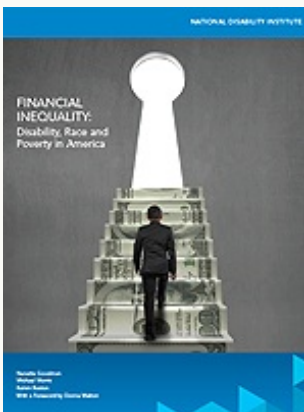




**Council Connections** brings the latest news on disability rights, resources that promote inclusion, and opportunities for advocacy to individuals with developmental disabilities and their family members living in the heart of Vermont Communities.



## REPORT SHINES LIGHT ON DOUBLE JEOPARDY OF RACE AND DISABILITY

**Study reveals the real-life situation for African Americans with disabilities, and the challenges they face at the bottom rung of the economic ladder.**

The [National Disability Institute](#) recently shared their findings in a report titled, [Financial Inequality: Disability, Race and Poverty in America](#). "African Americans are not only more likely to have a disability, but it appears that the impact of that disability on their lives may be greater than it is on their white counterparts," said the authors, who drew on several large national databases.

**40% of African Americans with a disability live below the poverty line.**

Photo is a screen capture of the report cover.

The writers hope to spark a national conversation about the connection between disability, race, and poverty. They recommend that financial education and counseling be integrated into the human services delivery system.

**"This publication explicates the unique dynamic of disability, race and poverty and underscores the necessity to increase awareness about the intersection of race and poverty on the challenges people of color with disabilities face."  
- Donna R. Walton, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**

Here are a few facts from the report:

- Nearly 40% of African Americans with disabilities live in poverty, as compared with 24% of non-Hispanic Whites.
- Among working-age individuals with disabilities, African Americans have the lowest rate of employment – 25%, compared to 35-39% for other racial groups.
- Only 13% of African Americans with a disability have a college degree.
- African Americans with disabilities are more likely to experience food insecurity and barriers to paying for medical care than their white counterparts.
- Two-thirds of African American families with a disability are unbanked or underbanked.



Despite unfair odds, Chester Finn (left) and Max Barrows (right) have built successful careers as champions for the self-advocacy movement.



## EMERGENCY ROOM ADMISSIONS INCREASE AS RESOURCES DWINDLE TO PREVENT CRISES

**Lawmakers nationwide are wrestling with increasing reliance on emergency rooms to address psychiatric issues and behavioral challenges. How can public policy shift the emphasis to prevention and sustained recovery?**

It's known as "psychiatric boarding," and increasingly, it's the last stop for an individual in acute psychological distress. For example, the admission rate for people who experience both autism and a mental health condition nearly doubled between 2009 and 2014. Often nurses and doctors are not equipped to resolve the complex needs of these patients and their families. Wait-times for a bed in a more appropriate setting can be long, often days, and emergency rooms are chaotic in ways that can quickly escalate a patient's anxiety or aggression.

For more information, [read the article by CNN](#). [Trigger warning: This article contains some disparaging language].

Young people with autism are more likely to be admitted to the ER because of crises than their adult counterparts.

Photo credit to the [Vermont Image Relay](#).

In Vermont, hospitals across the state are modifying their emergency rooms to accommodate patients with not only autism, but a wide range of mental health conditions, according to an article in [Seven Days](#). While some advocates worry that this will encourage care that is less than optimal, others say these investments are necessary in a state that saw a sharp reduction in inpatient psychiatric beds in the aftermath of hurricane Irene.

The Vermont legislature is hoping to get out ahead of these trends. Per [Act 82](#), lawmakers have requested an analysis and action plan for reducing reliance on hospital emergency rooms for the care of mental illness. The report, which is due December 15, 2017, will weigh the costs and benefits of crises prevention, as well as summarize ways to support individuals with disabilities so that they rely less heavily on hospitals for intervention.

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## VTDDC IS NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR SEEDS GRANTS

This [unique opportunity supports innovative projects](#) that increase community capacity to support Vermonters with developmental disabilities and family caregivers. SEEDS grants are nonrenewable awards that provide \$10,000 to \$15,000 in project support for up to one year. Seeds projects must:

- Support at least one goal or objective in VTDDC's Five-Year Plan.
- Be managed by a nonprofit entity.
- Reflect the values of the federal DD Act - inclusion, productivity, independence, and self-determination.



**Applying is easy.** Read the [Request for Proposal](#), view the [attachments](#), and fill out your [application](#).

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## STATEWIDE ADVOCACY GROUP HOSTS ANNUAL GALA TO BUILD A MORE ACCESSIBLE WEBSITE

Green Mountain Self-Advocates (GMSA) invites Vermonters to join them in a celebration of this year's accomplishments in self-advocacy. The party features dinner, dancing, and comedy by [Tina Friml](#), as well as a silent auction. You may also [sign-up to be a volunteer](#).



When and where?

- December 12, 2017, 5:00pm to 9:00pm
- [Capitol Plaza Hotel](#), 100 State St, Montpelier, VT 05602

Interested in attending? Tickets are \$40.00 per person with a small service fee.

- [Buy your tickets before they're sold out](#).
- OR you [may choose to become a sponsor](#) and can receive as many as five (5) tickets for your financial support.

[Visit Green Mountain Self-Advocates' website](#) to learn more about the GALA

## WHAT'S UP, UNDER THE BIG DOME?

VTDDC is at the State House closely monitoring policy that could impact Vermonters with developmental disabilities. Here are the most current developments:

- The [Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules](#) (LCAR) approved the [Green Mountain Care Board's](#) proposed rule for regulating Accountable Care Organizations. This moves the State one step closer to the full implementation of the All-Payer Model agreement which is set to begin on January 1, 2018.



## SAVE THE DATE for the next Quarterly Meeting



Council members work together to increase public awareness and to encourage systems change. They are expected to attend four day-long meetings each year and to be active participants on a committee or work group.

When: **Thursday, December 7, 2017**

Where: [Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#), South Burlington, Vermont

The mission of VTDDC is to help build connections and supports that bring people with developmental disabilities, and their families, in the heart of Vermont Communities.