



Moving On Up With MEPD

Summer 2010

WELCOME TO “Moving on Up with MEPD”

MEPD (Medicaid for Employed People with Disabilities) allows you to earn money for work and maintain your savings in the bank, which would normally put you over the limit to receive Medicaid. This newsletter is sent to all MEPD members.

You get **Medicaid for Employed People with Disabilities (MEPD)** because you:

- Have a disability.
- Are earning money from work.
- Are under 65 years old.

Remember, these things you need to tell your local DHS Income Maintenance Worker:

- When you stop working.
- When you earn more money.
- When you earn less money.
- When you move to a new address.

Iowa Workforce Development’s One Stop Career Centers

Written by Eden O’Connor—Region 10 Disability Program Navigator

A diagnosis of emphysema impacted Robert’s ability to work for nearly 17 years. Following a successful transplant, he was ready to re-enter the workforce to be more active and earn additional income. On the recommendation of a hospital social worker, he decided to learn more about the Ticket to Work program for SSDI and SSI beneficiaries. This recommendation led him to Iowa Workforce Development, a one-stop career center located in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The one-stop career center is where Robert first met with the Disability Navigator. He shared his story, employment interests, and questions about returning to work after a long absence from the workforce. Together they discussed these topics as well as Ticket to Work and the wide variety of services and resources that could help him gain employment. At the one-stop he explored

his interests, learned about education and training options, and accessed a variety of services to assist with his job search.

In early March, Robert arrived at a local job fair well-dressed with copies of his résumé and the positive attitude he always seems to have. After visiting with employers, he submitted applications and waited for a response. A few weeks later he was called in for an interview and offered a position. Robert’s dedication to finding employment, along with the services provided by the one-stop career center, added up to one of the many successes that he is likely to experience in the workforce.

Social Security—at your convenience!

Social Security Online Services

www.socialsecurity.gov
Apply for retirement/disability benefits
Change address/phone number
Replace Medicare card
Direct deposit

Automated Telephone Services

1-800-772-1213
Change address/phone number
Replace Medicare card
Direct deposit

The Em and Jerri Story

FROM CREATIVITY TO COFFEE:

BY MICHAEL HOENIG OF THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA'S CENTER FOR DISABILITIES AND DEVELOPMENT



Jerri's coffee shop counter for only two months after years of unemployment.

The "Em" of Em and Jerri's is Emilea Hillman, a vivacious 21-year-old entrepreneur who happens to have a disability. The "Jerri" is Jerri Reisner, Em's job coach and the coffee shop's manager.

"In the fall of 2008, a group began meeting to discuss employment options for people with disabilities in Independence," said Tami Fenner, Em's mother. "The group got smaller and smaller, until the only people remaining were Em's support team."

The team consists of Tami, Em's sister Ashlea and her husband, and Jerri, then a community trainer at Goodwill. Recognizing that the traditional service system would not allow Em to reach her potential, they began to brainstorm. Em needed something which would allow frequent contact with the public. Both coffee shops in Independence had closed. The idea to create Em and Jerri's was born.

Tami set her informal network in motion, contacting a friend who works for the Iowa Department of Human Services. Her friend referred her to Sheila Stoekel, an Iowa Workforce Development benefits planner. Sheila, in turn, put Tami in touch with the father of Poppin' Joe, another entrepreneur with a disability who sells kettle corn. Armed with the knowledge that her idea was viable, Tami approached Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, securing a small business development grant. With the purchase of a building, Em and Jerri's was born.

The team's enterprising spirit then kicked into high gear. Deciding on a 1950's motif, the team purchased and received donations of materials and furniture. Em and Jerri recovered chairs. Em attended barista training in Minneapolis, and with some minor modifications to the equipment, was "ready to go" for December's grand opening.

"What would you like for lunch," asked the friendly voice behind the counter. Then, recognizing that I am blind, she began reading the menu. Insightful under any circumstances, it's particularly impressive when you realize that the voice belongs to a woman who has worked the Em and

When I arrived, Em and Jerri's was a hub of activity. Between greeting customers, answering the phone, and supervising staff, Em found a few minutes to talk to me.

"I open the shop at 5:35," she beamed, proudly showing off her key. "I get right to work doing my favorite thing--make coffee!"

With the assistance of a fellow housing board member, Tami recently secured a \$22,500 USDA grant which will assist Em to cover payroll, rent and utilities. Grant funds also purchased woodworking tools and lumber, allowing Em to launch a satellite business, Emilea's Enterprises, which will market and sell hand-made wood products.

Em and Jerri's is already giving back to the community. A section of the shop, called the Newsroom, is dedicated to the Independence Bulletin-Journal, which once occupied the premises. Prominently displayed is a copy of a page from a 1921 issue. On the reverse side, we see a 2009 article featuring Em and Jerri's.

The Bulletin-Journal's editor, whose brother has Down syndrome, has drawn inspiration from Em's accomplishments. So, too, has the mother of a 14-year-old boy with autism who wants to be an Italian chef. "It's all about networking," says Tami with a smile.



