia Sports, "and the broadcasts to make the public aware of the Webcast."



A page from Wemedia's Web site.

DRAFT**OPEN LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR OF NEW YORK**

Honorable Governor Pataki.

A great wound exists among thousands of New York family members, and indirectly resonates among families across the United States in relationship to the atrocities suffered by those who were forced to rely on, and live in, Willowbrook State School and the scores of the State's institutional clones housing children and adults with mental retardation and developmental disabilities over the past 60 years.

After extraordinary U.S. Federal Court class action trial hearings, massive evidence was presented that resulted in the finding of constitutional violations at Willowbrook focused on the existence of cruel and unusual punishment and the wholesale disregard of basic human rights. Twenty five years ago the Federal Court Consent Decree was joined by your predecessor. No punitive damages were sought; no one was blamed for the inhumane system that cost the taxpayers one billion dollars in the system's implementation and operations. No one in power accepted the clear blame for what were crimes against humanity perpetrated with whatever intentions and rationales were used then to justify the violent and ubiquitous warehousing practices.

Today, every family caught in that situation still deeply grieves. They grieve for being part of the decision to surrender their sons or daughters to institutional living despite the overwhelming impossibility of providing the burden of care at home due to the lack of vital services available in New York. They grieve because each had to mutely witness their institutionalized family member relentlessly reduced to the lowest physical and intellectual human state from the impact of the institutional experience. They grieve because so much of their life time has been lost to humiliation, guilt, personal sacrifice, stigma and the ignominy imposed on them for struggling to keep a physical and social bond with their State held relatives.

It is the ultimate irony that the burden still lives in the hearts of every involved family member and the survivors of the incarceration and abuse themselves who were forced to live in the unimaginable environmental and social horror architected by State professionals and administrators. The victims still suffer their memories and experiences. The responsible New York leaders have thus far averred a public, explicit apology for their policies and actions. This has left the victims feeling they were somehow eternally to blame for what befell them. This is a well documented sequelae of victims of modern torture.

Enough time has passed. Enough denial, enough loss. We believe that two essential actions must be taken to somehow bring this wound to close in a self conscious and moral way. We call on you to help the healing of this terrible state. First we believe that a full public apology be issued from your office to lift the blame from the families and accept the consequences of the destruction, whether out of cruelty or ignorance, done to those who languished so awfully in the institution. Second, we feel that a fitting memorial and living museum structure be conceived and developed on the grounds of Willowbrook State School that will preserve the memory of what was done to our fellow citizens, instill hope and pride in families with individuals with special needs and celebrate the profound and enduring contribution that this diversity of human kind continually brings to our society as a whole.

We seek your unique leadership, your compassion, your courage to set this historic precedent that we believe will reverberate far beyond relieving the Willowbrook Class but stringently define the unacceptableness, the origin of the dehumanizing experiences that holds so many individuals hostage in segregation and hopelessness, both yesterday and today, in our land.

Collective signature block of NY and US leadership

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View Related Topics

May 3, 2000, Wednesday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section B; Page 5; Column 2; Metropolitan Desk

LENGTH: 936 words

HEADLINE: Recalling a Victory for the Disabled

BYLINE: By SHAILA K. DEWAN

BODY:

It was an unwieldy and not altogether happy reunion of a very unusual class, the so-called Willowbrook Class.

Twenty-five years after the patients of the infamous **Willowbrook State School** won a class-action lawsuit that led to the widespread deinstitutionalization of the mentally retarded, lawyers, doctors, administrators and some class members themselves gathered to celebrate the settlement, called the Willowbrook Consent Judgment -- and to criticize its aftermath.

In the 1960's and early 70's, the conditions at Willowbrook, including feces-smearred walls, naked inhabitants and frequent, violent deaths, were well documented, most notably by Geraldo Rivera, whose 1972 television expose was the impetus for a federal lawsuit.

In 1975, Gov. Hugh L. Carey signed the consent decree, thus committing the state to establish noninstitutional homes for people with developmental disabilities. Governor Carey, former Gov. Mario M. Cuomo, and Gov. George E. Pataki were all honored yesterday.

The conference, held on the campus of the College of Staten Island, where the crowded, prisonlike wards of Willowbrook once stood, was called "Social Justice Has Prevailed."

But many of the 450 present said it had not: There are still mentally retarded people institutionalized; care still needs improvement, even in group homes; the state is not meeting the promises it made in the settlement, and no reparations, or even apologies, have been made.

The participants acknowledged that the decree had succeeded, to a degree. Only 8 of the state's 20 mental institutions remain, and the number of people in such institutions has decreased to fewer than 1,000 from 25,000, according to the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, which was created after the consent decree.

The decree is considered to be one of the most successful social policy changes of its type, especially when compared with the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill, in which services for those affected have lagged.

But lawyers who represent the 3,600 remaining members of the Willowbrook Class said the case was technically still open, and that they often had to threaten to get an injunction to ensure that the state met its agreements.

"It's sort of a continuous game of chicken," said Beth Haroulas of the New York Civil Liberties Union, adding that she still saw reports of abuse, neglect and inadequate medical care in group homes.

And, she said, Willowbrook Class members are better off than other mentally retarded people. Their case managers have lighter loads -- 20 as opposed to 30 -- and the quality of their care is more closely

monitored.

Many of the conference panelists made a point of saying there was room for improvement.

One with a particularly dramatic story to tell was Bernard Carabello, who entered Willowbrook when he was 3, and stayed for 18 years, even though he was not retarded. Mr. Carabello has cerebral palsy, which does not impair mental functioning.

Now a governor-appointed advocate for the developmentally disabled, Mr. Carabello said the main problems in the field today involved community relations: neighborhoods often do not welcome group homes and those who live in them are often isolated from their communities.

During question-and-answer sessions, parents of school-age mentally retarded children said they, too, felt isolated. Without the rallying point of Willowbrook, one mother said, they lacked unity, especially since the group homes spread their children throughout the state.

"I feel like you hand the responsibility over to me as a parent, yet no one has ever backed me up along the way," one mother said.

Present problems aside, the gathering was, for some, an emotional trip to the past.

Several of the participants, including William Bronston, one of the Willowbrook doctors who helped organize the parents who filed the lawsuit, returned to the site for the first time since the 70's.

During one panel discussion, he called for an apology to be issued to those who suffered.

"The parents," Dr. Bronston said privately during a lunchtime presentation of awards and speeches, "have never been acknowledged as Holocaust survivors, American-style."

As Jose Rivera took the podium to remember his brother, who died while staying at Willowbrook, the faces of many parents and siblings grew quiet and drawn. Some of them had lost relatives. Others said they were lucky.

Ann Nehbauer of Hastings, N.Y., whose son now lives in a group home in nearby Scarsdale, told how she would make unannounced visits to Willowbrook, where he was one of 90 children in a ward with barely 12 inches of space between beds.

Though she knew what the conditions were, she said, "Our only option was no option."

Diana McCourt, the wife of the writer Malachy McCourt, said her daughter, Nina Galin, now lived in a group home in Harlem, where she participated in a new one-on-one program that allowed her to venture accompanied into the city.

She remembered finding out what Willowbrook was like: "I felt totally enraged, totally terrified and also totally determined to find like-minded people. I looked around to find the most radical social worker by length of hair, and it worked."

Though conditions have improved, Mrs. McCourt allowed, she bristled at honoring the former governors for their work.

"They were doing what they were paid to do," she said.

And she agreed with Dr. Bronston's call for an apology.

"I feel it's what establishes a human relationship between people who provide services and those who receive them," Mrs. McCourt said.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

GRAPHIC: Photos: In 1972, when the photo at left was taken, straitjackets and helmets were still used on retarded Willowbrook residents. Yesterday, Willie Mae Goodman, mother of a former patient, and Dr. William Bronston attended a conference on the 1975 decision that led to reforms in care. (Don Hogan Charles/The New York Times)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 3, 2000

FOCUSTM

Search: General News; Willowbrook state school

To narrow this search, please enter a word or phrase:

FOCUS

Example: House of Representatives

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Media Advisory

For Immediate Release
July 25, 2000

Contact: Charles Lynn, Appia Group
(212) 688-8599 or
clynn@appiagroup.com

First Lady Kicks Off WeMedia's "Political Forum" Series with Exclusive Webcast Interview on ADA Anniversary

What: New York senate candidate First Lady Hillary Clinton kicks off WeMedia's "Political Forum" series with an exclusive Webcast interview conducted by nationally known television news anchor Bree Walker.

When: Wednesday, July 26th -- the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) -- at 4:00 PM EST.

Where: The FDR Memorial in Washington, D.C., immediately following Wednesday's official White House event at the memorial with President Bill Clinton and the First Lady commemorating the passage of the landmark civil rights legislation. The interview will be Webcast on WeMedia's site, www.wemedia.com, at 4:00 PM EST

The interview will be available as archived video for visitors to the WeMedia site after that time.

Note: WeMedia's new *Politics and Advocacy* section is committed to bringing information to the disability community about relevant issues and providing access to key decision-makers. Upcoming guests on WeMedia's "Political Forum" series include Vice President Al Gore, and U.S. Senators Jim Jeffords (R-VT) and Tom Harkin (D-IA). In addition to the Forum, the *Politics and Advocacy* section will provide the disability community with unprecedented live Webcast coverage of the Republican and Democratic national conventions. WeMedia Inc. is the official Webcaster of the 2000 Paralympic Games in Sydney and publishes *WeMedia* magazine.

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Victoria L. Valentine
07/21/2000 10:05:08 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: CHECKLIST: 7/26 ADA 10th Anniversary event

Press Office

Victoria

Contact

Valentine, 67284

Event: 10th Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) event

Date: Wednesday, July 26, 2000

Time: 10:30 am - 11:30 am

Date for Announcing/Advisory: advisory, Monday, July 24

Press: OPEN PRESS

Site: FDR Memorial, Room 4 (overflow in Room 3)

Program:

Sequence of Speakers: Order TBD
President Clinton
First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Others TBD

Audience: 1, 500

Cabinet: TBD

Congressional: TBD

Other: Former President Bush invited to attend (he signed ADA bill, not expected to accept)
disability organization, civil rights and other relevant groups

Message:

The enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 10 years ago this month signaled a transformation in our Nation's public policies toward people with disabilities. America is now a dramatically different -- and better -- country because of the ADA.

In the last 10 years, we have worked hard to eliminate harmful stereotypes and have grown to understand disability as a natural part of the human experience. We are taking steps, such as renovating and constructing public accommodations to make them fully accessible, to ensure that people with disabilities are fully integrated into our communities and workplaces. And we have come to appreciate that people with disabilities are a key element -- and an untapped resource -- in sustaining our Nation's historic economic growth.

The Clinton-Gore Administration has worked hard to achieve the ADA's core goals -- equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency. Our Administration has vigorously defended the ADA in court cases across the Nation; we are collaborating with State Medicaid directors to implement the Supreme Court's 1999 *Olmstead* decision, which prohibits unjustified isolation of institutionalized persons with disabilities; we helped ensure that 80 percent of America's public transit buses are now accessible; we are implementing the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act, which the President proudly signed into law last December; we have worked closely with schools and colleges to improve the enrollment, retention, and graduation of students with disabilities; and my Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities is developing far-reaching policies for a comprehensive, coordinated employment agenda. We still have much to accomplish.



adachart0720.do

DRAFT deliverables to be announced by POTUS/FLOTUS on Wed., deliverables to be announced by VP on Tues and Cabinet on Thurs and Friday, also included.

PLEASE NOTE: the Vice President is doing his ADA event the day before, on Tuesday, July 25, see his deliverables in attachment above and general info on advisory at the end of checklist.

Speechwriter: Sam Afridi

Press Plan

National Media: OPEN PRESS
Regional Media: pitch to major markets

TV: pitch to show as package
Internet: pitch to newsites, special broadcast planned
Radio: pitch to major markets, put sound on actuality line
Specialty: disability press

Press Paper

Policy Paper/Q&A

Originating Office: DPC
Contact and phone number: Eric Gould/Karin Kullman

Event Participant List

Originating Office: DPC/LEG/OPL
Contact and phone number: Karin Kullman/Marty Hoffman/Jonathan Young

Event Guest List

Originating Office: OPL
Contact and phone number: Jonathan Young, Christine Stanek

July 25, 2000

Celebration Event for the 10th Anniversary of the Signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act

Date: Wednesday, July 26, 2000
Time: 10:30 AM
Location: FDR Memorial
From: Ann O'Leary
 Victoria Choitz (Kennedy School Fellow)

I. Purpose

To celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the ADA; to demonstrate the Administration's 8-year commitment to advancing the rights of persons with disabilities as full participants in all of society; and to announce several actions that preserve the spirit and the intent of the ADA, as well as build on its foundation by expanding employment opportunities and strengthening protections to ensure equality.

II. Background

Overview

You will highlight Administration accomplishments on behalf of Americans with disabilities over the past eight years.

You will then announce three initiatives for youth with disabilities: 1) increased SSI earnings exclusion caps for students with disabilities who want to work; 2) a Youth to Work Initiative that amends the Executive Order which created the Presidential Taskforce on Adults with Disabilities and Employment to include a focus on increased education, training, and employment for youth with disabilities; and 3) an Able to Work public-private consortium made up of 10 charter companies which will lead by example and mentor other companies hiring young people with disabilities (see below for details on these initiatives).

The President will announce four items: 1) proposals to increase earnings exclusion caps for Social Security beneficiaries who work; 2) an Executive Order directing Federal Agencies to hire 100,000 people with disabilities over a five-year period, to provide reasonable accommodations for workers with disabilities, and to identify disabled-friendly work arrangements; 3) a directive to revisit and strengthen Federal agency plans to prevent disability-based discrimination; and 4) the new Access America for People with Disabilities website to provide quick access to services and resources.

- * ~~ADP~~ ~~leaf~~ *
- * ~~SWERS~~
- * ~~CHANGS?~~
- * ~~REPAIR~~
- * ~~ADP~~ →
- * ~~INTERING~~

Detailed Description of Initiatives YOU will announce to Addresses Barriers to Employment for Youth with Disabilities

SSI earned income exclusion caps for students. You will announce the Administration's increase in the amount that students who receive SSI can earn while continuing to SSI benefits. The increase in the maximum monthly earned income exclusion for students who receive Supplemental Security Income is from \$400 to \$1,290 and the yearly exclusion from \$1,620 to \$5,200. The Administration is proposing to automatically adjust these amounts thereafter based on any annual increases in the cost-of-living index.

The Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE) has never been increased. The new level was set to approximate student earnings working full-time during the summer and sporadically during the rest of the year for 1.5 times the minimum wage. This increase reflects the fact that school expenses have increased since the SEIE levels were defined in 1974. These increases would assist SSI beneficiaries in financing their education (academic, vocational, or technical) and encourage them to work and become self-sufficient. Additionally, the cost-of-living adjustments will ensure that the amounts account for the price of inflation.

The Youth to Work Initiative. This Initiative would be created by amending the Executive Order that established the Presidential Taskforce on Employment of Adults with Disabilities to focus the mission on helping young people transition from school to work. Youth with disabilities who want to enter the workforce face many barriers to employment, including low educational attainment, as well as low educational and employment expectations. Under the structure of the Taskforce, the Youth to Work Initiative will strengthen interagency research, demonstration projects, and education and training activities for youth to work activities. It will create a public awareness campaign to focus on youth with disabilities and reduce the stigma of their entering the workforce. This Initiative will ensure that youth with disabilities are included in all youth programs in Federal agencies and will explore how to increase access to health care and postsecondary education and training for youth going to work.

Able to Work Consortium. The Presidential Taskforce has worked with 10 major corporations (Microsoft, IBM, Dell, Bristol-Meyers Squibb, Ford Motor Company, Booz Allen & Hamilton, Lucent Technologies, Caterpillar, Royal Bank of Canada, and Merrill Lynch) to begin a public-private partnership that will help ensure that youth with disabilities are afforded employment opportunities. These corporations have volunteered to lead by example in demonstrating to other major corporations the importance and viability of hiring young people with disabilities. These pioneering companies will actively serve as mentors to other companies hiring youth with disabilities.

III. Participants

Speakers

HRC

Senator Harkin

Senator Hatch

Justin Dart

POTUS

On Stage

Approximately 11 young people with disabilities

Audience

1700 audience members

IV. Sequence of Events

Beth Gray* - Very Special Arts Vocalist will perform the National Anthem acapella

(She is a blind student from Little Rock, Arkansas)

FLOTUS makes remarks and introduces Senator Harkin

Senator Harkin makes remarks and introduces Senator Hatch

Senator Hatch makes remarks and introduces Justin Dart

Justin Dart makes remarks and introduces POTUS

POTUS makes remarks and concludes

*** BETH GRAY-VOCALIST**

Beth Gray is a 19 year old vocalist from North Little Rock, Arkansas, who has Optic Nerve Hypoplasia. In high school, she was listed in Who's Who Among American High School Students, was named Most Talented Female, and was a member of the Tri-M Music Honor Society. As a sophomore at Ouachita Baptist University, in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, Beth is on a vocal scholarship and is majoring in Choral Music Education. An active member of the Ouachita Singers, Ouachita Concert Choir, EEE Women's Social Club, and the Baptist Student Union, she hopes to one day become a professional musician or an elementary music teacher. Beth is a 2000 Panasonic Young Soloist Award recipient, and has had opportunities to perform at The Kennedy Center and the Russian Embassy hosted by VSA arts. Earlier this year Beth was crowned Miss West Central Arkansas. Most recently she competed in the Miss Arkansas Pageant where, in addition to a top 10 finish, she won best newcomer talent and newcomer total points categories.

