



Exchange

“Protecting the Rights of Persons With Disabilities”

DRM Now Provides Vaccination Advocacy

Your right to vaccine access

Do you need help getting vaccinated? Disability Rights Michigan now offers free vaccine advocacy to individuals with disabilities who want a vaccine but cannot get one. The Vaccine Advocacy team is working to improve access to vaccines by addressing harmful stereotypes and accessibility gaps that confront individuals with disabilities.

Launched in October 2021, the team is comprised of 8 DRM employees, including advocates from across the state. The team provides direct advocacy, information, training, and outreach to help people with disabilities, family members, and caregivers get vaccinated. This service is grant funded (state and federal) through June 2024.

“DRM has always been client focused, and the goal of the Vaccine Advocacy Team is no different,” said Mark McWilliams, Director of Vaccine Advocacy. “The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the challenges faced by individuals

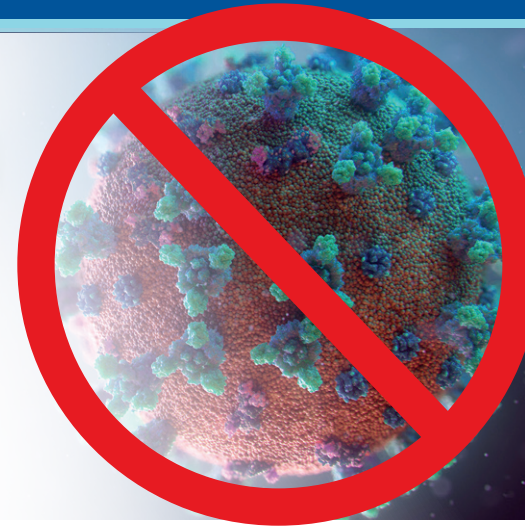
with disabilities in gaining access to the community supports they want and need. We are dedicated to helping individuals with disabilities get that access.”

Advocates have attended vaccine clinics, targeted efforts in underserved areas, created a series of COVID-FAQs, presented to statewide agencies on disability rights, and have partnered with other advocacy organizations to increase vaccine access. As outreach efforts continue to expand, advocates will implement new strategies and build new partnerships to meet the unique needs of Michigan residents.

Our Vaccine Services

Call and speak with an advocate or contact us through our website

- Get direct advocacy assistance
- Get your vaccine questions answered



- Learn about your rights
- We listen and offer guidance, advice, and suggestions
- Our advocates provide information and referral resources

Our services are **FREE** and **CONFIDENTIAL**.

Visit our website to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine and how we can help: www.drmmich.org/vaccineadvocacy.



DRM Secures Employment Settlement

Hannah, an employee with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), contacted Disability Rights Michigan (DRM) in January 2020. MRS is a division of the State of Michigan tasked with providing specialized employment and education-related services for people with disabilities. Hannah contacted DRM because she requested a reasonable accommodation to telework four hours per week to manage her back pain, and MRS denied the request. DRM encouraged her to file a complaint with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The EEOC found reasonable cause to believe MRS discriminated against Hannah by denying her accommodation request, and suggested MRS pay Hannah and provide the accommodation to resolve the claim. MRS refused.

In December of 2020, DRM, with NachtLaw P.C. as co-counsel, filed a federal complaint on Hannah's behalf. The complaint alleged disability discrimination under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act based on MRS' failure to provide Hannah with her requested

reasonable accommodation. She sought monetary damages for missed work and pain and suffering, as well as injunctive relief, including training for MRS' employees on reasonable accommodations. In November of 2021, Hannah and the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) settled the lawsuit, with MDHHS agreeing to pay Hannah an undisclosed amount.

Hannah left MRS in August of 2020 to pursue her law degree at the University of Wisconsin, and is in her second year there.



The Disability Community

• COVID-19 VACCINE SURVEY •



Our Vaccine Advocacy team is conducting a survey on COVID-19 vaccinations and is seeking input from the disability community. We want to hear from you.

You can take the survey if you are:

1. An adult with a disability (over the age of 18), or
2. A caregiver/family member of an individual with a disability

Your opinion matters to us – whether you have had the COVID-19 vaccine or not.

