Empowering Independence

AUGUST 2026 DHILS *WHAT's UP* NEWSLETTER

DHILS | MAIN | JOB OPENINGS | REFERRAL

Disability Pride Day at *Out to Lunch*

The disability flag/disability pride flag, or flag of the rights of persons with disabilities is a flag that represents people with any kind of disabilities. The current flag was created by the American disabled activist Ann Magill. She created the original rainbow lightning bolt design in 2016. In 2021, per input from people with visually triggering disabilities she changed its design to use muted colors and straight diagonal stripes.

YAA's Benji Kemper raising the flag.

On July 15th, Disability Pride Day, the Disability Flag was raised in front of Worcester City Hall. *Your Access Advocates* had a table at the *Out to Lunch* event along with many other agencies, as well as crafters/vendors and food trucks.

Out to Lunch is held Wednesdays from 11:00am - 3:00pm on the Worcester Common, now through September 9th.

Learn about MyServices

MassHealth members can use *MyServices*, a secure online portal, to manage their MassHealth account from home.

With a *MyServices* account, you can:

- Check your eligibility and enrollment status.
- View important notices, alerts, and actions that need your attention.
- Update certain account information.
- Track the status of your benefits and applications.

To stay informed and avoid missing important MassHealth deadlines or requests, **setup a *MyServices* account** at: myservices.mass.gov

A resource and advocacy center for independent living serving people with disabilities and the Deaf & hard of hearing in Central Massachusetts.

Voice: (508) 798-0350 • Toll Free: (800) 570-4020 • VP: (508) 762-1164 • TTY: (508) 755-1003 • Fax: (508) 797-4015
18 Chestnut St. Suite 540, Worcester, MA 01608 • Website: youraccessadvocates.org

Contact Us

Improving Accessibility at *Theatre at the Mount*

Theatre at the Mount is committed to expanding accessibility for all audience members. We are beginning a survey of Deaf and hard-of-hearing theatre patrons to better understand their experiences, needs, and the accommodations that support them best.

If you or someone you know are Deaf, hard of hearing, or who use hearing-related accommodations at performances, please take/share this brief survey. Your feedback will directly shape future accessibility improvements at TAM.

Thank you for helping us make *Theatre at the Mount* more welcoming and inclusive for everyone.

Take the Survey! Click here.

Panel Discussion: Healthcare with Hearing Loss

Listen in on our recent wide-ranging conversation with advocates Shari Eberts and Gael Hannan at the *Future of Hearing Health Conference,* where we explore our work, what we're learning about communication access in healthcare, and where we see opportunities for creating change.

Watch video here:
https://www.healthcarewithhearingloss.com/ourblogs/four-women-one-lively-conversation-about-healthcare

MCDHH: Sign Langage Interpreter Mentorship

MCDHH is proud to announce the *Sign Language Interpreter Mentorship Pilot Program* will be returning Spring 2027. If you are not yet screened or certified, desire to increase your interpreting skills, and want to take MCDHH's screening, this is the program for you!

This mentorship program is free of charge and offered to novice interpreters - Deaf, CODA, Spoken English/ASL interpreters from diverse backgrounds. This program will allow participants the opportunity to work with experienced mentors and gain a deeper understanding of interpreting.

Questions? Contact Holly Pearson, Workforce Development Coordinator, at **MCDHHMentorship@mass.gov**.

To learn more, view our vlog below!
Vlog Transcript: https://bit.ly/3T0vIRZ

WORCESTER FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER
BACK TO SCHOOL EVENT
AUGUST 15TH
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED
BACKPACKS FILLED WITH SCHOOL SUPPLIES AND LOCAL RESOURCES
TO REGISTER, CALL 508-796-1411
OR EMAIL YIWFRCYOUINC.ORG
Seven Hills Foundation
Family Resource Centers
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS Worcester

MassHealth Changes (Fall 2026)

New changes include:

- New work or education requirements ("community engagement requirements")
- More frequent eligibility checks for certain MassHealth members
- Which immigrants qualify for MassHealth

These changes will not impact most members.

