



# Join Your Voice with Ours! **Together We're Stronger!**

What if giving from the heart helped change the lives of individuals with disabilities, older adults and their families in Colorado? Rest assured that your year-end donation to Disability Law Colorado will impact lives throughout the Centennial state – up and down the Front Range, to rural communities on the Eastern Plains and across the Mountain Frontier and Western Slope.

Your gift will help fuel the fire of disability rights advocacy as we work to broker systems change, protect rights and improve lives. But we cannot accomplish this alone. Please partner with us and join your voice with ours by making a year-end donation.

Take a look at some of our 2017 highlights, and discover how your support impacts lives of individuals with disabilities, elders and their families. Together, we change lives.

## Together We Change Lives

- 1** Give on Colorado Gives Day - Tuesday, December 5. No need to wait, you can schedule your gift today! ([www.coloradogives.org/DisabilityLawCO](http://www.coloradogives.org/DisabilityLawCO))
- 2** Return the enclosed remittance envelope along with your tax-deductible donation. Consider making your donation a holiday gift!
- 3** Encourage your family & friends to make a year end donation. Give a gift in honor, memory or celebration of someone.

**WAYS to GIVE**

**DISABILITY LAW COLORADO™**

## Highlights of Our Life-Changing Work in 2017

Throughout 2017 Disability Law Colorado was involved in individual casework, filed administrative complaints, pursued administrative appeals, conducted neutral investigations, worked through committees on systemic issues, provided training to hundreds of people on various disability-related topics and made a major impact in the legislative session on behalf of people with disabilities and elders.

### Long-Term Care Ombudsman & Legal Assistance Developer for Elders

The Ombudsman Program is charged with the responsibility of protecting the rights of people in nursing homes and assisted living as well as assuring they receive adequate care. In 2016 the General Assembly passed legislation establishing a state ombudsman for the **Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly**, known as PACE. In January, **Leah McMahon** became the first State PACE Ombudsman within the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.



**Medicare/Medicaid Advocates** Julie Bansch-Wickert and Seth Greiner provided advocacy assistance to 299 individuals and documented 2,488 contacts with individual clients during the year; conducted 28 training sessions and presentations; participated in drafting HB1284 which passed and will require background checks for individuals who work with at-risk adults; and provided testimony to a House Committee on legislation to improve protections for Medicaid recipients.

Kelsey Lesco, Legal Assistance Developer for Elders, was appointed to the **Public Guardianship Commission** by the Chief Justice of the Colorado Supreme Court.

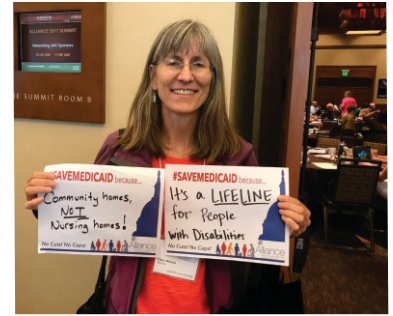
**COLORADO MEDICARE-MEDICAID ADVOCATE**

Free help for individuals with both Medicare and Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program)

## Protection & Advocacy System

In 2017 Disability Law Colorado reorganized our Protection & Advocacy (P&A) Staff into teams rather than by grants. **The P&A Teams include: Education Team, Access Team, Facilities Team, and Community Integration Team.** This reorganization has allowed people to work in specialized areas based on the law that applies, not on the client's disability. This new structure also allows for more consistency in services across the state. We implemented a **centralized intake system for all P&A programs.** This system has dramatically increased our intake efficiency. **In 2017 we recorded: 247 Information & Referrals (I&R's) on general disability law issues; a total of 986 I&R's; and a total of 488 cases.**

**Jail Wait Litigation** – For more than five years we have been working on the issue of people who are incarcerated and awaiting competency evaluations or restoration treatment languishing in jails. We joined a coalition and served as plaintiff in a lawsuit against the Colorado Department of Human Services. Based on this dogged determination, the Jail Wait Litigation Team, including our own Kelsey Lesco, Jennifer Purrington and Mark Ivandick, received the Colorado Lawyers Committee's 2017 "Team of the Year" award.



## Legislative Victories

We reviewed and analyzed more than 100 bills, including contacting legislators or testifying regarding 21 of those bills.

- **Making Law to Restrict the Use of Restraints in Public Schools [HB 17-1276]:** Prompted by our report, *What's Holding Our Kids Down – Restraint in Colorado Schools*, we assembled a coalition to submit a bill to ban prone (face down) restraints and create an administrative enforcement mechanism when students are unlawfully restrained in schools.
- **Juvenile Justice Reform Efforts [HB 17-1329]:** We were proud to be a part of the Child Safety Coalition, together with the ACLU of Colorado, the Colorado Juvenile Defenders Center and the Office of the State Public Defender, in investigating allegations of wide-spread abuse in the Division of Youth Corrections system and issuing a report, *Bound & Broken*.
- **Implement Conflict-Free Case Management [HB 17-1343]:** This bill implements conflict-free case management for persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities who are enrolled in home and community-based services under Colorado's Medicaid Program.



## Celebrating 40 Years as Colorado's P&A System!

A wonderful 2017 highlight was our 40th Anniversary Celebration. The event welcomed over 225 guests on Thursday, October 19th to the History Colorado Center. The cocktail reception featured a Decade Tables Project which displayed Disability Law Colorado's historical milestones and cultural items; and a program that paid tribute to those who have helped shape our history plus reflections on four decades of life-changing work.

