

July 21, 2021



HOW DRNC HELPS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN NORTH CAROLINA

Disability Rights North Carolina

www.disabilityrightsn.org

NORTH CAROLINA'S P&A

- Disability Rights North Carolina (DRNC) is the protection and advocacy (P&A) system in North Carolina, dedicated to advancing the legal rights of people with all types of disabilities, of all ages, statewide. Every state and territory in the US has a P&A.
- The 57 P&As comprise the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN).

NORTH CAROLINA'S P&A

As a P&A, our responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that people with disabilities live in safe and humane conditions
- Ensuring that people with disabilities are not unnecessarily institutionalized
- Enforcing the rights of all North Carolinians with disabilities under federal and state law
- Informing individuals about their legal rights and how to enforce them

ORIGINS OF THE P&A SYSTEM

Media scrutiny of New York's overcrowded Willowbrook State School in the early 1970s provided a window into the horrific, inhumane conditions in facilities where people with disabilities were segregated and forgotten. The images of abuse were impossible to ignore; Sen. Bobby Kennedy called it a "snakepit." As a result, Congress was motivated to act and created the P&As.

DRNC STAFF, BOARD, AND PAC



Members of DRNC's staff, Board of Directors and PAMI Advisory Council, September 2019 in Raleigh

OUR MISSION AND VISION

Mission

Disability Rights North Carolina advances and defends the rights of people with disabilities.

Vision

Disability Rights North Carolina works to achieve a just society where people with disabilities are free from discrimination and abuse. Our goal is a fully integrated and accessible community – where people with disabilities have power, equal opportunity, and freedom to make their own decisions.

OUR VALUES

We believe that people with disabilities have the right to be heard and a right to live in the world.

We increase the power of people with disabilities through advocacy and the relentless pursuit of justice.

Disability Rights North Carolina values integrity, creative strategies, and collaboration in our work.

We support human dignity, diversity, and civil rights.

We fight for full inclusion and self-determination.

OUR CAPACITY TO SERVE

- We consider all 1.9 million children and adults with disabilities living in NC to be our clients.

LEGALLY-BASED ADVOCACY WE PROVIDE

- ✓ Monitor
- ✓ Investigate
- ✓ Information and Referral Services
- ✓ Advance the Rights of People with Disabilities
- ✓ Influence Public Policy

MONITOR AND INVESTIGATE

The initial and still central mission of the P&A system was and is to prevent the abuse and neglect of individuals with disabilities particularly those who reside in institutions or other facilities.

OUR SUPER POWER - ACCESS

- Extraordinary investigative and access authority
- Routine access to all individuals with disabilities in facilities providing services
- Must have immediate access (within 24 hours) to all records related to death in a facility or where probable cause that health or safety is in serious jeopardy

MONITORING

- Goal is to ensure resident's rights are protected and that they are living in a safe environment with opportunities to participate in activities important to them.
- Identify individuals who could live in the community if they had the proper supports and services.

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

- All calls and emails for assistance are handled by our Intake Team who conduct in depth interviews.
- They determine if the caller's need falls within the current "Targets".

TARGETS

- Each year, we identify issues to focus our resources to accomplish specific outcomes.
- We seek input from the community on our Targets.

2021 TARGETS

- **Target 1:** Keep students with disabilities in school.
- **Target 2:** Students with disabilities will attend school free from abuse, including abusive interventions
- **Target 3:** Advocate for the employment of people with disabilities in competitive and integrated jobs
- **Target 4:** Enforce the right of people with disabilities to have equal access to their community

2021 TARGETS

- **Target 5:** Reduce NC's over-reliance on Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs)
- **Target 6:** Reduce unnecessary institutionalization of individuals with disabilities and advance home and community based healthcare services and supports.
- **Target 7:** Increase access to accessible, affordable housing for people with disabilities in the communities of their choice

2021 TARGETS

- **Target 8:** Prepare, advise, and advocate for people with disabilities before, during, and after a state declared disaster
- **Target 9:** Advocate for safe, equitable and just criminal processes for people with disabilities
- **Target 10:** Promote the right of self-determination
- **Target 11:** Enforce the right of people with disabilities to vote

REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE REVIEWS

On April 13, 2018, the President signed Strengthening Protections for Social Security Act. The law directs state Protection and Advocacy system organizations to conduct all periodic onsite reviews along with additional discretionary reviews. In addition, the P&As will conduct educational visits and conduct reviews based on allegations they receive of payee misconduct.

REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE REVIEWS

The P&A conducts a review which includes:

- An interview with the individual or organizational representative payee
- A review of the representative payee's financial records for the requested beneficiary or sample of beneficiaries served
- A home visit and interview for each beneficiary included in the review; and an interview with legal guardians and third parties when applicable.

REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE REVIEWS

Our goal is to protect people with disabilities from financial exploitation, abuse and neglect. If a Representative Payee is found to be mishandling benefits

- P&A works with the Payee on a corrective action plan with SSA's advance approval of the plan.
- SSA will be doing their own follow up in more significant instances, whether that might be removing the Payee and/or referring for prosecution

DRNC & LEGAL AID OF NC



Eligibility

Practice Areas

Geographic Service Areas



THANK YOU

Please Consider Supporting Our Work

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