Your responses will be kept private, and the information will only be shared in a group format. You can take the survey until 3/31/22.

We value your feedback.

SURVEY LINK: www.surveymonkey.com/r/DisabilityCommunityVaccineSurvey
or call for a paper copy at 1.800.288.5923.

Where Can I Find Help Obtaining an Adaptive Vehicle or Making My Vehicle Accessible?



Having an adaptive vehicle can be critical for individuals with disabilities and many have known the struggle to find reliable and affordable accommodations. The ability to drive safely and comfortably is

important when maintaining the freedom to travel.

Vehicle modifications can involve:

- Mechanical hand controls;
- A left foot accelerator;
- Reduced effort brakes and steering systems;
- Power transfer seats; and
- Lifts and ramps.

DRM has included adaptive vehicles on our Resources page and offer information on vehicle modifications, paying for modifications, and federal programs. Visit our website to learn more (<https://www.drmmich.org/resources/accessibility/>)



**DRM is
now on**

Instagram

We are excited to announce the debut of Disability Rights Michigan's new Instagram page! Follow DRM to learn more about who we are, what we do, and how we advocate for the rights of people with disabilities in Michigan. @disabilityrightsmichigan

Transition Services 101

What are transition services?

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for students eligible for special education. Transition services are intended to create a smooth pathway that allows a young person to experience a successful adult life. These activities can include instruction, related services, community experiences, development of employment, and adult living objectives.

Why is transition important?

Transition planning ensures a plan is in place for taking the "next step". These services help students with disabilities and their families think about life after high school.

Who provides transition services for students with disabilities?

Schools, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (Michigan Rehabilitation Services/Bureau for Services of Blind Persons), and service providers collaborate to provide transition services to students.

If you have a student that is age 16-26 that receives special education services and would like more information about transition services, please contact us at 1-800-288-5923.

Advocacy Partner Highlight

Michigan Developmental Disabilities Institute (MI-DDI)



PODCAST

- **Listen to MI-DDI's New Podcast Series: Possibilities** Michigan Developmental Disabilities' (MI-DDI) [Possibilities Podcast Series](#) examines issues that affect people with disabilities and their support systems. The topic for Episode 2 is Medication Management. Managing medications is not always easy. In this episode, Clinical Pharmacist Dr. Steven Erickson talks about how to make the process efficient and safe for people with disabilities and their caregivers. Link:

<https://ddi.wayne.edu/possibilitiespodcast/medication-management>



4095 Legacy Parkway • Lansing • MI 48911

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION U.S. POSTAGE PAID PERMIT NO. 263 LANSING, MI

Board of Directors

Officers

Jane Shank
President
Interlochen

Brian Calley
Treasurer
Portland

Mark Stephenson
1st Vice President
Troy

Mark Wiedelman
Secretary
Troy

Paul Palmer
2nd Vice President
Lansing

John McCulloch
Immediate Past President
Royal Oak

Members-at-Large

Melody Arabo
West Bloomfield

Davin Hemmila
Negaunee

Selena M. Schmidt
Shelby Township

Jill Busha
Alpena

Tom Landry
Highland

Hansen Clarke
Detroit

Malkia Newman
Waterford

Disability Rights Michigan (DRM)

4095 Legacy Parkway
Lansing, MI 48911-4264

Telephone 517.487.1755

TOLL FREE:

800.288.5923

Fax: 517.487.0827



<http://www.drmich.org>

Voice/TTY/Language and accommodations available. Available in alternative formats upon request.

Michelle Roberts
Executive Director

Disability Rights Michigan is mandated by federal and state law to protect the legal rights of individuals with disabilities in Michigan. DRM receives part of its funding from the Administration for Community Living, the Center for Mental Health Services-Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and the Social Security Administration. This publication is made possible by support from these federal funders. The contents are solely the responsibility of DRM and do not necessarily represent the official views of the federal agencies listed above. The Exchange is funded by the federal appropriations and grants, 94%; State of Michigan appropriations and grants, 5%; Other, 1%. Total copies . Total Cost: \$. Cost per issue: . ¢.