



“ONE ILLINOIS” CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS PREPARING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES; Transition Services Key to Success

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Springfield, Illinois (October 4, 2006) – The Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities today highlighted the importance of making available “transition services” to students with disabilities before their high school graduation. Transition services are defined as a coordinated set of activities that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, based on the individual student’s needs, preferences and interests.

“Our commitment to students with disabilities should not begin when they earn a diploma but early in their education to ease the transition,” summarized Janet Stover, Executive Director of the Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities. “Students with disabilities face even greater challenges upon graduation than their counterparts that do not have a disability. This is evidenced by the historically high unemployment rate among persons with disabilities. We call on all candidates for Governor to make ‘transition services’ in the Illinois school system a priority over the next four years.”

According to the “*ONE ILLINOIS: A Community Initiative for Persons with Disabilities*” campaign, an estimated 24,000 students per year exit the special education system and may require interagency transition services and/or long term services and supports in the community. These often include the behavioral, social, communicative, functional, occupational, and academic skills that enable young adults with disabilities to obtain and hold meaningful employment, live independently, and obtain further education and training.

The IARF campaign’s attention comes as the federal government recently released new regulations governing the nation’s special education programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The regulations makes several changes to sharpen the focus of transition services which are “designed to be within a results-oriented process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child’s movement from school to post-school activities.”

“The preparation for students for ‘life after school’ must begin at an early age with the involvement of families, state agencies, and other community resources,” said Mike Rein, Executive Director of Transitions of Western Illinois. “Community-based providers can facilitate the transition from school to work, or to other meaningful activities after school, by offering more effective and meaningful options to students and their families.”

IARF and its members, other community agencies, our One Illinois partners, consumers, family members, boards of directors, staff, and communities across Illinois are 2.2 million voters calling immediate attention to the platform issues – at stake is not just people’s votes or politics, but rather the quality of daily life for Illinois’ residents with disabilities. Statewide, 2.2 million voters are touched by, and care about disability issues and believe that you cannot talk about education, healthcare, housing, jobs, and human rights without talking about community services for persons with disabilities.

To learn more about “*ONE ILLINOIS: A Community Initiative for Persons with Disabilities*,” please visit www.oneillinois.info, or contact Janet Stover by phone at (217) 753-1190 or email at jstover@hso.net.

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