MassHealth Changes:

October 2026:
Some immigrants legally in the U.S. will stop being eligible for MassHealth.

January 2027:

- For 19 - 64 year old MassHealth members with no children or no disability:
  - New work or education requirements; and
  - Must renew MassHealth **every 6 months** instead of each year

January 2027:
Changes in retroactive MassHealth coverage *(coverage from before you had MassHealth)*.

October 2028:
Some members, ages 19 - 64, may have to pay part of the cost for some health care services.

What can I do right now to keep my MassHealth coverage?

- **Make sure MassHealth has your current mailing address, email, and cell phone number so that you get important mail and messages.**
- Report any changes that could affect your MassHealth coverage, like a new pregnancy or disability, a change in your income, or household size changes.
  www.mass.gov/how-to/report-changes-to-masshealth
- Sign up for *MyServices* to see important information about your MassHealth coverage 24 hours a day.
  www.mass.gov/learn-about-myservices

your ACCESS ADVOCATES
DHILS
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Services

Read all letters MassHealth sends you!

August Awareness Days 2026

2 National Ice Cream Sandwich Day

- Cool off with one of your favorite frozen treats!
- The original ice cream sandwich sold for a penny in 1900 from a pushcart in the Bowery neighborhood of New York.

8 National Pickle Ball Day

- Pickle ball is a paddle sport that combines tennis, badminton, and table tennis in one.
- Pickleball players and fans are called "Picklers".
- The non-volley zone in front of the Pickleball net is call the "Kitchen".

11 National Play in the Sand Day

- At the beach, in a park or your own backyard - get outside and play in the sand!
- It's relaxing, promotes creativity, and boosts mental health.

16 National Roller Coaster Day

- Go to an amusement park and ride a roller coaster!
- On this day in 1989, Edwin Prescott patented the first vertical loop roller coaster.

31 National Eat Outside Day

- At home, a park, a favorite restaurant or a food truck, or on the beach...food just tastes better when we eat it under the open sky.
- Also known as al fresco dining.
- Pack a picnic and head to a park or just bring your food out to the patio or balcony.

Worcester Parent Guide to Community Resources

CLICK HERE FOR ENGLISH GUIDE

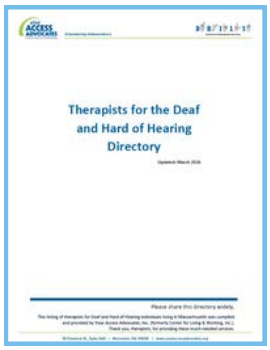
Missed a Newsletter?

Past issues are on our website!

CLICK HERE

Updated **Therapists for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Directory**

CLICK HERE



Questions? Contact your Skills Trainer

Joan Philip	*DHILS Director*	508-762-1165 (VP)
Priscilla Langone	*DHILS Administrative Assistant*	508-556-1600 (VP)
Ellen Perkins	*DHILS Asst. Manager/Hard of Hearing Skills Trainer*	508-502-7576 (Voice); 508-762-1354 (VP)
Rosemary Moreira	*Senior Deaf Skills Trainer (Full-time)*	508-762-1166 (VP)
Denise Paro	*Deaf Skills Trainer (Part-time)*	508-762-1021 (VP)
Calvin Calandra	*Deaf Skills Trainer (Part-time)*	508-762-1350 (VP)
Vacant	*Deaf Skills Trainer (Part-time)*	
Kim White	*Staff Interpreter*	508-755-1042 (Voice); 508-283-1036 (VP)

Contact Us

Videophone: 508-762-1164
TTY: 508-755-1003
www.youraccessadvocates.org

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Services

LIKE US ON facebook

YAA: **www.facebook.com/YourAccessAdvocates**
DHILS Group: **https://www.facebook.com/groups/yaa.dhils/**

SAFE SPACE LGBTQIA