V. Press Plan

Open press

VI. Remarks

- Provided by Laura Schiller

Attachments

- POTUS Briefing
- Administration Accomplishments
- Draft Press Paper

- Q & A's

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION AND THE FIRST LADY ON AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES

JULY 13, 2000

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SUMMARY OF THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES

Note: items in bold indicate initiatives and accomplishments that DIRECTLY affect children.

ECONOMIC INITIATIVES (FY2001 BUDGET)

- Support establishing an Office of Disability Policy, Evaluation and Technical Assistance (ODPET) within DoL (p. 2)
- Within DoL create the National Disability Business Development Board, a federally chartered corporation to facilitate employment and business ownership for Americans with Disabilities (p. 3)
- \$1,000 tax credit for work-related expenses for persons with disabilities (p. 3)
- Provide individuals with disabilities who return to work life-time access to Medicare (p. 3-4)
- \$2.4 billion in Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants (a \$60.8 million increase) (p. 4)

ECONOMIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 provides better health care options for people with disabilities who work (p. 4)
- July 1999 SSA increased the monthly earnings cap affecting benefits from \$500 to \$700 for beneficiaries who work (p. 4-5)
- October 1999 action plan to federal agencies for hiring persons with disabilities (p. 5)
- October 27, 1999 sponsored the first-ever "Disability Mentoring Day: Career Development for the 21st Century." This year, it will be on October 25. (p. 5)
- June 1999 signed executive order ensuring individuals with psychiatric disabilities are given the same hiring opportunities as persons with significant physical disabilities or mental retardation. (p. 5-6)
- June 1999 called for parity for mental health and substance abuse coverage in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Programs by 2001. (p. 6)
- Workforce Investment Act of 1998 included the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, which improve worker training and placement options for people with disabilities. (p. 6)
- March 1998 signed executive order establishing the Presidential Taskforce on Employment of Adults with Disabilities. Reports to the President periodically with policy recommendations to increase and aid employment for persons with disabilities. (p. 7)
- Inter-agency demonstration projects to expand job opportunities for persons with disabilities. (p. 7-8)
- **Extra Welfare to Work funds for long-term recipients, which includes persons with disabilities (p. 8)**

EDUCATION INITIATIVES (FY2001 BUDGET)

- **\$5.28 billion for Special Education Grants to States (\$290 million increase) (p. 8)**
- **\$45.2 million for State Improvement Grants for children with disabilities (\$10 million increase) (p. 8-9)**
- **\$26 million for the Parent Training and Information Centers program to meet the needs of under-served parents and families of children with disabilities (\$7.5 million increase). (p. 9)**
- **\$10 million for a Primary Education Intervention initiative to support projects with effective interventions and early identification for children with disabilities and significant reading challenges. (p. 9)**
- **\$8 million for State Technical Assistance Awards to help states comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (p. 9)**

EDUCATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **100 percent increase in funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (p. 9-10)**
- **Fought harmful amendments to IDEA (p. 10)**
- **Enforced IDEA in numerous Federal Court cases (p. 10)**

HEALTH CARE INITIATIVES (FY2001 BUDGET)

- **\$28 billion 10-year investment for long-term health care, including people with disabilities, children with special needs, and families who care for them. Centerpiece = \$3,000 tax credit for people with long-term care needs. (p. 10-11)**
- **Advocating for strong Patients' Bill of Rights (p. 11)**

HEALTH CARE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Family and Medical Leave Act, which allows workers to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a child or adult with a disability and other needs (p. 11-12)**
- **1997 created an optional program whereby states could allow people with disabilities who earn up to 250 percent of poverty to purchase Medicaid coverage. Oregon has done. (p. 12)**
- **Vetoed Republican proposal in the 104th Congress to block grant Medicaid (often the only form of health care available to persons with disabilities) (p. 12)**

ACCESS INITIATIVES (FY2001 BUDGET)

- **\$100 million for disability and technology research (\$13.5 million increase).** Includes \$5 million for an Educational Technology Initiative; \$3.4 million for an employment initiative; \$5.1 million for a Community Independence initiative; and \$15 million for alternative loan financing programs. (p. 13)
- \$58 million for Centers for Independent Living (20.8 percent increase) (p. 13)

ACCESS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- “ADA for the Information Age” July 1999 FCC adopted rules requiring telecommunications equipment and services be accessible to persons with disabilities (p. 13-14)
- **Assistive Technology Act of 1998, which re-authorized State Assistive Technology Centers (p. 14)**
- Changes to the Rehabilitation Act to strengthen obligations of federal agencies to provide accessible information technology to their employees and customers (p. 14)
- 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century on surface transportation (p. 14)
- Final regulations implementing the ADA provisions for public transportation accessibility (p. 14-15)
- \$75 million for Access to Jobs initiative, which facilitates transportation to jobs (p. 15)
- 1998 HUD statements, publications, and directives to increase housing options for persons with disabilities (p. 15)
- \$40 million in Section 8 housing funding for people with disabilities (p. 15)

EQUALITY INITIATIVES (FY2001 BUDGET)

- \$2.6 million increase in DoJ Civil Rights Division to enforce ADA (p. 15-16)

EQUALITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Supported and provided guidance to federal agencies on the June 1999 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, which ruled that unjustifiable institutionalization of a persons with a disability who, with proper support, can live in the community is discrimination. (p. 16)
- Increased resources for enforcing ADA, the Fair Housing Act, and IDEA (p. 16-17)
- Supports U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Bragdon v. Abbott*, which reinforces protections under ADA to persons with HIV/AIDS (p. 17)
- FY1999 \$40 million to HUD Fair Housing programs (\$10 million increase) (p. 17)
- July 1998 announcement that the FDR Memorial will include a statue that depicts FDR in his wheelchair (p. 17-18)
- Appointed most diverse Administration in History (p. 18)

SUMMARY OF THE FIRST LADY'S WORK ON BEHALF OF AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES

Note: in reverse chronological order

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| March 20, 2000 | Remarks at the Launch of a New Public-Private Effort to Improve the Diagnosis and Treatment of Children with Emotional and Behavioral Conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Thanks to Tipper Gore➤ Psychotropic drugs➤ Prescription drugs for children➤ NIMH fact sheet for parents➤ ED information kit for parents and teachers on ADHD➤ American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines on diagnosing and treating children with emotional and behavioral problems➤ NIMH \$5 million to study ADHD and Ritalin in preschoolers➤ FDA look at appropriate dosage levels for psychotropic drugs➤ Office of the Surgeon General Fall national conference on the treatment of children with behavioral and mental disorders |
| July 28, 1999 | "Talking It Over" Column on Americans with Disabilities, health care, and employment <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Unemployment and employment of persons with disabilities➤ National Taskforce on Employment of Adults with Disabilities➤ President's urging to Congress to pass Medicare and Medicaid health care options for persons with disabilities who work |
| June 7, 1999 | Remarks at the White House Conference on Mental Health <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The science of mental health➤ Announced the NIMH announcement of the launch of two clinical trials for effective treatments for those with mental illness (\$61 million) |
| January 28, 1999 | Remarks at the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation Awards <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Elizabeth Glaser, 10th Anniversary of Foundation➤ Children with AIDS, mother to child transmission➤ Clinton Administration initiatives: for minority communities, for a vaccine, global efforts.➤ Announced \$40 million grant to support medical schools in training doctors who work specifically with children➤ Announced awards to 4 scientists |

January 13, 1999

“Talking It Over” Column on epilepsy

- Numbers, facts
- President’s budget includes 14 percent expansion for NIH. \$76 million for research of epilepsy.
- FLOTUS in Chicago for a dedication of a new epilepsy center and a nationwide fundraiser for epilepsy research
- Next year, NIH will convene first-ever administration conference on epilepsy (did/will this happen?)
- CDC launch campaign to educate medical practitioners of need for early and accurate diagnosis

October 9, 1993

Remarks to the 44th Annual Convention of the ARC

- Health care reform generally
- Health care reform for persons with mental retardation, including home-based and community-based care, nondiscrimination, comprehensiveness, appropriateness, equity, and efficiency

**THE CLINTON
ADMINISTRATION'S
INITIATIVES AND
ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR
AMERICANS WITH
DISABILITIES**

THE WHITE HOUSE

Increasing Opportunities for Americans With Disabilities

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THE CLINTON-GORE ADMINISTRATION A RECORD OF PROGRESS

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PRESIDENT CLINTON AND VICE PRESIDENT GORE:

Supporting Americans with Disabilities

"If we want to keep our economy growing with continued low inflation and low unemployment, we must draw on the untapped potential of our people.... Americans with disabilities who want to work shouldn't have to wait one more day."

-- President Bill Clinton

October 16, 1999

HISTORIC ECONOMIC GROWTH:

Moving From Record Deficits to Record Surplus. In 1992, the deficit was \$290 billion, a record dollar high. In 2000, we have a projected budget surplus of \$167 billion -- the largest dollar surplus on record (even after adjusting for inflation) and the largest as a share of our economy since 1951. This is the first time we have had three surpluses in a row in more than a half century.

Saving Social Security. President Clinton and Vice President Gore have coupled fiscal discipline with a commitment to preserve and protect Social Security. President Clinton fought for and signed bipartisan legislation to eliminate the confusing and out-dated retirement earnings test in order to encourage work and earnings for older Americans. Under the Clinton-Gore Administration, the life of the Social Security trust fund has been extended to 2034. President Clinton has proposed extending the program's solvency to at least 2054 by paying down the national debt and dedicating the interest savings to Social Security. The President has also pushed for measures to strengthen Social Security's benefits to reduce poverty among elderly women.

Nearly 22 Million New Jobs. 21.6 million new

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jobs have been created since 1993, the most jobs ever created under a single Administration -- and more new jobs than Presidents Reagan and Bush created during their three terms. 91 percent (19.7 million) of the new jobs have been created in the private sector, the highest percentage in 50 years.

The Unemployment Rate Was 3.9 Percent in April -- the Lowest in More Than Three Decades.

The unemployment rate fell to 3.9 percent in April. The last time the unemployment rate was this low was in January 1970 -- more than thirty years ago. The unemployment rate has remained below 5 percent for 34 months in a row.

Lowest Inflation Since 1965. Inflation remains virtually non-existent, with the underlying core rate of inflation at 1.9 percent in 1999 -- the lowest rate since 1965. In the last four years the GDP price index has risen under two percent each year -- the lowest rate of increase since the early 1960s.

Fastest and Longest Real Wage Growth in Over Three Decades. In the last 12 months, average hourly earnings have increased 3.8 percent -- faster than the rate of inflation. The United States has had five consecutive years of real wage growth -- the longest consecutive increase since the 1960s. Since 1993, real wages are up 6.8 percent, after *declining* 4.3 percent during the Reagan and Bush years.

Highest Homeownership Rate in History. In 1999, the homeownership rate was 66.8 percent -- the highest ever recorded.

Lowest Poverty Rate in Two Decades. The poverty rate has fallen from 15.1 percent in 1993 to 12.7 percent in 1998. That's the lowest poverty rate since 1979 and the largest five-year drop in poverty in nearly 30 years (1965-1970).

EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY:

I. 2000 Legislative Priorities and FY2001 Budget Initiatives

Disability Office in the Department of Labor.

President Clinton and Vice President Gore support establishing an Office of Disability Policy, Evaluation and Technical Assistance (ODPET) within the Department of Labor (DOL), and improving access for adults with disabilities to employment services offered through the one-stop system. The President's FY 2001 budget includes \$20.56 million for ODPET, which was recommended by the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities. Under the

*Economic
Initiatives*

leadership of an Assistant Secretary, ODPET's mission would be to dramatically increase the employment rate of people with disabilities by implementing a sustained, coordinated, and aggressive strategy to eliminate barriers and create meaningful employment opportunities for people with disabilities. This office would initially subsume the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (PCEPD) in an effort to reduce duplication and enhance coordination of Federal employment programs for people with disabilities. The office would work within DOL to ensure that all programs address the need to increase participation of people with disabilities in DOL training programs, with a targeted emphasis on those serving youth during FY 2001.

National Disability Business Development Board. Creation of ODPET would also establish the National Disability Business Development Board, a federally chartered corporation. The Board will be made up of America's business leaders, organized labor, rehabilitation and service providers, and disability-related organizations currently advising the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. The board would: work to improve the access of individuals with disabilities to financial institutions and commercial and business enterprises; provide incentives to, and collaborate with, the public and private sectors to ensure the necessary levels of resources/investments in employment initiatives for individuals with disabilities; and leverage funds for public awareness about disability and employment.

Tax Credit for Work-Related Expenses. In his FY 2001 budget, President Clinton renews his proposal for a \$1,000 tax credit for work-related expenses for people with disabilities. This tax credit was proposed last year but not supported by Congress. The credit would help workers with significant disabilities cover the formal and informal costs that are associated with employment, such as specialized transportation and technology. Like the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act, it would help ensure that people with disabilities have the tools they need to return to work by recognizing the extra costs associated with working.

Extending Medicare Access for People with Disabilities Who Work. The President and Vice President's FY 2001 budget builds on achievements enacted in the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act to ensure that individuals with disabilities have full opportunity to participate in

and contribute to our growing economy. The Administration has proposed removing an arbitrary four-and-a-half-year limit on Medicare coverage for people with disabilities who return to work, giving individuals with disabilities lifetime access to Medicare.

Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants. The Administration's FY 2001 budget includes \$2.4 billion, an increase of \$60.8 million, or 2.6 percent, to assist State VR agencies to improve the employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities. A wide range of services is provided each year to about 1.2 million individuals with disabilities, and these funds will assist States to address the needs of this population.

*Economic
Accomplishments*

II. Record of Accomplishments

Enacted the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act. The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (TWWIIA) is an historic bill produced through the bipartisan efforts of President Clinton and Vice President Gore; Senators Jeffords, Kennedy, Roth, and Moynihan; leaders in the House of Representatives; and the disability community. On December 17, 1999, the President signed this historic bill into law at a ceremony held at the FDR Memorial. This legislation, which the President advocated since 1998, will help provide better health care options for people with disabilities who work.

TWWIIA will improve employment opportunities by: creating new options and incentives for states to offer a Medicaid buy-in for workers with disabilities; extending Medicare coverage for an additional 4 ½ years for people on disability insurance who return to work; creating a \$250 million Medicaid buy-in demonstration to help people whose disabilities have not yet progressed so far that they cannot work; and enhancing employment-related services for people with disabilities through the new "Ticket to Work" Program. TWWIIA also creates a Work Incentive Grant program to provide benefits planning and assistance, facilitate access to information about work incentives, and better integrate services to people with disabilities working or returning to work.

Increasing the Substantial Gainful Activity Amount. In July 1999, the Social Security Administration increased the monthly earnings guidelines from \$500 to \$700 per month, enabling beneficiaries with disabilities to earn more without

affecting their benefits. These guidelines are used to determine whether the work activities of a person with impairments, other than blindness, demonstrate that he or she is able to perform substantial gainful activity (SGA).

Directing Federal Agencies to Implement Plan for Hiring People with Disabilities. Since the beginning of the Clinton-Gore Administration, the American economy has added nearly 21 million new jobs, and unemployment is at the lowest level in three decades. Yet nearly 75 percent of individuals with significant disabilities are unemployed. Last year, Vice President Gore asked the Office of Personnel Management to develop a model plan to bring more adults with disabilities into the Federal workforce. On October 16, 1999, President Clinton released that action plan and directed the Federal government to implement it immediately. The plan, *Accessing Opportunity: The Plan for Employment of People with Disabilities in the Federal Government*, along with a companion Employment Guide, provides detailed resources for federal employees as they recruit, hire, train and promote people with disabilities. Under this plan, the Federal government -- the nation's largest employer with almost 1.8 million workers -- will do more to: recruit people with disabilities for positions at all levels of government; provide opportunities for students with disabilities; ensure career opportunities for people with disabilities; collect and maintain data to monitor success of people with disabilities in the federal workforce; and provide reasonable accommodations for applicants and employees with disabilities.

Sponsoring "Disability Mentoring Day: Career Development for the 21st Century." On October 27, 1999, the White House sponsored the first-ever mentoring day for people with disabilities. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and Departments of Labor, Justice, Education, Transportation, and Defense also participated in the mentoring program, which was modeled after other "shadow" days. It also coincided with a reception hosted by OPM to celebrate the release of the *Plan and Employment Guide*. This year, the mentoring day will take place on Wednesday, October 25th. The White House encourages people from all across the country to participate in their local communities.

Expanding Hiring Opportunities for People with Psychiatric Disabilities. In January 1999, Tipper Gore announced that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) would explore measures to eliminate the stricter standards that are currently

applied to job applicants with psychiatric disabilities. On June 4, 1999, President Clinton signed an executive order ensuring that individuals with psychiatric disabilities are given the same hiring opportunities as persons with significant physical disabilities or mental retardation. On March 17, 2000, OPM issued proposed regulations to create a new Government-wide excepted appointing authority for persons with psychiatric disabilities. This authority will broaden the category of people who may non-competitively acquire competitive civil service status after two years of successful service, providing individuals with psychiatric disabilities the same hiring opportunities already offered to individuals with mental retardation and significant physical disabilities.

Mental Health Parity for Federal Employees.