This writer, too, has drawn inspiration from Em. He is reminded of Ed Roberts, the founder of the Independent Living movement, who was told by professionals that he could not be competitively employed due to the severity of his disability. When Em was born, her parents were told that she would never walk or talk and that she should be institutionalized. As a teenager, she was told that her disability was too severe for competitive employment. As the old song says, "Oh, look at me now!"

Em and Jerri's is open from 6 AM to 5 PM Monday through Friday, and 7 AM to 2 PM on Saturday. It is located at 324 First Street East in Independence.

BY THE NUMBERS...IOWANS WITH DISABILITIES 2009

STATE DATA CENTER OF IOWA—WWW.IOWADATACENTER.ORG

On July 26, 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act, guaranteeing equal opportunity for people with disabilities in public accommodations, commercial facilities, employment, transportation, state and local government services and telecommunications.

63,349

The number of Iowa disabled workers in 2007 receiving benefits under Social Security's Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) Program.

397,420

The number of people in Iowa in 2007 who have some kind of disability. They represent 14.5% of the civilian noninstitutionalized population age 5 and over.

120,739

The number of Iowans in 2007 who reported that a disability made it difficult to work at a job or business.

123,222

The number of Iowans ages 16-64 with a physical disability in 2007. The number of people 65 and over with a physical disability was 106,967.

52.1%

Over half of all the people in Iowa in 2007 with a sensory disability are aged 65 and over. People 16-64 account for 43.2 percent while children 5-15 make up only 4.8 percent of the total.

EDUCATION...

85.7%

The percent of Iowans in 2007 with a disability who have a high school degree or higher. The percent of Iowans without a disability who have a high school degree or higher is 93.5%.

4.7%

The percent of Iowans with a disability in 2007 who have a Bachelor's degree or higher. The percent of Iowans without a disability who have a Bachelor's degree or higher is 17.3%.

INCOME AND POVERTY...

\$15,263

Media earning for Iowans age 16 and over with disabilities with earnings in 2007. The median earning for Iowans age 16 and over with earnings in 2006 without disabilities is \$27,207.

45.1%
THE EMPLOYMENT RATE IN 2007 FOR IOWANS WITH A DISABILITY. THE EMPLOYMENT RATE FOR THOSE WITHOUT A DISABILITY AT THAT TIME WAS 81.6%.

20.0%

The poverty rate for Iowans with disabilities in 2007. The poverty rate for Iowans without disabilities is 9.0%.

Source: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/docs/factsheets/congstats/2007/ia.html>

35.9%

Percentage of people 65 and older in 2007 in Iowa with a disability, the highest of any age group.

7.0%

Percentage of Iowa children ages 5 to 15 in 2007 who have a disability. This amounts to 30,002 children.

81.8%

Percentage of disabled children in Iowa age 5 to 15 with a mental disability in 2007.

SPECIFICALLY...

233,794

The number of Iowans in 2007 reporting a physical disability, a condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities, such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting or carrying.

117,089

The number of Iowans in 2007 reporting a sensory disability such as blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment.

157,083

The number of Iowans reporting a mental disability, such as learning, remembering, or concentrating.

70,627

The number of Iowans in 2007 who reported that a disability made it difficult to perform self-care activities such as dressing bathing, or getting around inside the home.

106,296

The number of Iowans in 2007 who reported that a disability made it difficult to go outside the home alone to shop or visit a doctor's office.

Iowa's Workforce Centers are Employment Networks Under the Ticket to Work Program

Workforce centers offer a variety of employment services through the partnership of many programs and agencies, all driven to a common outcome of assisting an individual in seeking employment, or exploring a career change or advancement. One could say that description sounds like an employment network, right? That is exactly the thought of the Social Security Administration Ticket to Work program.

Ticket to Work is one of many work incentives offered by Social Security for individuals who are on Social Security Disability Insurance or SSI and who want to work. Two of the key players in the Ticket to Work program are:



1. Ticket holders, individuals receiving Social Security benefits and age 18-64. In Iowa there are approximately 90,000 Ticket holders.
2. Employment Networks (referred to as EN), a single agency or group of agencies who provide employment services to assist a job seek obtaining employment.

Social Security states the two goals of the program are reducing the dependency on Social Security benefits and assisting people to become more self sufficient. The process of the program is for the Ticket holder to choose an Employment

Network for services to become employed. This is a voluntary program and assigning their Ticket to an Employment Network does not impact the benefits they receive. If the Ticket holder becomes employed as a result of the relationship with the Employment Network, and the earnings are high enough to qualify the Employment Network gets a financial incentive from Social Security.

State workforce centers are natural employment networks by the services they provide and for this reason all of the workforce centers in Iowa became an approved Social Security Employment Network in August, 2007. Workforce centers offer career assessments, employment workshops, resume development, application and interviewing tips, job postings, labor market information, computer classes, and additional services offered by the many workforce partner agencies.

A Ticket holder can go to any Iowa workforce center and state you are on SSI or Social Security Disability Insurance and have a Ticket. Then you will be connected with the Disability Navigator, for the Navigator is designated the person responsible to facilitate the Employment Network operations. For more information please contact mary.revoir@iwd.iowa.gov or 866-520-8986 x 107.

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People with disabilities, advocates, policy administrators, employers, and medical professionals working together to enhance opportunities for Iowans with disabilities to work and live as they choose.