

DISABILITY SUMMIT 20 25

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE
JOE
Hohenstein


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of Philadelphia
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and Delaware Counties

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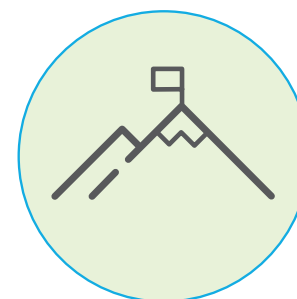
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Change



Challenge



Celebrate

2025 Disability Summit

9:00AM – 9:30AM REGISTRATION & BREAKFAST

9:30AM – 9:45AM OPENING REMARKS, (200 B/C)

Monika Williams Shealey, PhD., Dean and Professor, College of Education and Human Development, Temple University
Valerie A. Arkoosh, MD, MPH, Secretary of Human Services, Pennsylvania (invited)

9:45AM – 10:30AM KEYNOTE SPEAKER, (200 B/C)

Keynote by *Emily Voorde*, Founder of Into Strategies
Speaking on leadership development in the disability community

10:40AM – 11:30AM SESSION 1

Breakout 1 (200B/C): Leadership Development Roundtable

Moderators: *Emily Voorde*, founder of Into Strategies and former member of the Presidential Office of Public Engagement; *Shane Feldman*, CEO, Innivee Strategies
Panelists: *Thomas Earle, Esq.*, CEO Liberty Resources; *Vicki Landers*, Founder and ED, Disability Pride PA; *Nico Meyerling*, MPA, Chair, Philadelphia Mayor's Commission on People with Disabilities; and *Jessica Ruiz*, entrepreneur and emerging leader

Leadership knows no limits. It is a characteristic that can be developed, honed, and perfected in anyone. The time has come for the United States to recognize leadership from within the disability community and take steps to support emerging leaders who reflect the disabled experience in all aspects of society. The path to full equality

and accessibility will be forged by leaders who bring their lived experiences into the application of policy, the passage of legislation, and the holding of elected office. This panel will examine and discuss the places where leadership is being cultivated within the disability community today, and the way forward for them to have an impact in the world writ large.

Breakout 2 (217AB): Legislative and Governmental Updates City, State, and Federal

Moderator: *Rep. Joe Hohenstein*, Representative Pennsylvania House of Representatives, District 177
Panelists: *Adrienne Moore*, Dir. Philadelphia Mayors Office on People with Disabilities; *Dr. Valerie Arkoosh*, Secretary PA Department of Human Services; Representatives from Senator Dave McCormick and Representative Brian Fitzpatrick; and *Sherry Thomas, Esq.* Director-LCD Housing Initiative, Legal Clinic for the Disabled

This panel will provide updates on policy and legislative actions being taken in the City of Philadelphia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and in the federal government. It is not intended as an in-depth presentation on any specific piece of legislation, but rather will focus on highlighting the issues and discussions that are moving forward at this time.

Breakout 3 (217CD): Working while Maintaining Federal and State Benefits

Moderators: *Shane Janick, MPH*, Executive Director, The Arc of Philadelphia
Panelists: *Michele A. Leahy, MS, CPWIC*. Founder, Leahy

Life Planning LLC; *Stephanie Strein*, Self-Advocate; *David Simonetti*, Senior Director of Store Operations, Wawa; and *Laura McAnulty*, M.A., CCC-SLP, ASDCS, CYMHS. Executive Director, Neurodiversity Employment Network of Philadelphia

Maintaining work and maximizing Medicaid benefits can be challenging for people with disabilities and/or their family members. Michele discusses securing competitive employment while navigating and maintaining SSI/SSDI/Medicare/Medicaid, Home and Community Based Supports “Waivers,” and how retirement planning impacts benefits. Laura breaks down hiring practices and supportive employment for people with neuro-diversities. Drew highlights Wawa’s success in building out a supportive employment program for people with IDD in our region. The goal is to develop a foundation that is not exclusively dependent on state and federal support, but maximizes financial earning from jobs without sacrificing lifelong disability services and Medicaid benefits.

