


Candidate Forum

A public event that has candidates for local, state or federal offices on stage to listen to and speak to audience members.

Objectives

To engage and educate current and potential legislators on issues of importance.
To provide the opportunity for candidates to learn about disability issues
To bring public attention to disability issues through attendance and media coverage

Audience

- Current office holders and opponents,
- Legislative staff
- Self-advocates, families, staff, board members and community members

How to:

1. Determine if you want to have partners and if so, invite them to organizational meeting
2. Determine possible dates and times. Check with legislative and community calendar
3. Secure space for anticipated audience and audio-visual needs – access to microphones is important.
4. Determine format and ground rules
5. Select a moderator -- must be non-partisan and hopefully a recognizable figure i.e local TV/Radio reporter, university official
6. Invite candidates (two or more months ahead if possible)– use any connections that may already exist through your board or other contacts (see sample invitation)
7. Prepare press release – then follow up one or two weeks before the event
8. Publicize the event – mail, email, social media
9. Consider Live-Streaming the event on social media
10. Gather information to disseminate to candidates ahead of time. Inform them of format and ground rules (see sample)
11. Prepare handout materials for audience
12. Work out logistics – refreshments, materials, sign in sheets, displays, door prizes
13. Have system for timing candidates (very important) and for soliciting audience questions.
14. After event follow-up with thank you notes.
15. “Cover” the event in your own media (newsletter) and social media.

Tips

- Wait until after the primaries are concluded.
- If possible, have this earlier in the election cycle before the candidates get really busy
- After you’ve extended the invitation, invite the candidates for a visit to your program. They will want to have a better understanding of your issues, so they should be motivated.
- Partnering with other organizations can get a bigger audience (more attractive to the candidates), but you may lose control of what issues are addressed.
- Gather contact information of the participants to increase your mailing list and email distribution.
- Have laptops or access to internet to encourage audience members to sign-up for The Arc Action Network. You could demonstrate how to do this on a smart phone/tablet while people are in their seats.
- Consider having voter registration at the event.

Sample Invitation letter to Candidates:

Dear

I'm writing on behalf of a group of provider and advocacy organizations that serve people with developmental disabilities and/or mental illness. Our organizations are Stone Belt Arc, LifeDesigns, Inc, Mental Health America (MHA) of Monroe County and National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Monroe County. Collectively we support and represent over 5000 residents in Monroe and surrounding counties that experience some level of disability. On July 17 from 7- 9:00 pm we are holding a candidates' forum. It is our hope to have every candidate running for the General Assembly or Congress will participate in the forum. The event will be held at First United Church at 2420 East Third Street in Bloomington.

At the event we expect at least 100 participants including people with disabilities, family members, and other advocates. We have invited CATS, the public access television for Monroe County, to video or air the event. We have several things planned including testimony from audience members, information from local and state-wide advocates on issues related to disabilities and disabilities services, opportunities for candidates to address the group and a question and answer session. It will be professionally moderated by Brian O'Neill, who is extremely knowledgeable about policy and legislative issues.

Our organizations represent some of the most vulnerable citizens, but many of them vote and they do have strong advocates who consider candidates at least in part based up their positions on disability issues. Your understanding of their needs and the opportunity for this group of constituents to hear from you is critical. Since 20% of the general population has an identified disability, you will realize that the voices and votes of this segment of our community is worthy of your attention and consideration.

We hope you will promptly accept this invitation to join us. Upon receiving your confirmation, we will forward additional information to you, including a list of questions relating to your experience with and policies regarding supports for people with disabilities.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. My information is listed below.

Pre-Event information sent to Candidates

Dear Candidates

On behalf of our planning committee for the Candidates Forum on Disabilities, I want to express my sincere thanks to you for agreeing to participate tomorrow evening. We have five races for the General Assembly and the Congressional 9th District represented. I think it will be a very substantive and informative night for the audience and I hope it will be for all of you as well. We have done all we can in our planning to make this a fair and professional event and have consulted with multiple parties to develop the format and procedures for the evening. We ask for your understanding as this is the first time our group has planned an event of this size. We will solicit your feedback after the event so that we might improve any future activities we undertake.