Leading by example, in June 1999 President Clinton called for parity for mental health and substance abuse coverage in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) by 2001. The FEHBP is the largest employer-sponsored health insurance program in the country -- covering about 9 million people, including Federal employees, retirees, and their families -- and often serves as a model for other employers and the insurance industry. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will work with participating health plans to introduce managed behavioral health care components that incorporate proven techniques such as case management, authorized treatment plans, provider networks using effective screening and referral procedures, pre-certification, and disease management. OPM has eliminated lifetime and annual maximums in the Program, and negotiated with plans to move away from contractual day and visit limitations, high deductibles, co-payments, and coinsurance for mental health coverage.

Signed the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

On August 7, 1998, President Clinton signed the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which included the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, helping to improve worker training and placement options for people with disabilities. WIA establishes better links between the vocational rehabilitation (VR) system and the general workforce development system. Job seekers with disabilities now have improved options for service through the mainstream worker training and placement system, and through the disability-specific VR system. WIA also strengthens the Rehabilitation Act by giving increased options to individuals with disabilities in developing VR plans.

Increasing Employment of Adults with Disabilities. President Clinton signed an Executive Order in March 1998 establishing the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities. The Task Force is charged with creating a coordinated and aggressive national policy to move individuals with disabilities into gainful employment at a rate approaching that of the general adult population. The Task Force, chaired by the Secretary of Labor, continues its efforts to promote employment opportunities, and many of its recommendations have already been accepted and implemented by the President. The Task Force is analyzing the barriers to employment faced by people with disabilities and will report its findings with policy recommendations to the President on a periodic basis until its final report is presented on July 26, 2002.

Working on Innovative Strategies to Improve Employment of Adults with Disabilities. The Clinton-Gore Administration continues to develop innovative strategies to employ Americans with disabilities. The Social Security Administration (SSA), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Department of Labor (DOL), and the Department of Education (DoED) are all participating in inter-agency demonstration projects to expand job opportunities for persons with disabilities. For instance, DoED has awarded six systems-change grants to establish models of improved cooperation and coordination between State Vocational Rehabilitation programs, public employment/employment training programs, and other related programs. The grants will help reduce barriers to employment and increase the capacity of States' overall employment system to serve individuals with disabilities. The focus of these systems change projects is increasing the employment rate of individuals with disabilities who are currently receiving support through public programs.

In addition, SSA is working under cooperative agreements with 12 states to develop innovative projects to assist adults with disabilities to reenter the workforce. This activity, the State Partnership Initiative, is designed to help states develop innovative and integrated statewide programs of services and supports for their residents with disabilities that will increase job opportunities and decrease dependence on benefits, including Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income. Moreover, the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (PCEPD) has worked to coordinate a

commitment by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Society of Human Resource Managers, and dozens of other private sector companies to support several initiatives advancing the employment of people with disabilities among employers. Initiatives include the formation of local and state employer-led groups advocating for the employment of people with disabilities, the launching of a nationwide campaign to advance the employment of persons with cognitive disabilities, and supporting PCEPD's career exploration and employment programs for youth with disabilities.

Creating New Tools to Help Families Move from Welfare to Work.

Since enactment of the 1996 welfare reform law, millions of families have moved from welfare to work. Recognizing the special needs of some people with disabilities and other populations in moving from welfare to work, the 1997 Balanced Budget Act included \$3 billion to move long-term welfare recipients and low-income non-custodial fathers into jobs. To fully implement this initiative, the President's FY 2001 budget allows grantees an additional two years to spend Welfare-to-Work funds. It also proposes \$255 million for Fathers Work/Families Win grants to promote responsible fatherhood and support working families. The Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit provides tax incentives to encourage businesses to hire long-term welfare recipients. President Clinton has secured 110,000 new housing vouchers in the last two years to help welfare recipients and hard-pressed working families move closer to job opportunities, and this year he is proposing \$690 million for 120,000 new housing vouchers.

Education
Initiatives

EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

I. 2000 Legislative Priorities and FY2001 Budget Initiatives

State Grant Program. The Administration's FY 2001 budget includes \$5.28 billion, a \$290 million or 5.8 percent increase, for Special Education Grants to States. With passage of this increase, funding for the State Grant Program will have risen 127 percent since 1994. In FY 2001, the Grants to States program would provide an average of \$827 per child, an increase of 4 percent over the FY 2000 level. If approved, States will receive 13 percent of their average per pupil expenditures, or 11 percent of the excess costs, from the federal government for educating children with disabilities.

State Improvement Grants. The Administration's FY 2001 budget includes \$45.2 million for the State Improvement Grants, a \$10 million increase (or

28.4 percent) over FY 2000. This will provide funding for 28 existing awards to States as well as new awards to an estimated 15 States and territories. The State Improvement program would expand efforts to reform and improve State systems for providing educational, early intervention, and transitional services to improve results for children with disabilities.

Parent Training. The Administration's FY 2001 budget for the Parent Training and Information Centers program is \$26 million, a \$7.5 million increase, or 40.3 percent, above last year's level. The increase would be used to expand the size of the awards to existing State Parent Training and Information Centers, establish four new centers for a total of 103 across the country, and provide additional technical assistance to centers. Three of the new centers would be community centers operated by local parent organizations and focus on meeting the needs of underserved parents and families of children with disabilities.

Reading and Behavior. The President's FY 2001 budget includes a request for a \$10 million Primary Education Intervention initiative. This initiative will support projects that demonstrate effective interventions coupled with early identification to improve results for children with disabilities. The initiative would target children with significant problems in learning to read, and those exhibiting behaviors that have been found to lead to significant discipline problems or emotional disturbance as they get older. Research shows that early intervention is particularly effective for improving educational results for children, and these funds will allow more students to benefit from timely identification and service delivery.

State Technical Assistance Awards. Helping States comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is critically important, and the President's FY 2001 budget includes an \$8 million request for State Technical Assistance Awards that will help address this need. These technical assistance awards will be instrumental in improving State monitoring and complaint resolution systems, and to correct deficiencies found through State and Federal monitoring of the implementation of IDEA.

II. Record of Accomplishments

Supporting Quality Education for Children with Disabilities. In 1997, the President enacted a stronger Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), reaffirming our national commitment to

*Educational
Accomplishments*

provide a world class education for all our children by ensuring that our nation's schools are safe and conducive to learning, while scrupulously protecting the rights of students with disabilities. Funding for the basic IDEA grant program has increased by 100 percent under the Clinton-Gore Administration.

Fighting Unwise Amendments to IDEA. In the 105th Congress, the Majority in the House of Representatives attempted to amend the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to make it easier to expel children with disabilities who were judged by school officials to be potentially violent in school. These broad, subjective judgements could have resulted in inappropriate expulsion of large numbers of students with disabilities. The Clinton-Gore Administration, working with parents, successfully opposed these amendments.

Enforcing IDEA. The Clinton Administration has defended the rights of children with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in numerous Federal Court cases: *Cedar Rapids Community School District v. Garrett F.*; *Marie O. v. Edgar*; *Sacramento City Unified School District v. Holland*; *Hartmann v. Loudon County Board of Education*.

Health Care
Initiatives

**IMPROVING ACCESS AND QUALITY OF
HEALTH CARE:**

**I. 2000 Legislative Priorities and FY2001 Budget
Initiatives**

Addressing the Nation's Multi-Faceted Needs for Long Term Services and Supports. The President's FY 2001 budget includes a \$28 billion, 10-year investment to tackle the complex problem of long-term care, which affects millions of elderly persons, people with disabilities, children with special needs, and/or the families who care for them. Its centerpiece is a \$3,000 tax credit for people with long-term care needs or their caregivers -- triple the amount proposed last year. It also seeks to address the way in which Medicaid policy and practice has inadvertently discriminated against people with long-term care needs who want to live in the community by making it much easier to provide coverage in nursing homes than in the community. This proposal would enable states to provide services to nursing-home qualified beneficiaries at 300 percent of the Supplemental Security Income limit (about \$15,000), without requiring a complicated and frequently time-consuming Federal waiver. This proposal contributes toward the goal of giving people who

need long-term services and supports the choice of remaining in their homes and communities. It costs \$140 million over 5 years, \$370 million over 10 years.

Expanding Coverage to Uninsured Americans.

In his FY 2001 budget, President Clinton has proposed a 10-year, \$110 billion initiative that would dramatically improve the affordability of and access to health insurance. The proposal would expand coverage to at least 5 million uninsured Americans and expand access to millions more. If enacted, these policies would be the largest expansion of coverage since Medicare was created in 1965.

Advocating a Strong Patients' Bill of Rights.

The President and Vice President have called for passage of the bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights Act, to ensure that all Americans have essential protections, including: guaranteed access to needed health care specialists; access to emergency room services when and where needs arise; continuity of care protections to assure coverage if a patient's health care provider is dropped; access to a timely internal and independent external appeals process with a medical necessity standard; assurance that doctors and patients can openly discuss treatment options; and an enforcement mechanism that ensures recourse for patients who have been harmed as a result of health plan actions.

II. Record of Accomplishments

Extending Enforceable Patient Protections for Millions of Americans. Leading by example, the President directed all federal agencies to ensure that their employees and beneficiaries have the benefits and rights guaranteed under the proposed Patients' Bill of Rights. Eighty-five million Americans covered by federal health plans have the security of knowing they will have fair access to health care thanks to the President's work.

Providing Access to Health Care Services for Uninsured Workers. In 1999, the President proposed and won \$25 million in funding for a program to coordinate systems of care, increase the number of services delivered, and establish an accountability system to assure adequate patient care for uninsured and low-income individuals. This year, the President has proposed funding this initiative at \$125 million, representing a substantial down payment on the President's plan to invest \$1 billion over 5 years.

Supporting Families. President Clinton fought for

*Health Care
Accomplishments*

and enacted the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which allows workers to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a child or adult with a disability, seriously ill family members, newborn or adoptive children, or their own serious health problems -- without fear of losing their jobs. Since its enactment, FMLA has benefited millions of Americans, and the President has expanded leave options for Federal employees. President Clinton has called for extending this benefit to 12 million more working families and has proposed expanding FMLA to allow workers to take up to 24 unpaid hours off each year for school and early childhood education activities, routine family medical care, and caring for an elderly relative.

Increasing Access to Health Care and Supporting Employment for Americans with Disabilities. The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 created an optional program whereby States could allow people with disabilities who earn up to 250 percent of poverty to purchase Medicaid coverage. Oregon is the first state to take advantage of this policy, and they have created a program that will let individuals go to work and get or keep Medicaid. Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala has asked every governor to seriously consider this program.

Passing Meaningful Health Insurance Reform. President Clinton signed the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, which limits exclusions for pre-existing conditions, makes coverage portable, and helps individuals who lose jobs maintain coverage.

Protecting the Medicaid Guarantee for People with Disabilities. The Clinton-Gore Administration refuses to go backward on health care coverage for Americans with disabilities, rejecting proposals to end the Medicaid guarantee to meaningful health benefits for people with disabilities. The President vetoed the Republicans' proposal in the 104th Congress to block grant the Medicaid program, preserving Medicaid coverage for six million persons with disabilities. Medicaid is often the only form of health care available to people with disabilities and allows many children and adults to receive services at home rather than in institutions. Thanks to President Clinton, the 1997 Balanced Budget Act preserved the Federal guarantee of Medicaid coverage for populations who depend on it.

IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY:

I. 2000 Legislative Priorities and FY2001 Budget

Access Initiatives

Initiatives

Assistive Technology Initiatives. The Administration's FY 2001 budget includes \$100 million (a \$13.5 million increase) for disability and technology research at the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). NIDRR will launch a comprehensive technology initiative which includes: \$5 million for an Educational Technology Initiative to provide technical assistance and training to elementary and secondary schools; \$3.4 million for a multi-pronged Employment initiative to carry out research, training, and technical assistance to enhance the ability of individuals with disabilities to access and use information and communication technology; and \$5.1 million for a Community Independence initiative on how information and assistive technology can be used to enhance community integration and participation by individuals with disabilities. The Administration's request also includes \$15 million to support grants that establish or maintain alternative loan financing programs. Most people with disabilities do not have the private financial resources to purchase the assistive technology they need. If approved, this increase would significantly enhance opportunities for individuals with disabilities to take advantage of assistive technology.

Centers for Independent Living. The Administration's FY 2001 includes \$58 million for Centers for Independent Living (CILs) -- a 20.8 percent increase over last year's funding level. This increase would make it possible to accomplish an increase in the stability of existing CILs and open new CILs in unserved and underserved areas. The request could provide sufficient funding to establish a \$200,000 federal funding floor. In addition, a \$10 million increase for CILs could expand the network of centers by funding up to 56 new centers in 23 States.

II. Record of Accomplishments

Ensuring that the Telecommunications Revolution Benefits All. In July 1999, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted rules on Section 225 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which requires that telecommunications equipment and services be accessible to individuals with disabilities, if readily achievable. This provision is known as the ADA for the Information Age. These regulations, which have been supported by the telecommunications industry, will ensure people with disabilities have access to a broad range of products and services -- such as telephones, cell

Access Accomplishments

phones, pagers, call waiting, and operator services – where they previously experienced barriers. Telecommunications carriers may not install network features, functions, or capabilities that do not comply with the regulations. The regulations also ensure that information, documentation, and customer service is conducted in accessible ways.

Signed the Assistive Technology Act. Technology is a crucial component in enabling people with disabilities to obtain and keep meaningful employment. With the support of the Clinton-Gore Administration, Congress passed the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, which reauthorizes the "Tech Act" that created State Assistive Technology Centers to provide assistive devices to low-income individuals with disabilities.

Ensuring the Federal Government Provides Accessible Technology and Information. The Clinton-Gore Administration recommended, and Congress enacted, changes to the Rehabilitation Act strengthening the obligations of federal agencies to provide accessible information technology to their employees and customers. This enabled the federal government to use its considerable purchasing power to influence private industry toward developing universally designed technology that is accessible to almost everyone. On April 18, 2000, Attorney General Janet Reno announced the release of the Department of Justice's (DOJ) first report under section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, *Information Technology and People with Disabilities: The Current State of Federal Accessibility*. Under DOJ's direction, federal agencies examined the procurement policies and procedures, along with common types of information technology. DOJ found that while some information technology used by federal agencies is accessible, simple steps can increase the extent to which federal information technology is usable by people with disabilities.

Increased Resources for Accessible Transportation. In 1998, President Clinton signed the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), which provides significantly increased resources to make our Nation's surface transportation systems accessible. TEA-21 included increased funding for the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities grant program.

Increasing Public Transportation Accessibility. The Department of Transportation and the Access Board have issued final regulations implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provisions for over-the-road bus (OTRB)

accessibility that provides a definition of what constitutes discriminatory action. The regulation requires large, fixed-route operators to achieve 50 percent of full fleet accessibility by October 2006 and 100 percent by October 2012. The Department has strengthened the regulations by including provisions making OTRB operators individually and collectively accountable for providing accessible service.

Access to Jobs Initiative. The President's Access to Jobs initiative helps communities design innovative transportation solutions, such as van services, to help former welfare recipients and other low-income workers get to work. Funding for this initiative has increased to \$75 million in FY 2000 and will be \$100 million in FY 2001 as a result of guaranteed funding in TEA-21. This innovative program emphasizes providing people with disabilities the transportation access required to achieve education, work, and family goals.

Increasing Housing Options. The Clinton-Gore Administration took a number of significant actions in 1998 that advanced housing policy for people with disabilities. First, HUD issued a statement supporting the view that institutional living does not constitute real housing for people with disabilities. On April 28, 1998, Fannie Mae announced the publication of "A Home of Your Own Guide," the first manual specifically created to provide step-by-step home buying guidance for people with disabilities. In February, HUD Secretary Cuomo issued a directive encouraging communities to use community development block grant funds for home modifications for people with disabilities. Also, in HUD's recent Notices of Funding Availability, the agency included bonus points for developers when they seek to build structures that include "visitability" by people with disabilities.

Increasing Section 8 Funding in HUD Appropriations. President Clinton supported the inclusion of \$40 million in Section 8 funding for people with disabilities, in part to offset the displacement likely to occur as a result of "elderly-only" designation of public housing formerly occupied by people with disabilities.

PROMOTING EQUALITY FOR ALL OF OUR CITIZENS:

I. 2000 Legislative Priorities and FY 2001 Budget Initiatives

Increased Funding for Civil Rights Enforcement. The Clinton-Gore Administration's

*Equality
Initiatives*

FY 2001 budget includes a request for an additional \$16 million for the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Civil Rights Division -- a 19 percent increase over last year's budget of \$82.2 million. With a proposed increase of \$2.4 million for the Civil Rights Division, DOJ hopes to further implement the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by funding new initiatives, including an initiative to remove barriers that prevent people with disabilities from obtaining basic community services, such as riding public transportation or attending a town meeting. Additional funding will also help begin a new initiative to train law enforcement officers on how to appropriately interact with persons with mental disabilities.

Protecting All of Our Citizens. The President and Vice President have repeatedly called for passage of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which would strengthen and expand the existing federal hate crimes law to cover cases of hate crimes based on disability, gender, or sexual orientation.

II. Record of Accomplishments

Assuring Access to Community Living for the People with Disabilities. On June 22, 1999, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed in *Olmstead v. L.C.* that, under the Americans With Disabilities Act, unjustifiable institutionalization of a person with a disability who, with proper support, can live in the community is discrimination. In accordance with that Court ruling, on January 14, 2000, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued guidance to state Medicaid directors on how to make state programs responsive to the desires of people with disabilities to live in appropriate community-based settings. The Administration's goal is to integrate people with disabilities into the social mainstream with equal opportunities and the opportunity to make choices in their lives. The Clinton-Gore Administration's flexibility in granting state waivers has spurred an increase in home and community-based services. Since he took office, the President has approved over 300 such waivers. As a result, the number of people with developmental disabilities served in home and community waiver programs has increased significantly.