11:40AM – 12:30PM SESSION 2

Breakout 1 (200B/C): Self-Determination in the Autism Community

Moderator: *Dennis O’Brien*, former Speaker of the PA House of Representatives

Panelists: *Derek Green*, former Philadelphia City Councilmember; and *Abigail Salisbury*, Representative Pennsylvania House of Representatives, 34th District; *Candace McDowell*, Program Manager, CAPS Mental Health Partnerships; *Gregory Bannett*, Community Autism Peer Specialist, CAPS Mental Health Partnerships; and *Luke Tomczuk*, Engagement Coordinator, Temple University

The barriers people with autism face are well-established and embedded in the world of service providers. From denial to social stigmas to limits on accessing appropriate care and services to legal obstacles, just receiving a diagnosis can be an exercise in frustration and can freeze even the strongest self-advocate in their tracks. This panel will bring together autistic adults, family members supporting kids with autism, self-advocates, and providers to discuss how to confront the barriers and go under, over, or through them to get the services they deserve under the law.

Breakout 2 (217AB): The Current Landscape and Future of Assistive Technology: Insights from Every Angle

Moderator: *Shannon Choe*

Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Kencrest

Panelists: *Tyler Macready*, Assistive Technology Specialist, Kencrest; *Alanna Raffel*, OTD, OTR/L, Assistive Technology Specialist, TechOWL, Institute on Disabilities at Temple University; *Lisa Tesler*, Executive Director, PA Developmental Disabilities Council; and *Rebecca (Becky) Bradbeer*, Self-Advocate, Arts and Culture Ambassador

In this panel discussion, attendees will explore the world of Assistive Technology (AT) through the perspectives of AT providers, educators, facilitators, policy leaders, and users. The session will include a general overview of assistive devices and how technology can enhance safety, happiness, independence, and interdependence. Panelists will also tackle deeper questions: How will emerging technologies shape the AT landscape? How can the delivery of AT services be improved for both users and providers? What gaps need to be bridged—across systems, policy,

and practice—to ensure the right device reaches the right person? Join us for an “honesty hour” on technology from every angle and learn how to meet the moment together.

Breakout 3 (217CD): Raising Your Voice for Positive Change

Moderator: *Jamie Ray-Leonetti*, Associate Director of Policy, Institute on Disabilities at Temple University
Panelists: *Jen Fischer*, Vision for Equality, Project Coordinator; *Natalie Kaczor*, Family member with lived experience; *Sean Hagan*, Speaking for Ourselves, Self-Advocate; and *Shawn Moton*, Leadership & Career Studies student, Self-Advocate

Attendees will hear from people with lived disability experience, their family members, and allies as we explore:

1. Current changes in services and supports such as Medicaid cuts and their impact on Home and Community-Based Services. 2. Challenges in the disability community including the impact of Medicaid cuts, the ongoing crisis in the direct support professional workforce, and the persistent need to address abuse and neglect. 3. Raising our individual and collective voices with legislators and policymakers in a solution-focused way that celebrates our successes in disability advocacy as we continue our work to make our communities more accessible and inclusive for everyone.

12:30PM – 1:30PM LUNCH SESSION, (200B/C)

Kim Musheno, Senior Director of Medicaid Policy, The Arc of the United States

A dialogue on the impact of federal Medicaid cuts

1:40PM – 2:30PM SESSION 3

Breakout 1 (200B/C): Transportation: Impact of Pennsylvania Transit Funding Crisis on the Disability Community

Moderator: *Charles Horton*, Manager, SEPTA Access

Panelists: *Cassandra West*, Chief Officer, SEPTA Access; *Latoya Maddox*, Senior Independent Living Specialist, Liberty Resources and Chair, SEPTA Advisory Council; and *Lauren DeBruicker*, Assistant US Attorney

The state of Pennsylvania is struggling to find a way to properly fund and invest in public transit systems statewide. In the Philadelphia region, this has led to planned cuts and increased fares from SEPTA, which moves close to 750,000 people every day. Many of those riders are from the disability community and receive focused services and financial support to access the transit they need. This panel will examine the specific challenges faced by the community to maintain their hard-fought access, to adjust to loss of routes and services, and to ensure that the future includes a seat at the table for riders who can bring their experiences as people with disabilities into the decisions made affecting transit across the state—and specifically within SEPTA.