Because your response to participate has been so positive, our timeframes will be very tight. The first part of the evening will feature several guest speakers – people with disabilities, their family members and advocates, including brain neuro-anatomist Jill Bolte-Taylor. After that, you will make your formal statements followed by a question and answer session. Your statements and responses will be timed. You will be given signals from the time keeper when your time is expiring. Because we have up to 11 candidates represented, we must shorten the time for closing comments to one minute. The following will be the time limits:

- Opening statement – 3 minutes each
- Responses to questions – 1 minute each
- Closing Comments – 1 minute

Questions from the audience will be pre-screened and presented to you by the moderator. If a question is asked of a particular candidate, his/her opponent will be given the opportunity to respond as well. General questions will be directed to a candidate at the moderator's discretion with opportunities for others to respond if desired. Candidates who have a representative will not be able to participate in the question and answer session, but can read an opening and closing statement from the candidate.

You may bring campaign materials. We will collect those when you arrive and place them in the vestibule for audience members to take on their way out. We will not have space for campaign displays, posters and the like.

The Herald-Times will be covering the event and CATS – community television has been invited as well. We don't have an RSVP from audience members for the event, but we expect a good sized crowd.

Participants that have responded thus far are:

District 46 – Bob Heaton (R) and James Mann (D)

District 60 – Matt Pierce (D)

District 61 – Peggy Mayfield (R) and Peggy Welch (D)

District 62 – Jeff Sparks (D) by proxy (unconfirmed) and Matt Ulbehor (R)

Senate District 40 – Reid Dallas (R) and Mark Stoops (D)

Congress 9th District – Shelli Yoder (D) and Todd Young (R) by proxy (unconfirmed)

If you have any additional questions, please let us know. We will look forward to seeing all of you tomorrow evening.

Script for Moderator and order of program:

Moderator's Notes Please start no later that 7:10. -- Earlier if possible

Welcome comments – introduce yourself and talk about your connection to disabilities community

Inform the audience that tonight's program is designed

- To give the candidates information related to living with a disability or supporting someone who does
- to help the audience know more about how the candidates and to learn how would they respond to disability issues should they be elected or re-elected to office.

Introduce the committee – ask them to stand or wave.

(list names, titles and affiliation of committee members)

Direct audiences attention to the descriptions of each participating group on the fact sheet that is provided. It includes Web site addresses for further information.

Ask board members of the sponsoring organizations to stand and be recognized.

Recognize and thank Community Action Television

Introduce Testimonial participants – inviting them to the podium to speak. Each has been asked to speak for 10 minutes.

- **Aaron Smith** graduated from Bloomington HS South in 2003. He works at Goodwill and is president and founding member of the Aktion Club in Bloomington and is a member of the Kiwanis. He is also president of Self Advocates of Bloomington and a member of the Community Council on Accessibility.
- **Sarah Hunt** is the mother of an adolescent child living with mental illness. She became involved with advocacy after taking NAMI's Family-to-Family education class and has been a board member of NAMI-Greater Bloomington Area since 2008. Her advocacy efforts have included co-teaching NAMI Basics, a six week education course designed for parents and caregivers of children and adolescents living with brain disorders.
- Trish Ierino (she will then introduce Cheryl).
- Trish Irieno is the sister of Cheryl Thompson, whom you'll meet in a few minutes. Trish joined the Stone Belt board in 2009, where she currently serves as president. Trish and her mother helped Cheryl begin receiving services for the first time in her life after their move to Bloomington from Northwest Indiana in 2006. She is Assistant Vice President of Sales and Services Branch Network at the IU Credit Union.

Introduce Kim Dodson – invite her to the podium to speak (Moderator goes through a 100 word bio of Kim who serves as the subject matter expert for I/DD issues). Kim speaks for up to 10 minutes

Introduce Jill Bolte-Taylor invite her to the podium to speak (Moderator goes through her 100 word biography. She serves as the subject matter expert for the Mental Illness community) Jill speaks for up to 10 minutes.