Vigorously Enforcing Disability Rights. President Clinton has led the fight for vigorous enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Fair Housing Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and other critical civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities in housing, schools, workplaces,

Equality
Accomplishments

and public areas across the nation. Under the Clinton-Gore Administration, the number of positions allocated for ADA enforcement at the Department of Justice (DOJ) has increased by 105 percent. The Administration's FY 2001 budget proposal includes funding for another 29 new positions for ADA enforcement -- a 35 percent increase over FY 2000 funding. DOJ has entered into hundreds of settlement agreements involving access to civic life (city halls and municipal services), 911 emergency services, hotels, stores, restaurants, theaters, and other public accommodations. The Department's litigation activity has established important legal precedents including ADA coverage (such as zoning and prisons), architect liability, line of sight over standing spectators, effective communication, and unnecessary inquiries by professional licensing entities. Implementation of the ADA's "most integrated setting" requirement has been an important element of DOJ's Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act investigations and agreements (involving MRDD institutions, psychiatric hospitals, and public nursing homes).

Working to Stop Discrimination Against People With AIDS. President Clinton supports the Supreme Court's decision in *Bragdon v. Abbott*, which reinforces the protections offered by the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) for Americans living with HIV and AIDS. The President directed the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to vigorously prosecute those who discriminate against people with AIDS, leading to actions against health care providers and facilities that violate the ADA.

Working for Fair Housing. In response to the increase in reported cases of serious fair housing violations, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) committed to doubling the number of its civil rights enforcement actions by the year 2000. In addition, the President proposed and won a major expansion of HUD's Fair Housing programs. The FY 1999 budget expanded HUD's Fair Housing programs to \$40 million -- a \$10 million increase over FY 1998 funding. That 33 percent increase included \$7.5 million for a new audit-based enforcement initiative proposed by the Administration.

Adding a New Statue to the FDR Memorial. On May 2, 1997, President Clinton dedicated the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial to honor the thirty-second President of the United States. On July 2, 1998, Vice President Gore announced that

the FDR Memorial will soon include an additional outdoor room at the main entrance, which will depict FDR in the small wheelchair he invented. In collaboration with the disability community, the Clinton-Gore Administration has selected a specific design that will show how FDR became one of our greatest presidents while he had a disability and used a wheelchair. And last year, the Clinton-Gore Administration helped secure \$3 million to fund the memorial addition, which may be complete as early as this year.

Appointed the Most Diverse Administration in History. President Clinton has appointed a highly talented and the most diverse Administration in history, including the appointment of record numbers of people with disabilities in the White House and throughout the Clinton-Gore Administration. The Federal government now employs more than 100,000 employees with some type of disability. President Clinton's Administration appointees include: Judith Heumann, Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitation Services; Paul Miller, Commissioner of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; and Fredric Schroeder, Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Commission. People with disabilities serve in the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, Labor, State, and Transportation. President Clinton has also appointed people with disabilities to positions in such independent agencies as the National Council on Disability and the Social Security Administration, as U.S. District Court Judges, and to various Presidential Committees, Commissions, and Task Forces. In the White House, Jonathan Young is the first person with a disability ever appointed to serve as Associate Director for Disability Outreach in the Office of Public Liaison.

5/00

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**THE FIRST LADY'S
COLUMNS AND REMARKS ON
AMERICANS WITH
DISABILITIES**

Remarks on Children w/ emotul & beh. conditions

THE WHITE HOUSE

Treatment of Children with Emotional and Behavioral Conditions

(incl. psychotropic drugs)
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Launch of New Public-Private Effort to Improve the Diagnosis and Treatment of Children with Emotional and Behavioral Conditions

Remarks by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

Indian Treaty Room
Roosevelt Room
March 20, 2000

Thank you all for joining us here this morning. I want to thank Secretary Shalala for her leadership, and I'm also pleased she refuses to sit still. Because whenever our children's health is at stake, she's out there working very hard to make sure we all pay attention.

Also, I'm pleased to be joined not only by Secretary Shalala, but by Surgeon General David Satcher, and FDA Director Jane Henney, and NMIH Commissioner Dr. Steve Hyman, and Dr. Judith Heumann, and representatives from many of the groups who are on the frontlines working on behalf of all of our children, particularly children with behavioral and emotional challenges.

We just came from a meeting where we talked about what more we can do to ensure that children with emotional and behavioral problems get the diagnosis and treatment they need, and when they need it. Today's meeting and the announcements around it are important steps, but they are certainly not the last step we need to take in ensuring that all of our children get the health and support and treatment that they deserve.

You know, when a child comes to us who is hurt or sick, there is nothing more terrifying for any of us, especially parents, when we don't know how to make it better. If they have a broken arm, we want to fix it; if they have a deadly disease, we want to do everything we possibly can to cure it. And it's no different if the problem they bring to us lies in

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their head or their heart.

Thanks in large part to the leadership of Tipper Gore, the President's mental health adviser, we've come a long way in our battle to bring mental illness out of the shadows and make sure it is treated just as seriously as physical illness. More and more often, those treatments include drugs, even for young children. That is the issue we're here today to discuss.

As many of you know, the Journal of the American Medical Association recently reported that the number of preschoolers who are taking psychotropic drugs increased dramatically from 1991 to 1995. We know that the increase for Ritalin alone was 150 percent, and the use of anti-depressants increased over 200 percent. Now I am no doctor, as is obvious, but I am a parent and I have been a longtime children's advocate. And these findings concern me. I know they concern Dr. Hyman, Secretary Shalala and countless other experts.

But let me be very clear: We are not here to bash the use of these medications. They have literally been a Godsend for countless adults and young people with behavioral and emotional problems. We know that when children with such problems are left untreated, they may fail to reach their God-given potential later in their lives. That's why we are here. We want the best information for every parent, every doctor, every teacher—every single person who cares for our children.

But we do have to ask some serious questions about the use of prescription drugs in all children. We have to ask, for example, how are we diagnosing, treating and caring for children with behavioral and emotional conditions? Do we have the best tools to make the most accurate diagnoses? When it comes to drug treatments for children, why are we seeing such great variations by community and race? And what effects do overuse and underuse of these medications have on our children?

We need to ask also, why aren't we doing a better job of combining drugs, when necessary, with family therapy and other behavior modifications? And what about the effects on our very youngest children who haven't been tested for these prescription drugs and whose brains are in their most critical stage of development?

These are tough questions, and none of us have all of the answers. But as we made clear in the meeting this morning, we are building on a record, not

starting from scratch. We have already taken critical steps over the past few years to ensure that drugs are being tested and labeled specifically for children. Some of you may remember that was a long, drawn out struggle, that we were finally able to make progress and we were able to make an announcement at the White House last year. In so doing, we have learned that finding the right prescription for a child is not always just a matter of decreasing the dosage.

You know, I think it's important that all of us adults recognize that children are not just miniature adults; that their systems, their developmental needs, are different from that of an adult. We also learned quite a bit from the first ever Surgeon General's report on mental illness, which came out in December. It grew out of the White House Conference on Mental Illness, led by Tipper Gore. It taught us that the stigma of mental illness is worse for children; that too many health care professionals lack training in the area of children's mental, emotional and behavioral needs; and that we have a long way to go to increase awareness about children's mental health.

So clearly, we must do more. We know that the questions being raised are very difficult and they cannot be answered overnight. And they certainly won't be answered by the government, or health care professionals or educators or parents acting alone. Every single person with a stake in our children's health has an important role to play.

So I'm very pleased today to announce some of the immediate steps we are taking to make sure that children with mental illness, with behavioral and emotional problems, get the right care at the right time.

As our meeting made clear, we already know a lot about the proper diagnosis and treatment of emotional and behavioral problems in children. But that critical information has not reached many of the people who need it most—many of the parents, many of the teachers, many of the school nurses, many of the school social workers, many of the family physicians, many of the pediatricians—so there are a few things we are going to try to do to change that.

Today, the NIMH is releasing a new, easy to understand fact sheet that parents can use to make the right decisions about their children's treatment for these conditions. The Education Department will soon release an information kit to help parents and teachers better care for children with ADHD.

And I want to thank both the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians for all they are doing on this issue. This spring and fall, the American Academy of Pediatrics will give all of their 55,000 members up-to-date guidelines for diagnosing and treating children with emotional and behavioral problems. And as part of their yearlong focus on mental health, the American Academy of Family Physicians is sponsoring continuing education courses about these conditions for their 90,000 members.

But now we also have to admit, honestly, that there are some areas where we still just don't know enough, and that's especially true when it comes to giving prescription drugs to our very youngest children. I am pleased that NIMH will dedicate over \$5 million to conduct a landmark study examining ADHD and Ritalin use in preschoolers. This study will look at the gap between what we are finding out in the science labs and what is happening in clinical practice, so we can ensure that our children get the care they need. In addition, the FDA will look at some common psychotropic drugs and begin a process to find out what dosage levels are appropriate for very young children. This information will then be included on the labels of these medications, and the studies on them will address the obvious ethical issues that arise when you examine the use of prescription drugs in such a vulnerable group.

Finally, I'm delighted that this fall, the office of the Surgeon General will coordinate a national conference on the treatment of children with behavioral and mental disorders. It will bring together experts from the administration, parents, advocates, educators, researchers, healthcare professionals and consumers. It will look at the challenges we are all still facing in caring for children with mental illnesses. It will help us develop long term strategies that each of us can use to help young people get the childhood and chance in life that we all deserve.

I remember, as we were talking today, that I was fortunate, more than 30 years ago, to work at the Yale Child Study Center, one of the premier research institutions in our country when it comes to treating our young children. And I was exposed to some of the greatest minds and experts in the country about how to treat very young children. And there was nothing more challenging and, in many ways, heartbreaking, than a preschooler with obvious mental, emotional and behavioral problems. That child cannot speak for him or

herself. So it's often difficult to find out what kind of conditions in the child's life led to—if there is a cause and effect—the kind of behavior that is being observed. So I know firsthand—from 30 years of work on my own behalf, and watching experts who are really on the frontlines of this—that this is a very big challenge we are taking on today.

But I am also concerned that we are seeing increasing numbers of children who are both being diagnosed with certain disorders and whose behaviors are crying out for helpful intervention. We spoke earlier today in our meeting about the increasing number of very young children in foster care. The fastest growing group of children being put into foster care are children under 5. They come into foster care because of abuse or neglect and they therefore have more than the kinds of problems that one would expect in the population at large. We talked about the increasing numbers of children who are in the juvenile justice and criminal justice systems. We are not doing what we need to do to help intervene and treat those children, just as we are not providing adequate medical and mental health services in our adult prisons. These are problems that affect all of society, not just the individual with the specific problem or that individual's family or those teachers and others that come into contact with that young person. This has ramifications for all of us.

All we need to do is look back a few weeks and think about the 6-year-old that brought the gun to school to kill the other 6-year-old. That is a problem that did not just occur the morning the child picked that gun up off of the bed in that terrible condition in which he was living. So all of us have a stake in the research, the diagnosis and the treatment. And I would also add that we need some other people at the table, and we're going to try to do that through Dr. Satcher's efforts and the efforts of the associations represented here. We need to be sure that the insurance industry, the HMO industry, the pharmaceutical industry—as well as decision-makers at all levels of government—are also at the table. We do have a lot of information about what works, but we need more. And that's what this meeting and these announcements are about. But we should at least be trying to implement what we do know works while we look for more answers, and follow up on the efforts that will be underway.

You know, when a child is sad or misbehaving, it is never easy for even the most well-intentioned, best-meaning parent to figure out what is happening. Anyone who has ever had a child who is

pre-verbal with any kind of illness, or a toddler, or a preschooler, knows how difficult it is. Some of these young people have problems that are symptoms of nothing more than childhood or adolescence. Some of them need a parent to love them, or a person simply to listen to them talk about their pain. And yet some do have severe emotional and mental problems that can be greatly helped by prescription drugs. These children are waiting for our help—every one of them—and today we are taking important steps to provide it.

It is my great hope that this meeting will move us closer to the day that we will be able, number one, to remove the stigma from these problems so that no parent or no community has to wonder whether this is something that should be talked about, or help should be sought for. And number two, that we will treat the problems of the body and the mind the very same.

I hope that all of us will see this as a beginning and that we will be even more committed to doing whatever it takes to make sure that our children get the help, support and love that they need to have.

Thank you all very much.

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Column on Am's w/ Disabilities; health care; jobs

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July 28, 1999

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TALKING IT OVER

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

July 28, 1999

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Vice President &
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No one should be forced to choose between health care and a job, but that is exactly what happens to millions of people with disabilities in this country every day.

Joann Elliot worked as a food-service worker at St. Elizabeth's Hospital here in Washington for 20 years. She loved her job, but in 1991, a massive stroke left her paralyzed on her left side. Now, she needs a wheelchair to get around and help with bathing, dressing and completing other day-to-day activities.

Because she had to give up her job, Joann receives Social Security Disability Insurance, Medicare and Medicaid to cover her personal-care assistant, prescriptions, special equipment, therapy and some transportation. But she wants to go back to work. "I don't like staying at home," she explains. "I want to get out and be productive."

Here's the problem: If Joann finds a job -- even a low-paying one -- she'll lose her Medicaid benefits -- the very health care coverage that she needs to be able to go to work. Karen Moore, who is a wheelchair user, was thrilled when she found a job as a dispatcher for the River Cities, S.D., Transit System. When she began working full-time, Karen found that she needed less medical care, made new friends and was able to reduce her SSDI benefits.

But like Joann, she also found herself in a Catch-22. She depends on an attendant to get ready for work every day, but lost coverage for that care once she went to work. "I believe in contributing for these services," she says, "but the current arrangement makes it impossible for me to continue working."

After David Robar sustained a spinal-cord injury in

Talking It Over: 1999

[December 15, 1999](#)[December 8, 1999](#)[December 1, 1999](#)[November 24, 1999](#)[November 17, 1999](#)[November 10, 1999](#)[November 3, 1999](#)[October 27, 1999](#)[October 20, 1999](#)[October 13, 1999](#)[October 6, 1999](#)[September 29, 1999](#)[September 22, 1999](#)[September 15, 1999](#)[September 8, 1999](#)[September 1, 1999](#)[August 25, 1999](#)[August 18, 1999](#)[August 11, 1999](#)[August 4, 1999](#)[July 28, 1999](#)[July 21, 1999](#)[July 14, 1999](#)[July 7, 1999](#)[June 30, 1999](#)[June 23, 1999](#)[June 16, 1999](#)

After David Robar sustained a spinal-cord injury in 1990, he learned the same unfortunate lesson. Determined to return to work, he managed to finish his degree in business administration, but when he began looking for a job, he found that he would have to give up his health care benefits. "If I were to pay for my personal attendant services out of pocket," he says, "it would cost me more than I would make working full-time."

Today, millions of Americans live with disabilities and can bring enormous energy and creativity to our workforce. Studies show that the vast majority wants to work, yet 75 percent of them are unemployed. Too often, they find themselves in the same boat as David, Karen and Joann: If they find a job, they stand to lose the very benefits that allow them to go to work in the first place.

Nine years ago this week, the Americans with Disabilities Act became law, opening doors in the same way that the Civil Rights Act did three decades ago. Whereas, at one time, we presumed that a disability meant a lifetime of dependence, now, we know that those with disabilities want to -- and can -- lead independent lives and contribute to our nation's prosperity.

I am proud of the steps this Administration has taken to integrate people with disabilities into the workplace. Last year, my husband created a National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities. He has implemented new regulations that increase the amount of income that those with disabilities can earn while still receiving critical benefits; taken steps to remove federal hiring barriers for people with mental illness; and ordered the development of a plan for the federal government to hire more people with disabilities.

But while these actions have been a source of hope to Americans with disabilities, a major obstacle to employment remains: Most Medicare and Medicaid benefits are limited to those too disabled to work. That is why, this week, as we celebrate the anniversary of the ADA, my husband has urged Congress to pass legislation that would provide new health care options and employment assistance so that people with disabilities can work.

Last year, when we celebrated the anniversary of the ADA, the President promised to work with Senators Jeffords and Kennedy to achieve this goal. In his State of the Union Address in January, he urged Congress to make this legislation a top priority, and he included full funding for it in the budget he sent to Congress. In June, by an

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overwhelming bipartisan vote of 99-0, the Senate passed a bill. But the full House has yet to act.

In many ways, work helps build our self-respect as well as our nation's economy. But although our nation is enjoying its lowest unemployment in a generation, too many Americans with disabilities cannot participate because of the barriers that still stand.

Ignoring the potential of these citizens is not only a missed opportunity for them, it is a missed opportunity for the entire country. Let's celebrate the anniversary of the ADA by opening the doors of opportunity for millions of Americans even wider, so that no American has to choose between going to work and paying medical bills ever again.

To find out more about Hillary Rodham Clinton and read her past columns, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at www.creators.com.

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Remarks @ WH Conference on Mental Health

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White House Conference on Mental Health

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THE WHITE HOUSE Office of the Press Secretary

For
Immediate
Release

June 7, 1999

REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY AT WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON MENTAL HEALTH

Blackburn Auditorium
Howard University Washington, D.C.

2:32 P.M. EDT

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. If I had any voice I would break into "You are the Sunshine of My Life," and dedicate it to Tipper. (Laughter.) But I'm delighted to be here, and so pleased not only to see this packed room with standing room only, but to know that nearly 6,000 sites around the country are sharing in this firsthand.

