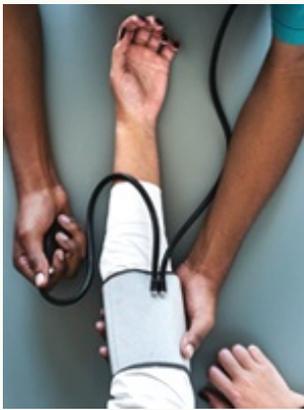




Council Connections brings the latest news on disability rights, resources that promote inclusion, and opportunities for advocacy to individuals with developmental disabilities and their family members living in the heart of Vermont Communities.



Rules that govern Medicaid Fraud Control Units has not been updated in over 30 years.

Photo by [rawpixel](#) on [Unsplash](#)

PROPOSED ADJUSTMENT TO FEDERAL LAW WOULD DETER MEDICAID FRAUD

The State Medicaid Fraud Unit may receive an uptick in the amount of cases it takes annually as a new bill aims to expand protections for beneficiaries.

[Vermont Representative Peter Welsh](#) cosponsored a bill to expand State Medicaid Fraud Units on a national level. He hopes that by including all Medicaid settings that states will save money, increase investigations, and defend more vulnerable adults. Under the current federal regulations only institutional settings, like nursing homes and health clinics, may be investigated.

[Bill H.R. 3891](#) is an amendment to Title XIX of the Social Security Act. [Vermont Attorney General T.J. Donovan](#), and [Agency of Human Services Secretary Al Gobeille](#) joined Representative Welsh at Tuesday's press-conference in Montpelier to talk about the bill

The [Vermont Medicaid Fraud and Residential Abuse Unit](#) reports that 80% of the State's Medicaid fraud investigations involve providers, 15% are patient abuse and neglect, and 5% are multi-state.

The report is released annually by the Attorney General's office.

What does [Medicaid Fraud](#) look like in the community?

- Intentionally billing for items, medication, and services that are not necessary or not provided.
- Sharing, copying, or selling your card to someone who is not Medicaid eligible to pay for goods and services.
- Making beneficiary referrals for medical goods or services in exchange for money.
- Helping someone make false claims



Congress will determine if the bill becomes a law, but Representative Welsh is confident it will pass the

The proposed adjustment to current Federal Laws is as much about investigating fraud as it is protecting

For more information [read or listen to the article by VPR](#) or [by VTDigger](#).



The name-brand EpiPen is made by [Mylan](#) and costs as much as \$600 for a two pack.

EPIPEN SUBSTITUTE GETS OK FROM THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

A generic version of the EpiPen and EpiPen Jr qualifies as a "therapeutic equivalent" to a life-saving drug, and may help drive down costs and avoid shortages for Americans with allergies.

To combat a body's overdrive response to allergic triggers such as insect bites and stings, eggs, peanuts and tree nuts, etc. a person may be injected with the hormone epinephrine until emergency medical personal can intervene. But this do-it-yourself method for health can still cost more than \$100 after insurance has paid the majority.

[Teva Pharmaceuticals USA](#) will release their version to the drug and dispenser sometime soon. Exact dates have not yet been determined by the [Food and Drug Administration](#).

All EpiPen's have an expiration date and must be replaced periodically. Never keep or use an expired Epi-pen.

For more information [read the article by VTDigger](#).



The proposal outlines a very broad scope of who is considered inadmissible by being a "public charge".

IMMIGRANTS WITH DISABILITIES MAY BE BLOCKED FROM A VISA OR CITIZENSHIP

There are over 150 types of Visas one could apply for, but the opportunity to work, learn, visit family, and reside may have just become narrower as proposed regulations seek proof of financial stability.

The [U.S. Department of Homeland Security](#) fears that American public benefits, such as Medicaid and Social Security, will become less sustainable as more New Americans qualify. Secretary of Homeland Security, Kirstjen Nielsen, describes the proposed regulations as a means to "protect finite resources" and "ensure that they [immigrants who lawfully come into the country] are not likely to become burdens".

There are already federal guidelines for immigrants entering the United States to be above the Federal Poverty Level, but the Department wants to make that level even higher. This particularly difficult for immigrants with disabilities and their family members who want a green card.

The proposed rule will be open for public comment for 60 days on the Federal Register, but no one knows the exact date it will become available.

For more information [read the Disability Scoop](#).



THERE ARE MORE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES THEN PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT

Nationally respected telephone survey and data collection service, [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System \(BRFSS\)](#), released findings that one in four adult Americans have a disability.

Nationwide calls to Americans for survey participation were random, and people who said they had a disability were asked how they identified. The six disability types on the survey were: hearing, vision, cognition, mobility, self-care, and independent living. Participants were also asked their age, gender, race, income, region, and if they had access to healthcare.

Previous reports by BRFSS stated that 1 in five adult Americans had a disability.

Individuals who live in long-term care facilities were not included in the study, which possibly explains why there may be more younger adults with cognitive (intellectual) disabilities than older adults.

Those who said they did not have a disability were not included in the survey. Previous polls did not ask participants if they were deaf or hard-of-hearing.

For more information [read the study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

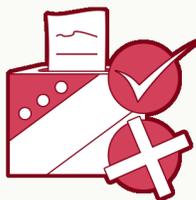
Poverty and limited access to health-care is prevalent among people with disabilities.

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

The Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council is creating a PSA to encourage adult Vermonters with disabilities to vote this election season. But we're missing something very important... your voice. Literally.

Our goal is to keep the full PSA within 30 seconds or fewer. This means we can't use everyone's voice (but we would if we could). If your audio file is picked we will ask you to sign a media release.

[Download the handout](#) to learn more about how you can participate.



Email us at vtddc@vermont.gov with the audio attached and subject line "My Voice Matters".



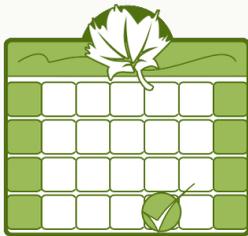
WHAT'S UP, UNDER THE BIG DOME?

VTDDC is at the State House closely monitoring policy that could impact Vermonters with developmental disabilities...



Vermont's new Special Education Funding law is taking off. The new law, now named Act 173, changes funding for special education services.

Act 173 created an advisory group with three duties: Advise the State Board of Education on the development of rules for the new law; 2. Advise the Agency of Education and supervisory unions on implementation of the new law; and 3. Recommend to the Legislature any possible changes needed to meet the goals of the new law. The Advisory Group met for the first time on September 14th and is in the process of scheduling future meetings. Vermont Legal Aid and the Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights each have a representative on the Advisory Group. Together, we will work to ensure that all students eligible for special education receive a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment in accordance with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).



SAVE THE DATE **for the next Quarterly Meeting**

When: Thursday, December 06, 2018

**Where: VT Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired,
South Burlington, Vermont**

Council members work together to increase awareness about the needs of Vermonters with disabilities and 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.

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