Candidate Panel:

Introduce each candidate by name and by office they seek, starting from your right

- Candidates are introduced

Candidates Opening Statements – each will get 3 timed minutes. Be ready to stop the candidate if he/she starts to go over their allotted time. Have one person designated as timer.

Questions from the audience – remind audience that their questions should be

1. Related to the office the candidate seeks (i.e. state issue, or federal issue)
2. Not of a personal nature to the candidate
3. Related to disabilities issues

Members of the committee will be collecting the questions and bringing them forward to our screeners. You will get a final version of the question to read aloud.

1. if it is directed to a specific candidate they have one minute to respond and then their opponent also has one minute to respond.
2. if it is a general question, you can use your discretion on which candidate to start his/her response. All other candidates will have the opportunity to respond as well each using one minute or less.
3. Be sure to begin the questions with a different candidate each time so there is fairness.

Candidates closing statements – one timed minute each

Remind audience to vote and let them know that registration forms are available in the exhibit area. Campaign materials for the candidates are also available for you to take as you leave>

Announce that candidates and panelists will remain a few minutes to respond to individual questions

Thank everyone for taking part in this highly successful evening.

A CANDIDATE FORUM ON DISABILITY ISSUES

PRESENTED BY
STONE BELT,
LIFE DESIGNS,
MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA
NAMI OF GREATER BLOOMINGTON AREA
AND
THE ARC OF INDIANA

Tuesday, July 17
7 - 9 pm

First United Church
2420 East 3rd Street, Bloomington

Childcare available by reservation
contact catgray@indiana.edu

Meet candidates for state
and federal offices,
listen to presentations on
current disabilities
issues and **submit**
questions of interest
for **candidate answers**.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD AS AN ADVOCATE FOR THE DISABILITIES COMMUNITY!

PRESENTED BY:



Issue Related Forum

A public forum to cover a particular topic. Some examples include:

- The Care Gap Crisis – create awareness of DSP wage issue
- Citizen Advocacy – a public forum featuring Congressman Lee Hamilton
- It Matters to Me (session 2) –an advocacy session to inform constituents of the impact of proposed repeal and replace ACA efforts in Congress.

*name used by permission for NYSARC

Objective To create awareness of an issue important to people with disabilities
To position yourself/your organization as an information resource and thought leader
To provide a public service to the community
To educate and engage decision makers where their action may be needed.
To create momentum for a call to action (as applicable)

Audience

- Self-advocates, families, staff, board members, and community members
- Community leaders
- Funders and administrators (as applicable)
- Legislators (as applicable)

How to

1. Determine topic of interest. What are the pressing issues of the day? Where do you need to create awareness and momentum for possible future action?
2. Determine if you want to have partners and if so, invite them to an organizational meeting
3. Determine format of the session – panel, guest speaker, breakout sessions
4. Determine dates and time for event three to four months out (unless more pressing issues are at hand). Check community calendars for conflicts.
5. Confirm speaker(s), moderator and other persons involved.
6. Determine space needs for selected format – secure space that provides for your audience size and audio-visual needs.
7. Prepare press release – then follow up one or two weeks before the event
8. Publicize the event – mail, email, social media
9. Consider Live-Streaming the event on social media
10. Prepare pre-printed post-cards if the event includes a Call to Action. These can be filled out on-site and then mailed to the policy-makers.
11. Work out logistics – refreshments, materials, sign in sheets, displays, door prizes
12. After event follow-up with thank you notes.
13. “Cover” the event in your own media -- newsletter and social media.

Tips

- Unless there is a pressing issue, it is harder to get people to these events. Consider having door prizes or other enticements to attend.
- Your speaker and topic are important considerations to attract a larger audience.
- Even if this is an information-only session, use it as an opportunity to talk about your advocacy efforts. Gather names and contact information for future engagement
- Have laptops or access to internet to encourage audience members to sign-up for The Arc Action Network. You could demonstrate how to do this on a smart phone/tablet while people are in their seats.
- Consider having voter registration at the event.

Event Description:

The Care Gap Crisis: A Community Discussion

May 21, 2014 - 7 p.m.