This is an historic conference, but it is more than that; it's a real signal to our nation that we must do whatever it takes not only to remove the stigma from mental illness, but to begin treating mental illness as the illness it is on a parity with other illnesses. And we have to understand more about the progress that has been made scientifically that has really led us to this point.

I don't believe that we could have had such a conference even 10 years ago, and I know we couldn't have had such a conference 25 or 30 years ago, when I was a young law student working at the Child Study Center at the Yale University and taking classes at the Med School and working at the Yale New Haven

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Hospital, and very interested in the intersection of mental illness and the law and in the development of children and other issues that we were only then just beginning to address. And we didn't have a lot of evidence to back up what we needed to know or how we should proceed with the treatment of a lot of the problems that we saw.

Well, today we know a lot more. And it is really our obligation and responsibility, therefore, to begin to act on that scientific knowledge. And I'm very pleased to be talking with a distinguished group of panelists about the science of mental health and mental illness.

We're happy to have with us Dr. Steven Hyman. He is a distinguished scientist who directs the National Institute of Mental Health, one of the institutes of the National Institutes of Health. And I want to start with Doctor Hyman.

Dr. Hyman, you have been dealing with some very difficult diseases that affect millions of people. We've already heard several mentioned—clinical depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia. What progress have we made in learning about these diseases in the last few years so that we understand them more scientifically, and, therefore, have a better idea of what to do about them?

DR. HYMAN: Well, Mrs. Clinton, the first thing that we've recognized is that the numbers are indeed enormous. More than 19 million Americans suffer from depression. More than 2 million children. More than 2 million Americans have schizophrenia. And the World Bank and the World Health Organization have recognized that depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide, including the United States.

We have also learned some very important facts about these illnesses, and if I can just encapsulate them briefly, it's that these are real illnesses of a real organ—the brain. Just like coronary artery disease is a disease of a real organ—the heart. We can make diagnoses, and these diseases are treatable.

In addition, we've learned that these diseases should be treated just like general medical disorders. If you have heart disease you would get not only medication, but also rehabilitation, dietary counseling, stress reduction. So it is with a mental illness. We've heard a lot already today about medication, but people need to get their medication in the context of appropriate psychotherapies and other psycho-social treatments. (Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: So how then has these scientific discoveries changed the way that we as a society deal with mental illness? And following up on what you

said, if we now know—if you as experts and practitioners know that we should treat mental illness as real and as treatable, as a disease of a bodily part, namely the brain, what does that mean for the kind of response that we should be looking to in society?

DR. HYMAN: You know, sometimes people think of science as something cold, but actually it has been an enormously liberating force for families and for people with mental illness. Not two decades ago, people were taught that dread diseases like autism or schizophrenia were due to some subtle character flaw in mothers. This idea, unfortunately, has been perpetuated by ignorance far too often. And, indeed, these ideas didn't help with treatments. And what they did do is they demoralized families who ultimately had to take care of these poor sick children.

So science has shown us some alternative ideas. For example, it's turned out that autism, schizophrenia, manic-depressive illness are incredibly genetic disorders. What this means is that genes have an awful lot to say about whether somebody has one of these illnesses. And I have to tell you that as the human genome project approaches completion, in the next few years, we're going to be discovering the genes that create vulnerability to these disorders.

Now, that's important because genes are the blueprints of cells and by understanding those blueprints, I think we're going to come up with treatments that we could not possibly have dreamt of.

The other thing, as you mentioned, is we're learning an enormous amount about how the brain is built and how the brain operates. I brought a few pictures—I don't know if we can project them, but I think pictures are worth an awful lot. You can see on the left the brain of a healthy person, and on the right the brain of someone with schizophrenia, given a cognitive task that requires planning and holding something in mind. The kind of task that a person with schizophrenia has difficulty with. And what you can see just looking at the red spots, that people with schizophrenia don't activate their brain in the same way as a person without this illness.

We also know—and I think this is really interesting if we could have the next slide—that our treatments work because they work on the brain. No one is surprised that medication works on the brain, but what we're learning is that psychotherapy also works on the brain. (Applause.) So what you can see in the lower two brain diagrams is that this is someone with an animal phobia—something that we can study relatively easily—before treatment. Now, after a cognitive behavioral treatment that exposes and

desensitizes the person, you can see new spots of activity—they're shown in green—and they represent activation of our prefrontal cortex, a modern part of the brain—which is actually able to suppress some of the fear circuitry.

Now, I don't want to over-sell this, but ultimately we're going to understand how these treatments work in the brain.

And then, finally, I just want to show you a picture that is somewhat alarming, but what we see here on the left, someone with—a healthy person with a normal brain, and then on the right someone who has had severe depression for a long time. What you see outlined in red at the bottom is that a key structure acquired from memory—actually gets smaller, it deteriorates if depression is not treated.

Now, this is not so hopeless as it seems because we believe that with treatment these changes can be reversed. But I'm showing you these pictures again to remind us that these are real diseases of a real organ—the brain—that we can make diagnoses and that these should be treated just like general medical illnesses. (Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: You know, this is very exciting to all of us, because I think we can, in our own memories, think of diseases that have gone through a process of first being just mysterious; and then myths and stigmas associated with them; and then finally, science being brought to bear, and then the better they're understood, the more diagnosable and treatable they become.

That's why I'm also very pleased that in July, under your leadership, the NIMH will launch a \$7.3 million landmark study to determine the nature of mental illness and treatments. This will be a study that will help us guide strategies and policies for the next century by collecting information on mental illness, including the prevalence and duration of it, as well as the types of treatments that are most commonly used.

NIMH will announce the launch of two new clinical trials, investing a total of \$61 million, to build effective treatments for those affected by mental illness. So we're taking this information and we're not just leaving it in a laboratory. We are attempting to use it to implement better policies and better treatment modalities.

And I would just underscore something that was said, and that is that as we learn more, through the human genome project, we have to be even more careful to guard against discrimination against both physical and

mental illness. (Applause.)

I want to turn now to Dr. Koplewicz, who is an expert on mental health issues. He has shown me through the NYU Child Studies Center, and I know from firsthand experience and reports how he has brought to bear his extraordinary talent and experience on behalf of children as a child psychiatrist.

And I would like to ask you, you've worked with children and families on so many of these issues, what steps can we take to demystify mental illness?

DR. KOPLEWICZ: It's hard to believe that until 20 years ago we still believed that inadequate parenting and bad childhood traumas were the cause of psychiatric illness in children. And in fact, even though we know better today, that antiquated way of thinking is still out there, so that people who wouldn't dream of blaming parents for other types of disease, like their child's diabetes or asthma, still embrace the notion that somehow absent fathers, working mothers, over-permissive parents are the cause of psychiatric illness in children.

And the only way we can change that is through more public awareness. I mean, essentially, these are no-fault brain disorders. And as Dr. Hyman pointed out, these diseases are physiological, they respond to medicine. They're familial, they run in families. And they have a predictable onset and course. And as we learn more about this, it really becomes necessary for us to do three things.

We have to learn the costs of untreated mental illness, which really is lost school days, lost work days, dropout, marital distress, and also lost opportunity cost—executives and leaders who are quietly depressed and who aren't functioning at full capacity.

The second thing we have to do is we have to educate kids as early as middle school about mental illness. They learn about AIDS, they learn about seatbelts, but they have to learn about depression anxiety. And we have to educate their parents also.

And the third part is that you need a national public awareness campaign, so that Americans have to understand depression the way they understand heart disease. And the only way that happens is that when you have recognizable national leaders, moral leaders, role models like Tipper Gore, like Mike Wallace, who come out and acknowledge that they have a psychiatric illness, it makes it so much easier for the average citizen then to accept that maybe their child or maybe themselves or maybe another relative might be suffering also.

MRS. CLINTON: I think that's so right. I remember when Betty Ford went public with her breast cancer. And to the best of my memory, that was the first time anyone in a position like that had, and what a difference that made.

Let me ask you, do children have particular needs, though, when it comes to mental illness, so that we can't just talk about mental illness generally; we do need to talk specifically about children's needs.

DR. KOPLEWICZ: Right. Well, as we all know, kids are not little adults, their brains are different. But child psychiatry has really lagged behind in many ways. I mean, there are three major problems—one is access. It is really a problem because there are 6,000 child and adolescent psychiatrists in the whole country. Pediatricians get very little training about mental health. And in many states across the United States Medicaid does not pay, forcing parents or forcing school officials or school teachers, so that treating a child is much more complex.

The next issue is research—not only basic epidemiology, treatment, prevention—in many ways we lag behind. And while the funding has increased dramatically in the last six years, it's still out of whack when you consider the impact and how common these child psychiatric illnesses are in society. So compared to childhood cancer, we really are not dedicating nearly enough funds for the research of child mental health.

And the last part again, of course, is that it's the stigma. The stigma is worse for kids. Let me remind you, teenagers are never volunteering to be customers for mental health services. So parents not only feel bad about themselves, many people are telling them they've done something wrong and then the kid doesn't want to go on top of that. So those things are much more difficult for children, adolescents, than for adults.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think that part of what we we've got to do, though, is reflect how we can both identify and get help to children who need it, whether or not they want it or are willing to accept it. I think all of us have the tragedy at Littleton in mind, and we also know of the other school shootings; and in the ones that don't get as much publicity, there may have been signs, there may have been some way that we could have intervened and prevented.

So what can we do to intervene early, before mental illness causes a child to be violent to others or, as we see increasingly, to be a victim of suicide, which is a leading cause of death of young people?

DR. KOPLEWICZ: I mean, the real tragedy of Littleton is that—and in these other recent incidents of school violence—is that they're most probably preventable. Normal children just don't snap and go out on a shooting spree. Children who commit violent crimes almost always have histories of violence, depression or other mental health problems. And, unfortunately, schools and parents ignore psychiatric illness.

The problem is that we have never really looked at the underlying cause of all this violence, which is childhood psychiatric illness, which is a tremendous problem -- 12 percent of the population under the age of 18 -- that's about 8 million children, teenagers, in the United States today—have a diagnosable psychiatric illness. And that means that about 2 million children have depression, teenagers have depression.

And not all of them are going out to shoot someone, but they're certainly more at risk and they're certainly suffering and at risk for hurting themselves or others. And the problem is that while teachers ignore it and parents ignore it very often, unless we have a national public awareness campaign, unless we dedicate ourselves to child mental health the way we have to other mental health issues, it becomes really quite impossible for us to address this problem. So that someday, if teachers, pediatricians, if family practitioners were more aware of mental health warning signs for children, adolescence, that's the first step.

And, frankly, with public awareness, I think we have reached the point with a focus that mending of broken bones should be the same as getting help for emotional distress. It should be just as acceptable. It should be just as expected. Because, you see, if we don't do that, I think what happens, these kids lose out on schooling, making friends, and at the end of the day they lose out on happiness that we expect for all of our children. (Applause.)

* * * * *

MRS. CLINTON: I really want to thank you not only for coming forward, as you have in the past and again today, but for putting your energies behind this issue in the Congress and using your own personal experience to really make a difference, and I know that it will continue to do that.

I want to thank our three panelists and really not only thank them, but all of you who work on the issue of mental health and mental illness, and particularly the scientific research that we're learning so much more about. And, hopefully, this conference and the work that is being done because of it will get that word out to many, many Americans, and maybe they'll say, well, you know, I heard Dr. Hyman or I saw the pictures or I listened to the Congresswoman or whatever it might be. And for that, we're very grateful, and especially to you, Tipper. So, back to you. (Applause.)

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Remarks on Pediatric AIDS

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Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation Awards Remarks by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

Washington Press Club
January 28, 1999

Thank you all. Thank you. Well, it is my honor to be here, once again, for one of the most important events that I think goes on in Washington every year, as we take the energy and the generosity of individuals, corporations, and foundations in a great show of philanthropic spirit and put that to work on behalf of the extraordinary, groundbreaking work that these scientists and their colleagues are doing. I am grateful to be here with all of you and to have a chance, once again, to thank those of you who support the foundation and the work that Elizabeth started so many years ago.

I want to thank my friend Paul, whom I appreciate for not embarrassing me. But more than that I want to thank him for his courage, commitment, and his support and friendship. I'm honored to be with him once again as we recognize the outstanding work that the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, and these scientists, are doing to push the frontiers of science even further.

I want to thank the remarkable leaders of this foundation, who have helped to build it into what it is today. I know that Suzie Zeegan is often very modest about her contributions, but she has been a stalwart, steadfast voice and heart of this organization for so many years. I'm glad that she is joined by Kate Carr and Janis Spire, and all of you who are on the board and involved in the work of the foundation.

And I want to say a personal word of appreciation and gratitude to Mary Fisher. Her tireless work, her eloquent powerful voice has meant a lot to many of us, and I know that she will not rest until we do all that we can on behalf of the work that she so well

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represents.

None of us would be here today—not Suzie, not Paul, not me, not Mary—none of us, were it not for the inspirational life and work of our friend Elizabeth Glaser. Her spirit animates this gathering, as it does any time we come together. No one fought harder—or more—to bring attention and resources to the issue of pediatric AIDS. No one who ever heard her speak or met her will ever forget that fabulous laugh and that very persistent effort that she put into making it clear to all she met that this was an issue that was not just confined to those who were suffering from the tragedy of HIV and AIDS—and particularly as it affected children—but for every human being. And that work that she started and that spirit that is still with us has brought hope to millions and millions of children and adults who suffer from this disease. She transformed literally the way this country responds to HIV and AIDS.

It was something that started very simply, sitting around a kitchen table with Suzie and Susan, and deciding to undertake what must, at that time, have seemed like an impossible task. But once again, one person and a small group of people have made a tremendous difference. And as Margaret Mead famously once said, “It is only a small group of people who ever make a difference in changing the direction of the world.”

So here we are to celebrate the 10th anniversary, a “decade of progress, a decade of promise,” and to go forward into this upcoming decade with the same level of commitment, motivation, and dedication. And there is no group that has done more than this foundation to make it possible for us to say that we are looking at a decade of promise.

Ten years ago, almost no one knew about AIDS, let alone that it could be transmitted from mother to child. There was ignorance; there was fear. And we have come a very long way indeed. We’ve come to the point where we can say that there is a pediatric AIDS research agenda and that we can point to the progress that all of us have seen made because of the dedication of scientists.

We can look back at the decade of breakthroughs that have dramatically reduced mother-to-child transmission and greatly improved the quality of life and life expectancy of infected children. There are also more drugs—once only available to adults—that are now benefiting children.

I want to underscore something Paul said and thank

all of you who joined us in our fight to make pediatric labeling a reality. It was a long struggle, but it was one that we could not have achieved without the support of this foundation and many of you here today. Now we have a regulation in place assuring that prescription drugs are tested for safety and efficacy in children. This regulation will ensure that doctors know which drugs to prescribe and how much to give to their youngest patients. We believe this initiative has the potential for saving countless lives, and we could not have done it without you.

In the past several months, the Clinton Administration has also launched new initiatives to address AIDS in minority communities, to strengthen our efforts to find a vaccine, and to boost our international efforts to care for children orphaned by AIDS. Those are three very important initiatives, and let me just briefly address them.

As I look around this room, I see that there are not many representatives of minority communities, which are the hardest hit part of the American population. And certainly if we look abroad and we see what HIV/AIDS is doing in Africa and Asia, it makes that emphasis even more urgent.

The effort to find a vaccine, which these scientists to some extent are focusing their work on, is something that the United States is even more committed to. And working with partners around the world, we hope we will see progress.

And finally, international efforts to care for children orphaned by AIDS are extremely important. I've seen varying statistics, but I keep seeing the number: 40 million orphans from AIDS in the next ten years.

So we've come together to celebrate what we've achieved, but also to look towards the future. And we have a lot to be thankful for when we look at the health care of our children. In the last six years, because of the leadership of this President and the Administration and the supporters in Congress and elsewhere, we've seen improvements in the health of America's children. Immunization rates are at an all time high, infant mortality at an all time low. And thanks to the President's program for children's health insurance called "CHIP," millions more children are eligible for coverage, and we have to make sure that we reach the 5 million children who are eligible but not currently enrolled.

I'm also pleased to announce today that the President's fiscal year 2000 budget includes a new \$40 million grant program to support graduate

medical education. This is something that has worried me for quite sometime. Some of you may know that graduate medical education—how we fund the training of our physicians, our research scientists, our hospitals, and our medical centers—is funded by Medicare. And what we have found over the last several years is that the funding for those who work with children and are being trained to work with children is grossly disproportionate to the need. I can't remember the exact figures, but something like over \$9,000 a year is spent out of Medicare to fund the training and work of physicians who work with adults, and about \$400 a year for those physicians working with children. We have worked for quite sometime to change that, and I am very proud that the President's budget will make a start on that.

There is no way we could talk about treating children with HIV or AIDS or any chronic or acute condition if we don't have the doctors and the trained staff ready and able to treat them throughout our country. So we need to do more to train doctors who care for our children and provide vital health services for the poorest, the sickest, and the most vulnerable among our children.

Too long children's hospitals have been trying to carry this responsibility without adequate resources. I ran into Senator Kennedy as I got off the elevator. Senator Kennedy and others have introduced a bipartisan piece of legislation to make permanent the funding of those who work for children's health and I hope, in addition to the grant, we will see a permanent solution to this problem.

But we have a lot of work ahead of us. Here, and around the world especially, new HIV infections are increasing, and women of color and young people are among the most vulnerable. Every hour of every day, two more American adolescents are infected with HIV. And around the world, 1,600 children are infected every single day.