Breakout 2 (217AB): Advocacy in the Changing Healthcare Landscape for People with Disabilities

Moderator: *Valerie Chadwick*, BSN, RN, Health Advocacy Director, The Arc of Philadelphia

Panelists: *Karin Roseman*, LCSW, Co-Director, Jefferson FAB Center for Complex Care; *Matthew Purinton*, LCSW, Council For Relationships; *Wendy Elliott-Vandivier*, Senior

Professional in Human Resources; and Ellen I. Henry, Patient Navigator, Penn Dental Medicine

Discover how healthcare providers, advocates, and persons with disabilities can collaborate to address barriers to health accessibility. This session will feature discussions on innovative solutions and best practices in clinical settings, and provide an update on how the federal changes affect healthcare delivery for people with disabilities.

Breakout 3 (217CD): Ensuring Equality in Home and Community Based Services

Moderator: *Marian Baldini*, Executive Director, KenCrest

Panelists: *Rachel Milano-Davis*, Chief Operating Officer, Values Into Action; *Kathleen Laverty*, Family Member of Self-Advocate; *Chris Laverty*, Self-Advocate; *Michael Merriman*, Speaking for Ourselves, Self-Advocate; *Ned Whitehead*, Community Advisor, Vision for Equality, Family member and Advocate

Join a dialogue around the real-life impact of the Home and Community Based Service (HCBS) system, the importance of safeguarding its original intent and integrity and how service providers are offering effective services at the direction of people with disabilities and their families or other freely chosen allies.

The provision of these HCBS services result in people with intellectual disabilities living lives of their own choosing, living where and whom they want, spending time with people they like, doing things they choose to do with support they control and direct.

2025 Public Legislative Hearing | 3:00PM

Tech Accelerator: Providing Access to State Government for All Pennsylvanians (200B/C)

Panelists: *Jeremy Yale*, Director, ODP Office of Policy & Quality Management; *Jennifer Hale*, Dir., Office of Long Term Living Policy & Communications Management; *Lisa Tesler*, Exec. Dir., PA Developmental Disabilities Council; *Nae Vallejo*, Technology Solution Specialist; *Chris Moore*, Technology Solution Specialist; *Caitlin McKenney*, MS, ATP; Assistant Director, Emergency Management at Institute on Disabilities at Temple University; and *Russ Goddard*, MRC, CRC Department of Labor & Industry | Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

For the past year the Pennsylvania Tech Accelerator project, a group of more than 20 self-advocates, consumers, providers, and government agency officials, have been meeting and gathering information on creating administrative and public access systems that provide natural and flowing access to government services and information in Pennsylvania. The concept of Technology First, making universal access and accommodation the first issue to be addressed in the development and implementation of governmental interface with the public, is guiding this work. This hearing will provide an opportunity for public presentation of the report and recommendations of the Pennsylvania Tech Accelerator and possible draft legislation for Technology First initiatives that seek to improve accessibility to state government services for all residents of the Commonwealth, especially members of the disability community.

Temple University, Howard Gittis Student Center Room Outline

200A: Resource Fair and Exhibit Tables

200B/C: Breakout Room 1, Keynote Speaker,
Lunch, Legislative Hearing

200D: Resource Fair and Exhibit Overflow Room

217AB: Breakout Room 2

217CD: Breakout Room 3

Room 220: Art exhibit room

Room 223: Sensory/Quiet Room

Underground: Networking and Co-working space

To view the livestream of
today's event click or scan
the QR code below