As we all know, the ravages of pediatric AIDS are the most severe in the developing countries, where over 90 percent of new infections now occur. By the end of this year, 40 million people will be living with HIV or AIDS. And by the end of the next decade, AIDS will have orphaned over 40 million children.

Now when you're confronted with statistics like these, it is sometimes difficult not to feel overwhelmed. But the founders of this foundation and this effort, and Elizabeth herself, would not accept that as an excuse at all. The legacy that

Elizabeth leaves us is one that is driven by and shaped by hope, not despair; one that chooses action over inaction; one that is determined, regardless of the odds, to find effective treatments, a vaccine, and eventually a cure.

Now we know that that can only happen if we have the kind of support and dedication of the scientists that we honor today, and I am very proud to ask them to stand and receive their individual awards. These gifted individuals represent some of the brightest investigators from the international research community. While they work at separate research institutions, they all share a deep commitment to not only furthering their own work, but collaborating with those who are their partners here and around the world.

The first recipient is Dr. Robert Doms from the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Doms, will you please come forward? Dr. Doms is investigating how a cell gets infected with HIV. And I told Dr. Doms and the other scientists that I read the summary of their work, and as a lay person, I have to confess I wasn't quite sure what CCR5 was, what it did or what it didn't do, but I know how important the work is that each of them is engaged in. Dr. Doms is attempting to discover how we can block the infection by learning how the cell gets infected in the first place—which would then lead to the development of an effective vaccine. And so on behalf of all us, and literally on behalf of millions of people who will maybe never know your name, Dr. Doms, but will benefit from your work, congratulations! [The First Lady presents the award.]

Dr. Philip Goulder from Massachusetts General Hospital is investigating the immune response of AIDS-infected children in the United States and Africa to bring us closer to the discovery of an AIDS vaccine. I want, particularly, to thank Dr. Goulder and those who work with him for partnering with scientists and physicians in Africa where the need is so acute, and where we have an opportunity to make a tremendous difference. Because, as so many of you know, the progress that we've made in extending life expectancy and quality of life for many people living with HIV/AIDS is dependent upon a very expensive drug regiment which is out of the reach of people in most of the rest of the world. So the work that is being done by Dr. Goulder and others is critical to bringing hope to people in parts of the world that now don't have an opportunity to benefit from what has already been achieved. Dr. Goulder—congratulations. [The First Lady presents

the award.]

Next is Dr. Jule Overbaugh from Seattle's Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. She is collaborating with other researchers to further reduce mother-child HIV transmission—particularly during breastfeeding. You know, we spent years persuading women in developing countries to breast feed. This was one of the great causes of the 1970's and early 80's, to persuade them that their breast milk was more effective for their children to build up their child's immune system, and not to be persuaded by advertisements promoting the use of formula when they didn't even have clean water that they could mix with the formula. But, of course, now we are trying to figure out what we do with that success, because the breast feeding, which is very important for many reasons, is one of the ways that HIV is transmitted. As part of the work that Dr. Overbaugh is doing, she is studying HIV-infected infants and mothers in Nairobi, Kenya. And I want to thank her also for helping to focus on the issue in Africa. Congratulations. [The First Lady presents the award.]

Dr. Paul Johnson from Harvard Medical School is researching new ways to help boost the immune system's response to HIV infection in children. And that is something else that we are so hopeful about, to learn more about what can be done to fend off HIV once it enters into a child's system, to prolong life and really do everything we can to diminish the impact of HIV and postpone or eliminate the development of AIDS. Thank you, Dr. Johnson for your important work. [The First Lady presents the award.]

You know, I feel, as I hand out these awards to these scientists, the way I felt when I first went to a doctor younger than myself. These four incredible scientists are so young, and for all of us we think of that as a very hopeful sign that the research that is going on is engaging the attention and the intelligence and expertise of our young scientists and researchers. And certainly by evidence of them today and the work that they are doing, we have every reason to be hopeful. So let me on behalf of the foundation thank all of you who have been part of this work, who have been involved in carving out this very unique contribution that the foundation is making to furthering scientific endeavor and to highlighting the work that these four scientists are doing.

It is a pleasure and an honor for me to be part of this presentation once again, and to do all that I can

along with all of you to make it possible for us to move forward against this disease, and do everything we can to protect our children from it, and to help those who already suffer from it to lead lives of quality as they try to fulfill their entire God-given promise.

Thank you very much.

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Column on Epilepsy

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TALKING IT OVER

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

January 13, 1999

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Not long ago, I had the opportunity to catch up with an old friend from Chicago. In the course of the conversation, he told me about his daughter, Lauren. Although Lauren was a happy, healthy baby at birth, she began to have seizures at the age of 7 months. Seventeen years later, the seizures continue, the cause has never been identified, and Lauren's development has been irrevocably delayed. She will never live independently and will require lifelong supervision and support. As her father spoke, I could see and hear the devastating impact Lauren's epilepsy has had, not only on her own life but also on her entire family.

When I heard Lauren's story, I was determined to learn more about this condition and bolster this administration's efforts to improve treatment and find a cure.

Nearly 200,000 Americans are diagnosed with epilepsy each year. Current treatments control symptoms in most of their cases. Yet the word epilepsy still provokes profound fear and misunderstanding.

Epilepsy is a chronic brain disorder characterized by spontaneous, recurrent seizures that range from brief lapses in attention to prolonged losses of consciousness with convulsions. It affects more than 2 million Americans -- one out of every 100. Of these, 300,000 are children. Head injuries, brain tumors, stroke, lead poisoning, genetic conditions and infectious illnesses can cause epilepsy. But in more than half of all cases -- like Lauren's -- no explanation is ever found.

According to a new report, "Epilepsy: A Report to the Nation," sponsored by the Epilepsy Foundation of America, anti-seizure drugs and other forms of

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of America, anti-seizure drugs and other forms of treatment can control or eliminate seizures in 75 percent of those affected.

These people live nearly normal lives -- lives that can be both personally and professionally fulfilling. But even they never escape the uncertainty or the potential social stigma that comes out of ignorance -- a stigma that can crush the spirit as surely as the disorder debilitates the body and the brain.

Tragically, though, for the nearly 600,000 like Lauren, the disorder is intractable. Drugs, diet, surgery and other treatments just don't bring their seizures under control.

One of the most heartbreaking aspects of epilepsy is the toll it takes on children. Seizures in early childhood often produce developmental delays and brain damage that can lead to a lifetime of dependence and extraordinary costs. Children with epilepsy are at special risk for learning problems.

They fall behind in reading, language development and general knowledge. Children who have frequent seizures can't even go to school. Perhaps worst of all, they live in constant fear of their next seizure.

If these children are ever to live the normal, healthy and happy lives they deserve, we must dedicate ourselves to finding a cure now.

I'm pleased that the President's budget for this year includes a 14 percent expansion for the National Institutes of Health, the largest funding increase ever. Of this, an unprecedented \$76 million is for epilepsy research alone. But we must still do more.

This week, I'll be in Chicago for the dedication of a new epilepsy center at Rush Presbyterian-St. Luke's Hospital and a major nationwide fund-raiser for epilepsy research. There, I'll release the Epilepsy Foundation's report and talk about the administration's next steps in the effort to eliminate the disorder.

Next year, NIH researchers will convene the first-ever administration conference on epilepsy, bringing together more than 150 experts and members of the public focused on finding a cure. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and the Agency for Health Care Policy Research together will launch a campaign to educate medical practitioners about the critical need for early and accurate diagnosis.

I have heard from many families around the country

June 9, 1999

June 2, 1999

May 26, 1999

May 19, 1999

May 12, 1999

May 5, 1999

April 28, 1999

April 21, 1999

April 14, 1999

April 7, 1999

March 31, 1999

March 24, 1999

March 17, 1999

March 10, 1999

March 3, 1999

February 24, 1999

February 17, 1999

February 10, 1999

February 3, 1999

January 27, 1999

January 20, 1999

January 13, 1999

January 6, 1999

who have been touched by epilepsy. Some share the pain of lives destroyed and promising futures extinguished. Others marvel at the seemingly miraculous -- when drugs, surgery or diet actually bring an end to the nightmare.

But the message is the same: More research dollars are critical if we are to devise innovative, safe and effective treatments or find a cure. No one has said it better than the parents of 12-year-old Philip Gattone, whose seizures ceased following a combination of successful surgery and drug therapy. They wrote:

"Today, Philip plays sports, participates in school activities and clubs, and loves learning. He has friends that care about him. He is our hero.

"There are so many children that need help. The fight for a cure is a daily battle, and it is real. It is a fight that must be won. Only research and new treatments will help these special families achieve their dreams of recovery from epilepsy."

For more information on epilepsy, visit the Epilepsy Foundation of America at www.efa.org.

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Remarks to ARC

Speech: Hillary Rodham Clinton
44th Annual Convention of The Arc
Providence, Rhode Island - Friday, October 9, 1993

Thank you. Thank you very, very much. Thank you very much for that very warm welcome. It is such a pleasure to be here with David Dunn, and the other officers and board of the Arc, and all of those in this audience and around this country who support the work of The Arc. And, I am also pleased to be here with the Governor of Rhode Island, Governor Sundlun, and both Senator and Mrs. Pell who came to be with us today. And, I am particularly pleased to have been introduced by someone you have known a long time and I have only been able to claim an acquaintanceship of less than a year but whom I admire so greatly, Senator Chafee. From the very first time that the President asked me to work on this very important task he has been such a constructive and helpful counselor and advisor. And I think it is only fair to say that we now do have a President who is committed to health care reform, and we have leaders like Senator Chafee who have worked on health care reform for many years who will help create a climate of cooperation that will lead to a bipartisan, nationally accepted health care reform in 1994 and I am very grateful to him for that.

This is an issue that we know will be very discussed all over the country in all kinds of forums like this, but even more importantly in living rooms, in coffee shops, around the water coolers, people are going to be talking about health care reform and I think it is a conversation that is long overdue and very welcome.

And those of you in The Arc have experience in knowing what is needed to make systems respond to human needs and we are so grateful that the Arc is taking such a strong stand of support in favor of health care reform. I want personally to thank The Arc for the very positive response that you issued in response to the President's health care speech. And I want to thank David and others for being with us at the White House when we kicked off this campaign for health care reform. Because you have been working with us through your officers and representatives now for a number of months and your help and constructive advice has enabled the Administration to come forward with the plan that it has and will continue to make a contribution as we work through the Congress to the final resolution.

You know, often better than most Americans, how easy it is to be victimized by a health care system that discriminates against pre existing conditions, that does not offer adequate long term care choices such as personal assistance and other supports that people with mental retardation and their families need to rely on to fulfill their lives and to be productive citizens.

We are trying in our health care reform approach to deal with several of the problems that are most important to The Arc. We want to expand home and community based services to persons with mental retardation.

You know so well that we have to have the capacity to support people while they live in their homes or in alternative living arrangements, and that you know so well that it is the right thing to do both in terms of the human dimensions and in terms of the economics. For too long we have looked to institutionalized care and, as the wonderful introduction of Senator Chafee pointed out, we are beginning to understand the human and economic costs that that has made on our society. But we still have not recognized how much better it would be if we could provide more support for home and community based arrangements. The health care reform plan will move beyond even the legislation that was mentioned and will finally make it clear that regardless of income or age, individuals with severe disabilities should have the options to choose home based care or community based care.

Also, as part of the overall plan we are leaving in place programs that have provided health and assistance. In fact, really the theme of health care reform, as far as the President is concerned, is let's preserve what is right about the American system and fix what is wrong. So one of the features that we will be preserving is Intermediate Care Facilities/ Mental Retardation and the Medicaid home and community based waiver program. In fact, we would like to be able - assuming we can afford to do so - to increase the living allowances for residents of ICFMR from the \$30 to higher - maybe as high as \$100 a month, if we are able to do that.

You know, when the President in his speech held up that health security card - and I hope you saw that on television - he didn't hold it up and he didn't say you will only be able to get this if you are a certain age, or if you have never been sick, or if you do not have any mental retardation. He held it up and said: every

American will be entitled to this card and the services that it will it represent and we want to make that a right of every American to have.

There are so many features of health care reform that will enshrine this basic principle about every American being entitled to receive health security, and at an affordable cost, that preserves and enhances quality; but particularly for people with mental retardation and their families we see it as a way to end the discrimination that has for too long existed in our health care system.

I was talking with some friends of mine about their small business. They employ four people, so there are four families, plus their own on their policy.. Several years ago one of their employees had a child who was born with Down Syndrome and all of a sudden they were faced with what so many people are faced with every day in our country. You want to continue to insure this family with this child. You want to have to pay more because if you continue to insure this family the costs for all your families will go up. And my friend, whom I have known ever since high school, a small business man said to me: What a choice for me to be asked to make. To turn my back on an employee and his family that were a part of my family and my small business, or to reach down even deeper out of the wages of my employees, out of our profits, and provide health care insurance. He continued to do so. He called me the other day to say: You know I made what I know is the right choice. It was the right choice for my business. It was the right choice for my employee and his family, but no American should have to make that choice. All Americans should be entitled to health care coverage, no matter who they are or what happens to them during the course of their life and that is the bed rock principle we have to work on.

In the coming months, as the Senator referred in his comments, you will be asked to judge health care reforms by a number of questions and I hope that you will keep them in mind as we go forward during this very important conversation.

In the news release that The Arc issued supporting health care reform and the President, it said that The Arc wants to measure any reform against a set of five principles from a disability perspective and these are: nondiscrimination, comprehensiveness, appropriateness, equity and efficiency. Every one of those fits into the principles that the President outlined and that are also embodied in the alternative that Senator Chafee has worked so hard on. It has to be

comprehensive, and that means it has to provide a comprehensive set of benefits.

It cannot discriminate against any American. It must be appropriate in the sense that it should build on what works. It should provide access to adequate quality affordable health care in appropriate settings, based upon choices that individuals make that are best for them and their families. It must, it must have equity, and if it is comprehensive and does not discriminate it should have equity; but, it needs to have safeguards built in so that all of us feel that we are not being taken advantage of or discriminated against. And it must have efficiency. Efficiency in the better delivery of health care services at a more cost effective level. This will be one of the great debates that we will be having as to how much efficiency we are able to achieve. But The Arc, for many of the programs that you are involved with, you have seen models that work. You know of more efficient ways of delivering health care services to people with mental retardation. That is true across our country. And, what we need is to build in incentives so that efficiency is rewarded and that those who are inefficient, who don't deliver high quality care at a cost efficient affordable rate, will learn how to do better because there will be incentives in the system for them to become more efficient. And we will need your voices and your experiences, speaking loudly to people all over America about how we can do the job better. I share the confidence and optimism that Senator Chafee just said in his introduction. I know, I know we are going to have health care reform in 1994. We are going to have it because it is the right thing to do. Because we know that to stay with the status quo is no longer an option and because so many people, including those in The Arc, have worked too long and too hard to try to make things better for us to give up now on what is an historic opportunity.

So, I came here today mostly to say thank you. Thank you, not only for the support you have given in the last months to this health care reform effort, but thank you for the support and the advocacy and the caring, and the example you have given this country for decades. Our time has finally arrived. If we work together we will see the fruits of your labor, and we will all be prouder to be Americans and to live in the country that gives us the best opportunities in the world if we are only willing to take the responsibility to make it so.

**THE PRESIDENT'S
JULY 1, 2000
PROCLAMATION FOR THE
"SPIRIT OF ADA MONTH,
2000"**

POTUS Proclamation for ADA Month 2000

THE WHITE HOUSE

Proclamation: Spirit of the ADA Month,
2000[Help](#) [Site Map](#) [Text Only](#)

THE WHITE HOUSE Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate
Release

July 1, 2000

SPIRIT OF THE ADA MONTH, 2000

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

The enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 10 years ago this month signaled a transformation in our Nation's public policies toward people with disabilities. America is now a dramatically different -- and better -- country because of the ADA.

In the last 10 years, we have worked hard to eliminate harmful stereotypes and have grown to understand disability as a natural part of the human experience. We are taking steps, such as renovating and constructing public accommodations to make them fully accessible, to ensure that people with disabilities are fully integrated into our communities and workplaces. And we have come to appreciate that people with disabilities are a key element -- and an untapped resource -- in sustaining our Nation's historic economic growth.

Throughout our Administration, Vice President Gore and I have worked hard to achieve the ADA's core goals -- equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency. Our Administration has vigorously defended the ADA in court cases across the Nation; we are collaborating with State Medicaid directors to implement the Supreme Court's 1999 Olmstead decision, which prohibits unjustified isolation of institutionalized persons with disabilities; we helped ensure that 80 percent of America's public transit buses are now accessible; we are implementing the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act, which I proudly signed into law last December; we have worked closely with schools and colleges to improve the enrollment, retention, and graduation of students with disabilities; and my Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities is developing far-reaching

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policies for a comprehensive, coordinated employment agenda.

We still have much to accomplish. Because the many barriers confronting people with disabilities took generations to develop, breaking them down requires consistent, coordinated, and farsighted effort. We must work aggressively to increase the employment rates of people with disabilities by attacking a range of work disincentives, including barriers to education, health care, technology, housing, and transportation. We must provide real choices for people with disabilities to live and work in their communities with the necessary services and supports. And we must be vigilant in protecting the rights we have secured through decades of legal activism. I am encouraged that the first 10 years of the ADA's life have provided us with a solid foundation for meeting these challenges.

To mark the ADA's 10th anniversary and the 25th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the American Association of People with Disabilities has organized a nationwide "Spirit of ADA" Torch Relay. Twenty-four cities from coast to coast are hosting official relay events, and hundreds of communities are organizing additional local events as part of this national celebration. The Spirit of ADA's organizing theme is "Renew the Pledge" to encourage individuals, organizations, and government entities to reaffirm their commitment to the principles of the ADA and IDEA. Vice President Gore and I are proud to join in the celebration and to renew our own pledge to help advance the cause of disability rights.

Promoting disability rights not only improves the lives of the 54 million Americans with disabilities, it improves all of our lives. As President Franklin Roosevelt recognized more than 60 years ago, in words that are now inscribed on the FDR Memorial in our Nation's capital: "No Country, however rich, can afford the waste of its human resources."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim July 2000 as Spirit of the ADA Month, 2000. I urge government officials, business people, community leaders, educators, and all the people of the United States, to celebrate the contributions people with disabilities have made, and continue to make, to the progress and prosperity of our Nation, and to renew our commitment to upholding the nondiscrimination principles of the ADA and IDEA.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of July, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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Media Advisory

For Immediate Release
July 25, 2000

Contact: Charles Lynn, Appia Group
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First Lady Kicks Off WeMedia's "Political Forum" Series with Exclusive Webcast Interview on ADA Anniversary

What: New York senate candidate First Lady Hillary Clinton kicks off WeMedia's "Political Forum" series with an exclusive Webcast interview conducted by nationally known television news anchor Bree Walker.

When: Wednesday, July 26th -- the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) -- at 4:00 PM EST.

Where: The FDR Memorial in Washington, D.C., immediately following Wednesday's official White House event at the memorial with President Bill Clinton and the First Lady commemorating the passage of the landmark civil rights legislation. The interview will be Webcast on WeMedia's site, www.wemedia.com, at 4:00 PM EST

The interview will be available as archived video for visitors to the WeMedia site after that time.

Note: WeMedia's new *Politics and Advocacy* section is committed to bringing information to the disability community about relevant issues and providing access to key decision-makers. Upcoming guests on WeMedia's "Political Forum" series include Vice President Al Gore, and U.S. Senators Jim Jeffords (R-VT) and Tom Harkin (D-IA). In addition to the Forum, the *Politics and Advocacy* section will provide the disability community with unprecedented live Webcast coverage of the Republican and Democratic national conventions. WeMedia Inc. is the official Webcaster of the 2000 Paralympic Games in Sydney and publishes *WeMedia* magazine.

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SPECIAL REPORT: **THE TOP 10 COMPANIES** TO WORK FOR IN AMERICA

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Stevie Wonder Ponders A High-Tech Gamble

About WeMedia Inc.

WeMedia Inc. was launched in 1997 by two entrepreneurs, Jerome Belson and Cary Fields, who have worked extensively with disability organizations for more than 40 years. Both founders share a common goal of developing strategies to improve the lives of people with disabilities, through a variety of media offerings.

The company's first media property was WE magazine, a glossy consumer lifestyle publication. The bimonthly magazine has won accolades for its impressive editorial content and innovative approach to cross-disability issues. The magazine's website, www.wemagazine.com, debuted in 1998.

In December 1999, WeMedia launched www.wemedia.com, a full service online resource for people with disabilities, their families and friends. The new website provides the disability community with targeted and comprehensive information and resources in the areas of finance, real estate, travel, news, sports, employment, technology, advocacy, and education, among others. As the official Webcaster of the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games, WeMedia Sports will provide the first live webcast of an Olympic or Paralympic event, in what will be the most ambitious webcast ever. In addition to print and interactive outlets, WeMedia will distribute content through broadcast and wireless mediums.

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Veteran's Assistance Foundation, Wisconsin
Wheelchair Sports USA
YAI/National Institute for People with Disabilities
YMCA of Central and Northern Westchester *And more to come...*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Sydney Paralympic Organizing Committee and We Media Inc. To Provide
Exclusive, Live Webcast of Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games**

*We Sports, Online Sports Network for People with Disabilities, to Produce Breakthrough
Webcast Of World-Class Athletic Event and Broadcast Coverage of the Games*

SYDNEY, Australia and NEW YORK, April 11, 2000—The Sydney Paralympic Organizing Committee (SPOC) and We Media Inc. today announced a breakthrough plan for the worldwide live coverage of the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games over the Internet via We Media's Internet destination www.wemedia.com. This will be the first time that any event at either the Olympic or Paralympic Games has been webcast live. Coverage of the Games will include live streaming video, real-time audio and extensive coverage of the event from Opening Ceremonies on October 18 through the Closing on October 29.

SPOC also announced today that it had granted the US broadcast rights to the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games to We Media for over-the-air coverage in addition to the Internet package.

We Sports, Wemedia.com's full-service sports network for the community of people with disabilities, focuses on the coverage of live events, participation and instruction and it will Webcast and broadcast the Games. With approximately 125 countries and 4,000 athletes scheduled to compete in this year's Games, We Sports' coverage will be international in scope and focus on a wide range of athletes and teams. In addition to video coverage of the Games, We Sports will provide extensive coverage, including breaking news, athlete profiles, full results and summaries.

"Our partnership with We Media is an extremely exciting development for the Games," said Sydney Paralympic Organizing Committee (SPOC) Chief Executive, Lois Appleby. "We know that We Media has the experience and expertise to deliver high-quality coverage of the Games in a format we haven't seen on such a scale before. Of equal importance to us is We Media's incredible track record of commitment to the community of people with disabilities."

--more-

Cary Fields, president and CEO of We Media Inc. added: "The Paralympic Games are the single most anticipated sporting event for the hundreds of millions of people with disabilities worldwide. We Media believes that the Paralympics and the community deserves the live coverage that we will be bringing to the world for the first time in history. We hope that our coverage generates a greater awareness of the Games amongst the community at large."

Rick Gentile, 10-time Emmy Award winner as Executive Producer of CBS Sports, will produce We Media's coverage of the Games as Senior VP, We Sports. In addition, Gentile will oversee the production of the We Sports Web site. We Sports has also added Jay Rosenstein, former VP Programming at CBS Sports, and Arthur Pincus, former Sports Editor of the Washington Post, to create programming and content for the site.

"We hear a lot of talk in the sports industry about webcasting, but not a lot of events have achieved anything tangible yet.", said Simon Thomas, SPOC's Senior Manager for Television, "With this deal We Media can show everyone what really can be accomplished on a worldwide basis, complementing our international television coverage and extending the reach of the Paralympic Games to a much larger audience than ever before."

Before and after the Paralympics, We Sports will offer comprehensive, global coverage of all types of sporting events, athletes and sports news. Services that visitors to the site will receive include a "Sports Access Center" to research participation opportunities and to learn where to get specialized sports equipment.

We Media has assembled a world-class production unit, bringing together broadcasters with national and international sports expertise. Gentile produced CBS's coverage of the 1996 Paralympic Games, and he served as the Executive Producer for CBS coverage of the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympic Games, the 1994 Olympic Games at Lillehammer and the 1992 Winter Games at Albertville.

"Our Webcast will set the standard for all future sports Webcasts," said Gentile. "In fact, with the enhancements made possible via the Internet, sports enthusiasts will soon be watching Webcasts as often as traditional television broadcasts."

Rosenstein, VP Programming, has more than 25 years of experience in the sports industry. He has been a journalist, senior network television programmer, sports marketing and public relations executive with CBS, Young and Rubicam, Ohlmeyer Communications and Time Magazine, and an athlete representative.

--more--

Pincus, VP Content, served as Vice-President Public Relations for the National Hockey League from 1993 to 1999. He also brings 24 years of experience in the newspaper and magazine business, working as an editor and reporter with *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* as well as Times-Mirror Magazines.

About SPOC

In 1993, shortly after Sydney won the rights to host the 2000 Olympics Games, the rights to host the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games were awarded to Sydney. In 1995, the Sydney 2000 Paralympics Organizing Committee (SPOC) was established to organize and stage the Games. It is SPOC's assignment to: stage the Paralympic Games in accordance with the Host Contract between the Sydney Olympic Organizing Committee and the International Paralympic Committee; raise money to fund the operation of SPOC; organize the sports program, including preparing and operating all venues and facilities for the Paralympic Games; organize an arts festival program for the Paralympic Games; organize accommodation and transport for competitors, team officials and official personnel in relation to the Paralympic Games; and promote the interests of the Paralympic movement and athletes with a disability.



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Immersion and WeMedia Partner to Increase Internet Accessibility

Visually-Impaired Will be Able to Experience Web Pages Using Their Sense of Touch

San Jose, Calif., April 24, 2000—Immersion Corporation, (NASDAQ: IMMR), the pioneering developer of tactile interaction technology, today announced that it has signed a strategic marketing agreement with We Media Inc., a multimedia company dedicated to providing people with disabilities, their families, and friends the same access, mobility, and choices that are available to the rest of society. Initially, Immersion and We Media will target the visually impaired and later expand to include people with motor and neurological impairments to create touch-enabled web pages on the wemedia.com site. These visually impaired users will be able to rely on wemedia.com as a one-stop online community service and e-commerce resource. With Immersion's innovative TouchSense™ technology, visually impaired users will be able to have access to online content, entertainment, and other resources that have, up until this point, been limited.

Immersion and We Media have planned several joint projects, which will be announced in the coming months. One of the first initiatives involves touch activating Web pages with Immersion's TouchSense™ technology, which will allow the visually impaired to utilize the Internet as a rich resource of information and entertainment and take full advantage of the interactive experience. A visually impaired person will be able to experience these touch sensations through Immersion TouchSense™ enabled hardware products, such as the Logitech WingMan Force Feedback Mouse.

"Immersion's technology is our added ingredient for enriching the Internet and will be used to help We Media in its mission to provide a full outreach service to visually impaired people," said Matt Toner, vice president of strategic alliances at We Media. "With the increasing growth of the Internet as both a content and entertainment medium, We Media and Immersion feel it is important to create an accessible Internet so people with disabilities will be full participants in the development and progression of our society."

"Immersion recognizes that with the extensive growth of the Internet, the visually impaired have been an overlooked population," said Jennifer Saffo, vice president of marketing for Immersion. "Immersion and We Media are working together to establish new Internet standards for people with disabilities and make the Internet an accessible resource for everyone."

*The visually impaired refer to people with low vision or blindness.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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We Media Inc. Launches Full-Service Internet Destination For People With Disabilities
Site Goes Live on United Nations International Day of Disabled Persons, Offering Mobility, Access, to 54 Million Disabled Americans

NEW YORK CITY, December 2, 1999 – We Media Inc., parent company of the glossy, consumer lifestyle magazine, *WE*, today announced the launch of [Wemedia.com](http://www.wemedia.com), <http://www.wemedia.com>, a destination Web site designed to offer people with disabilities unparalleled mobility, access, and choices. The site will go live tomorrow, December 3, in conjunction with the United Nations International Day of Disabled Persons.

"Wemedia.com offers a single comprehensive source for information, education, products and services for people with disabilities, their families and friends," said Itzhak Perlman, world-renowned violinist and Wemedia.com member. "Wemedia.com is revolutionizing the world of disabilities, changing it to a world of unlimited possibilities. It's wonderful to see this under-served community of 54 million people be provided with the same opportunities as the rest of society."

Wemedia.com represents the first "ramped" 21st century community, allowing people with disabilities to interact, explore and communicate on an equal basis with each other and the rest of the world, all free of charge. The Web and other multimedia formats are ideally suited for people with disabilities, who rely heavily on media and computer technology to find information, goods and services. Some features of the site include:

- **WeSchool**– offers accredited courses and programs in partnership with top distance learning companies for credits and diplomas
- **WeJobs**– is an employment service designed for both people with disabilities and employers
- **WeSports**– provides complete coverage on outdoor sporting activities including sailing, skating, skiing, cycling, and the Sydney 2000 Paralympics
- **WeBroadcast**– delivers a wide variety of sporting and related events through WeDo Internet Radio, WeChat and WeBroadcast Television
- **WeHomePlace**–v allows members to identify, interact, meet and participate with people of similar interests and backgrounds through the personal portals of this volunteer-based community
- **WeRealEstate**– provides a searchable database of disabled accessible homes on the market, relocation services, and access to mortgage services

"At We Media, we have always recognized that people with disabilities have the same desires for products and services as the general population, with a few specific additional needs," said Cary Fields, president and CEO of We Media Inc. "We Media's goal is to empower people with disabilities, their families and friends by providing both mobility and access to the services this population has long been denied."

Fields added, "Through Wemedia.com, we have developed innovative features to empower people with disabilities with greater choice and freedom. Although the community of people with disabilities has over \$1 trillion in purchasing power, until now there has been no single resource that could fulfill all of their needs. Now a home-bound individual can visit the grocery store, stop at the bank, pick up a new shirt, and order a new battery for his / her wheelchair all in one location with the click of a mouse or even the blink of an eye."

In support of its extensive outreach to people with disabilities, Wemedia.com has established a not-for-profit (NFP) membership program to provide these organizations with free Web sites, e-mail, online event calendars, chat rooms and other premium online services, such as WePhone, a free long distance Internet phone service. Wemedia.com members can also research NFP organizations and discover new opportunities for becoming active in their cause.

Wemedia.com is We Media's second foray into the Internet space. In 1998, We Media launched Wemagazine.com, www.wemagazine.com, the online component to its award winning bimonthly, glossy, consumer, lifestyle publication, *WE*. In addition to the *WE* magazine's top-flight editorial content, the online component provides education, entertainment, shopping, and chat rooms in an organized, accessible fashion.

In order to be accessible to people with various types of disabilities, Wemedia.com interfaces with a wide variety of assistive technologies. As more technologies are developed to further help people with disabilities navigate through cyberspace, Wemedia.com will ensure that they are incorporated into the site. Wemedia.com is also quickly working toward becoming the first major destination site that is fully "Bobby" compliant. "Bobby" is a web-based tool that analyzes web pages for their accessibility to people with disabilities and was created by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST). To become "Bobby" compliant, a Web site must provide text equivalents for all non-text elements (i.e., images, animations, audio, video); provide summaries of graphs and charts; ensure that all information conveyed with color is also available without color; clearly identify changes in the natural language of a document's text and any text equivalents (e.g., captions) of non-text content; organize content logically and clearly; and provide alternative content for features (e.g., applets or plug-ins) that may not be supported. The live press conference announcing the launch of Wemedia.com is archived online and accessible at <http://webevents.broadcast.com/wemedia/press>, beginning at 12:00 PM EST, Thursday December 2, 1999.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Sirius Satellite Radio Partners With We Media To Develop
Original Audio Programming For Millions of Americans With Disabilities**

NEW YORK, May 5, 2000 - Sirius Satellite Radio [Nasdaq: SIRI], the satellite radio broadcaster, and We Media today announced an alliance to develop distinctive audio programming targeted at the community of people with disabilities, their family and friends. The programming will be heard on Sirius' 100-channel subscription radio service, which will deliver commercial-free music, news, entertainment and information to consumers coast-to-coast. We Media is the country's first multi-media company designed to serve the community of people with disabilities by providing them access to the information and resources they have historically been denied.

As part of the alliance, Sirius and We Media will jointly create unique short- and long-form programming—from news shows to feature-length stories, talk shows and entertainment—that will be aired on Sirius Radio. In addition, Sirius will adapt material from We Media's *WeDo Internet Radio* and *WeBroadcast Television*, both of which can be accessed via www.wemedia.com, as well as articles from *We* magazine, the company's award winning consumer lifestyle magazine.

Americans with disabilities and their families purchase and lease a significant number of vehicles each year, including specially equipped cars and vans. According to the University of California - San Francisco's Disability Statistics Center, there are close to 20 million disabled Americans who have a vehicle that they drive. In addition, artists with disabilities, such as violinist Itzhak Perlman, percussionist Evelyn Glennie and jazz pianist Marcus Roberts have all made important contributions to many of the musical genres that will appear on Sirius Radio.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for Sirius to provide the highest-quality specialized entertainment and information across the country to an audience that is largely underserved by conventional radio programming," said Joe Capobianco, Sirius' senior vice president of content. "And it is also a great example of how our national coverage allows us to reach out with valuable services that are simply not available on a local basis."

--more--

"Sirius Radio will be an excellent new avenue for We Media's unique perspective, serving this national community of more than 50 million disabled Americans who are a powerful economic force," said Cary Fields, President and CEO of WeMedia. "This is a great opportunity to break down some barriers and reach millions of people with news, entertainment and information, and extend the range of services WeMedia offers."

About Sirius Satellite Radio

Sirius Satellite Radio (www.siriusradio.com) is building a digital satellite radio system that will broadcast an unprecedented breadth of unique music and entertainment programming to motorists throughout the continental United States. Sirius plans to offer 50 channels of commercial-free music all created at the company's National Broadcast Studio in New York City, and up to 50 channels of news, sports and entertainment programming for a monthly subscription fee of \$9.95. Sirius expects to begin broadcasting nationally at the end of this year.

As part of its commitment to creating commercial-free music and an unprecedented range of audio programming, Sirius has created alliances with critically acclaimed artists and on-air personalities, including Sting, Grandmaster Flash, and MC Lyte, who will have regularly scheduled programs on Sirius. Sirius also has a strategic alliance with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the National Symphony Orchestra. Some of the world's foremost creators of audio information and entertainment programming will also have channels on Sirius Radio, including CNBC, National Public Radio, SCI FI Channel, Bloomberg and the BBC. Sirius also has the exclusive right to carry the nationally acclaimed "Car Talk" on satellite radio. Sirius Radio has partnerships with both *Playbill*® magazine and *Live Broadway*® to create specials and live programming for Sirius Radio's "Broadway's Best" channel, the country's first-ever around-the-clock nationwide showcase for Broadway music and entertainment.

Sirius has exclusive alliances to factory-install Sirius receivers in DaimlerChrysler cars and light trucks, including Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep®, Mercedes, Mitsubishi, and is the preferred service provider for Freightliner and Sterling heavy trucks. Sirius also has exclusive alliances to factory-install Sirius receivers in BMW, Ford, Jaguar, Mazda and Volvo automobiles. Sirius also has alliances with leading automotive electronics manufacturers to design and develop receivers for the automotive aftermarket and for installation in new cars. These companies include Alpine, Audiovox, Clarion, Delphi Delco Electronics, Kenwood, Panasonic, Recoton, Sanyo and Visteon.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

MARKETPLACE

People With Disabilities Are Next Consumer Niche

Companies See a Market Ripe For All-Terrain Wheelchairs, Computers With 'Sticky Keys'

By JOSHUA HARRIS PRAGER

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Handicapitalism.

It's a brand-new term that describes what's behind a dawning realization in business: People with disabilities shouldn't be viewed as charity cases or regulatory burdens, but rather as profitable marketing targets. Now, mainstream companies, from financial services to cell phone makers, are going beyond what's mandated by law and rapidly tailoring products to attract them.

A new training video from Norwest Mortgage Inc., a unit of Wells Fargo & Co. in Des Moines, Iowa, details a number of products it offers, including vehicle-conversion loans and home-modification loans especially for the disabled. The video, a call to arms for its sales force, offers a stark rationale: "Fact: People with disabilities have money!"

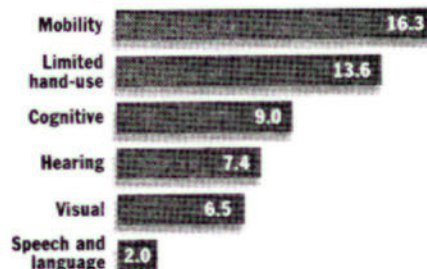
In 1995, according to the latest available census figures, there were about 48.5 million people 15 and older with disabilities in the U.S., with annual discretionary income totaling \$175 billion. With last month's passing of the Work Incentives Improvement Act, a bill expected to funnel tens of thousands of disabled people into the work force, their purchasing power will only grow.

Already, businesses are becoming more direct in their appeals. "We've been called gimp, cripple, and our new favorite, retard," begins an ad heralding the recent launch of wemedia.com, an Internet portal that posts wheelchair-accessible real-estate listings and links to employment services that specialize in placing job seekers with disabilities. "You can start calling us Mr. and Mrs. \$1 trillion in consolidated buying power."

"If this were charity, I wouldn't bother," says

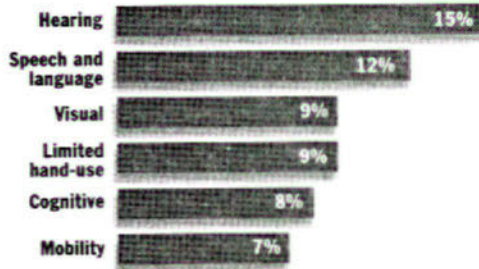
Cultivating a New Community

Number of people with disabilities, by type of disability, in millions:



Source: Inclusive Technologies

Percent of people living in households with annual incomes of at least \$50,000, by disability:



Cary Fields, president and chief executive officer of wemedia, whose corporate partners include HotJobs.com Ltd., a job-search site. "These people are here," he adds. "If you want their money, go deal with them."

More companies are raising their profiles among people with disabilities. Johnson & Johnson sponsored a few sessions at last year's annual convention of the Society for Disability Studies. Earlier this year, the company launched Independence Technology, a unit that will produce and market products for people with disabilities. Johnson & Johnson has invested more than \$100 million in the company, whose first product is the IBOT Transporter, an all-terrain wheelchair.

DaimlerChrysler AG's Dodge brand and Barnes & Noble Inc. have agreed to sponsor AdaptZ.com, another one-stop shop for the disability community, launched last month. And, in the past year, more than 100 companies including Nike Inc., Pfizer Inc. and portal site Snap.com have aired commercials featuring people with disabilities, according to Advertising Age magazine.

Some of the activity has been spurred by fed-

eral regulations. In November 1998, Olli Kallavuo, chief financial officer of Finnish cell-phone company Nokia Corp., sent a letter to employees about the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which mandated that companies in the U.S. ramp up access to technology for people with disabilities. "Passage of this law presents a tremendous opportunity for Nokia," he wrote. "Enhancing our accessible product line... offers Nokia the opportunity to reach a developing global market of almost 750 million people with disabilities."

For people with hearing problems, Nokia sells phones that flash or vibrate. It also offers a "loopset," a wire with a microphone in it that hangs around a person's neck and plugs into a hearing aid.

More companies are forming in-house disability teams. Last year, for example, Microsoft Corp. created its Accessibility and Disabilities Group, with more than 40 researchers, marketers and product developers. The group has engineered such products as a mouse that is less sensitive to tremors. For people who can't press several keys

Please Turn to Page B6, Column 3

Disabled People Say, 'We Have Money And Want to Spend'

Continued From Page B1

at once, Microsoft makes "sticky keys" configured to hit control, alt and delete keys, say, with a single stroke.

Accessibility enhancements can be as simple as varying colors. People with vision problems, for instance, are aided by contrasts. "The cost of white plastic is the same as gray plastic," says Jim Tobias, president of **Inclusive Technologies**, consultants on technology and disability, in Matawan, N.J. "And a few more million people will be able to use it."

Several years ago, **Bell Atlantic Corp.** launched an in-house market research project on people with disabilities. The company determined that the market was ripe for such assistive devices as light-flashing caller-IDs and voice mail that alerts people to take their medicine.

Last year, Bob Baublitz, Bell Atlantic's first manager of marketing to the disability community, led the launch of an accessibility Web site touting Bell Atlantic's disability-friendly products. Earlier this year, Bell Atlantic advertised its services in three disability-oriented magazines.

Bell Atlantic won't disclose its sales figures but says the products are selling well. "They're just scooping them up," says Marilyn Benoit, manager of Bell Atlantic's center for customers with disabilities. "This was a very good business decision."

Indeed, handicaps (a term that Johnnie Tuitel, a lecturer with a disability, is seeking to trademark) has nothing to do with regulatory change or the landmark **Americans With Disabilities Act**, passed in 1990. That law, which mandated that companies treat people with disabilities in an evenhanded way and make "reasonable accommodations," prompted companies to install wheelchair ramps for workers and hire interpreters for deaf employees, among other things.

Still, pinpointing what is considered legally "reasonable" remains tricky. Last month, the **National Federation of the Blind** sued **America Online Inc.**, alleging that it violated the federal disabilities law by being inaccessible to blind users. The Baltimore group's complaint charged that AOL's software doesn't work with computer programs that dictate text and otherwise help blind people operate applications and Web sites.

"It would be more productive to everyone if we could deal with this as a technology issue and not a legal issue," says Tricia Primrose, an AOL spokeswoman. She says that the next version of AOL's software will be screen-reader-compatible and so accessible to people with visual impairments.

Other advocates for the disability community say they prefer products and services to be spurred by profit potential, not by compliance. And targeting people with disabilities for purely altruistic reasons "isn't going to get the return on investment," says Cheryl Duke, president of **W.C. Duke Associates Inc.**, a disability-consulting firm in Woodford, Va. "If you do it because it's a moneymaking project, it will continue."

CYBERSCOPE

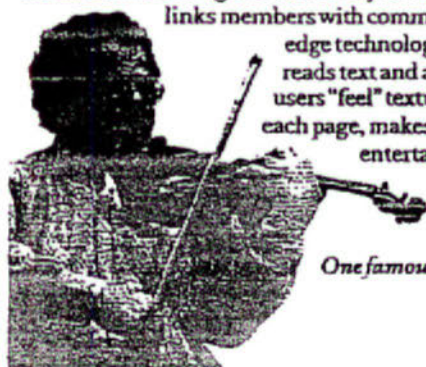
ONLINE

Disabled? Sure. Limited? No More.

THE 54 MILLION AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR families can now enter the Internet through a portal all their own. The week-old wemedia.com allows members to attend school, search for jobs, try sports and buy homes through programs and merchants designed exclusively for them. A sitewide directory links members with common interests. And cutting-edge technology, including software that reads text and a mouse that lets blind users "feel" textures and dialog boxes on each page, makes the site interactive and entertaining—for anyone.

MICHAEL E. RYAN,
N'GAI CROAL and VICTORIA
SCANLAN STEFANAKOS

One famous member: Itzhak Perlman



SPORTS MEDIA/Richard Sandomir

Live From Paralympics, Online Coverage

At the Summer Olympics in Sydney, NBC Sports will carry 161 hours and MSNBC and CNBC will telecast 276½ more hours on cable.

Soon after, also from Sydney, Wemedia.com will Webcast at least 100 hours of the Paralympics, which are contested by disabled athletes.

This is not prime-time television, but Wemedia Corporation, which owns the Internet site and publishes *We*, a slick magazine for disabled people, from its downtown Manhattan office, is capitalizing on advances in streaming video to bring the Paralympics to computers from Oct. 18 to 29. After the Paralympics, the company plans to Webcast two events a month.

"We're trying to create access and mobility to watch the games for people nobody have cared about, and make it free to the world," Cary Fields, Wemedia's president, said. "The computer makes the disabilities disappear. It's the ultimate enabler."

Wemedia's plans for the 18-sport Paralympics are ambitious: three separate daily feeds of 12 hours of live events, feature and studio coverage, from 7:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. Eastern, which would be repeated for the next 12 hours.

"Track and field and swimming

and velodrome cycling could all be starting at once, and you can go to one for two or three hours, then switch to another," said Rick Gentile, the executive producer of Wemedia Sports, who served in the same position at CBS Sports.

In addition to shifting among three video feeds, there will be a second screen offering a continuous flow of accompanying information.

"We have a blank slate — an entire network to program," said Gentile, who was a top programming or production executive during CBS's telecasts of the 1992, 1994 and 1998 Winter Olympics. "And with three feeds, we'd better be good. A lot will depend on our Web site boys to synchronize it all together."

Wemedia tested its technology in April at the Paralympic sailing trials and plans more tests next month at the track and field and swimming trials. The quality of the Webcast depends on the abilities of the computers receiving it as well as on the equipment Wemedia uses to transmit the video. Nonetheless, the quality of streaming video in general seems to improve on an almost daily basis.

"A few weeks ago, I would have

said TV is TV, but this is different," Gentile said. "What works on TV doesn't necessarily work on the Web. Pictures and graphics are smaller. But on a laptop, where you'll have one box with a moving picture, we can synchronize graphics in a way that makes this unique."

Wemedia's primary goal is to expand the presence of the underexposed Paralympics — and bring new members to its Web site, which will add a much larger sports news and information component today. But it also intends to spread the gospel about the extraordinary skills of the thousands of athletes who are blind, paraplegic, amputees or mentally retarded or have cerebral palsy.

Charlie Huebner, executive director of the United States Association of Blind Athletes, doubted that Wemedia would face a shortage of events.

"We have 300 to 400 local, regional and national events within our own organization," he said. "Wemedia is helping parents and kids find out what events are out there."

Arthur Pincus, the vice president for content of Wemedia Sports, added: "There are basketball tournaments, rugby, tennis tournaments, sailing regattas, skiing and expedition-adventure events. There's no

question we'll have enough to do two events a month."

Olympic viewers are accustomed to network features about athletes that often strain to find the obstacles, family tragedies or melodramatic woes that formed them.

"Here every story smacks you in the face," Gentile said. "They're all remarkable. At the dock where the athletes get on the boats, many have to be picked up or hoisted into the boats. Then you see 30 empty wheelchairs and prosthetic arms and legs on the dock."

To advocates of the disabled, Wemedia's sports strategy fills a long-overlooked void and will provide broad recognition for their athleticism.

"It's crazy to think only disabled people will watch disabled events," said Deborah Bonsack, executive director of America's Athletes With Disabilities, which promoted 190 disabled sports events last year. "People need to think of disabled sports as sports played by people with different physical compositions."

If Wemedia finds viewer success in Webcasting the Paralympics and other events, she said: "Folks will have a shift in opinion. You'll hear

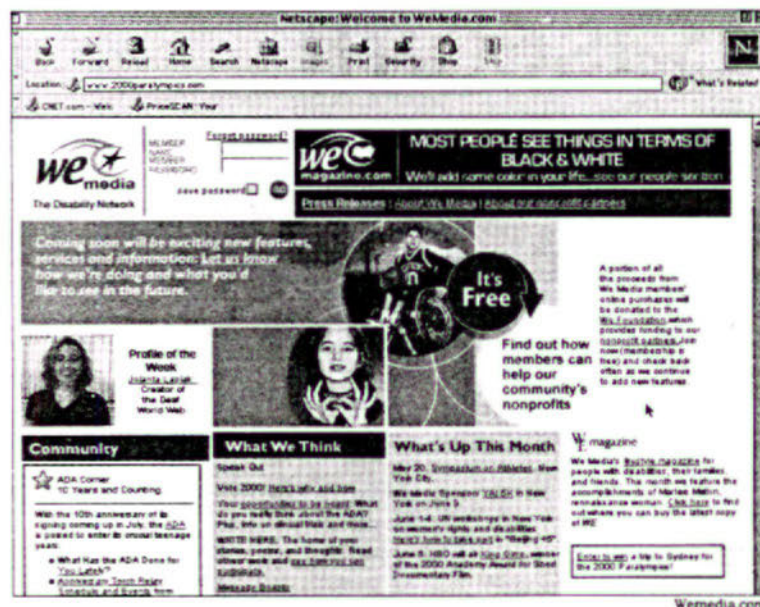
people stop and say, 'How does that amputee swimmer do that?'"

Andrew Imparato, president of the American Association of People With Disabilities, said: "Too often, the public view of people with disabilities is a charity model, that we need to raise money for them. But the Paralympics and Special Olympics show disabled people achieving well beyond what people with disabilities are supposed to be able to do."

He cautioned that many disabled people — as well as those who are able-bodied — cannot afford a computer and cannot view the Webcast of the Paralympics.

But with the United States television rights, on top of its world Web rights deal, Wemedia has a TV strategy. It is seeking a cable partner for daily reports, and a broadcaster for a post-Paralympics special.

"We want the Webcast to enhance the broadcasts," said Jay Rosenstein, the vice president for programming of Wemedia Sports, "and the broadcasts to make the public aware of the Webcast."



A page from Wemedia's Web site.

We Media weaves Web for blind

New site and tools bring the Internet to people with disabilities

By ANICK JESDANUN
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Walter Cronkite calls it "the ultimate prosthetic." We Media Inc., which makes tools and publishes We magazine for the disabled, has activated a service aimed at making the Internet more accessible to people with disabilities.

In some cases, users would need to buy such special equipment as a vibrating mouse that lets blind people "feel" boxes and images on the computer screen.

"This is not at all an ordinary Web site," said Cronkite, the former CBS anchorman who acts as an adviser to the site. "It's an enabling device."

The tools will enable people with disabilities to do such things as take online college courses and participate in discussion groups, he said.

The new service comes a month after the National Federation of the Blind sued America Online, calling its software incompatible with programs that convert text to audio or Braille.

According to the Census Bureau, one in 10 Americans has a severe disability such as blindness.

The for-profit site at www.wemedia.com will offer shopping and access to online college courses, chat rooms, lists of jobs at accessible workplaces and real estate brokers who specialize in accessible homes. Some of the features and tools, however, won't be available for weeks or months.

The software will be written so that the Web page is compatible with such tools as the vibrating mouse.

Several other sites cater to people with disabilities. Some of the access tools are also available



Bebeto Matthews/AP

John Doyle, a blind student scientist at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, demonstrates a touch-feedback computer technology called TouchWeb.

already. We Media, however, brings both elements together; it designs accessible sites and works with hardware companies to develop tools for people with disabilities.

For example, someone with paralysis or other motor impairment could surf the site using technology that detects eye movement.

A blind person could use the vibrating mouse to feel and listen to the site's visual content. The mouse works with software to convert text into computerized voices.

The mouse will sell for several hundred dollars, though We Media is seeking arrangements with nonprofit partners to buy the tools in bulk and offer them for free or at a subsidized price.

Laurence Bergman, We Media's product manager, likened the one-time purchase to that of a wheelchair.

John Doyle, a blind college

student from Montreal, said the new mouse expands what he could do on the Internet. He has an easier time with shopping sites that ask for credit card and other information.

"Before it was difficult to fill out this registration info. I'd have to ask someone with sight to do it," he said, demonstrating the technology. "This allows me to do anything a sighted person would do on the Web."

So far, We Media is the only Web

site to use coding compatible with the vibrating mouse. But the maker of the mouse, Haptic Technologies, hopes other sites will ultimately adopt the coding.

Richard Ring, a blind Web user who runs the International Braille and Technology Center for the Blind, said a vibrating mouse would be more useful if it worked elsewhere. "I wouldn't want to be limited to using a special Web site any more than you would," he said.

From Associated Press Newswires

New Web site and tools unveiled for the disabled

By Anick Jedanun

December 3, 1999

New York (AP)—Walter Cronkite calls it "the ultimate prosthetic." Developers for a new Web site and tools people with disabilities want to make the Internet more accessible.

We Media Inc., which publishes *WE* Magazine for the disabled, is activating the service today. In some cases, users would need to buy such special equipment as a vibrating mouse that lets the blind "feel" boxes and images on the computer screen.

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