First United Church

As the nation recovers from one of its longest and worst recessions, Stone Belt, and other providers, are still waiting for recovery. In 2010, to deal with revenue shortfalls, the State cut rates for most services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). **Some rates were rolled back to 2002 levels causing Stone Belt to reduce its expenses, mostly in wages and benefits to its employees.** As time has gone on, the rate cuts coupled with rising costs have created an increasingly unsustainable rate structure.

With a suppressed pay scale that has not been adjusted for more than four years, the industry is **facing workforce shortages and challenges** with maintaining the infrastructure necessary to train and support that workforce. **Turnover and job vacancies have caused increased pressures on the remaining staff and put the quality of services in peril.** People with I/DD coming off of the long waiting lists are experiencing delays in accessing services because providers cannot attract and keep employees in sufficient numbers to meet the demand.

A small rate restoration in January of 2014 will alleviate some of the operational stressors, but will not sufficiently raise wages for dedicated workers who do so much to help people with disabilities live full and active lives in the community.

Join us as we host a community discussion on these very issues. Clients, families, local leaders, policymakers, community partners, and all other interested community members are welcome and encouraged to attend. A panel presentation will enlighten the audience on the scope of the problem and impact of the I/DD system. Each expert panelist will represent a unique perspective to create a full understanding of "The Care Gap Crisis."

After the panelists speak, there will be an opportunity for the audience responses, questions and further discussion. Audience members will leave with a better understanding of the issue and help advocate for change. We hope this first community conversation might serve as a model that other communities replicate. **Mark your calendars and plan to attend**

Panel to present the issues:

Phil Meyer, WTIU station manager and parent will moderate and give introductions – facilitate discussion.

Leslie Green, Stone Belt CEO will discuss the agency's current status related to funding and its impact on services, with focus on work force shortages

Kim Opsahl – President and CEO on INARF will give an industry overview with state and national statistics that illustrate the scope of the problem.

Tiba Walters, Stone Belt Direct Support Professional (DSP) – will share her perspective of working in the field including rewards, challenges, personal experiences and hardships with working at current wage level.

John Dickerson, President of The Arc of Indiana will present the results of the DSP survey information and offer his reflections on family/client advocacy perspective

Jacqueline Hall, Stone Belt client and board member will share her personal experiences with staffing shortages and how it impacts her personally, as well as her involvement with self-advocates.

Legislators Matt Pierce, Democrat and Matt Ubelhor, Republican will respond to the information, express support of issues related to people with disabilities, relate priorities of the General Assembly, offer ideas on how we can best advocate for this need.

Invitation to legislator to participate:

January 31, 2014

Representative xxx
1825 Avenue C
Anytown, IN 46151

Dear:

I sent you an email about a week ago, but I suspect it got buried in the deluge of emails you probably received re: the HJR-3 issue. So I thought maybe an old-fashioned written letter might be a better form of communication right now.

We are planning a community forum in May to focus on the issue of funding and its impact on our ability to attract and retain a quality work force. We are hoping you would join as one panel member speaking to this issue. We also plan to have a direct support staff, a client, someone from our trade association perhaps a state official and a democratic legislator. Of course, we will provide you with the information you need to be up on the issue prior to the event. I'm including the text of a guest editorial that recently ran in the HT for some preliminary background.

Here is a tentative plan with dates for the event.

Event Title: The Care Gap Crisis: A Community Discussion
Location: First United Church (same location as the forum two years ago)
Date: May 20 or 21
Time: 6:30 or 7 p.m. - 8:30 or 9 p.m.

Would you be able to participate in this event? If so can you indicate your availability for one or both of these dates? We appreciate your consideration. To let me know of your availability or if you have any questions, please contact me by email at lgreen@stonebelt.org or by phone at 812-221-2168 ext. 249.

I'll look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Opinion Editorial --Stone Belt CEO, Leslie Green

As one of south central Indiana's largest nonprofit organizations, Stone Belt employs more than 450 people who provide numerous resources and supports to hundreds of people with developmental disabilities across three counties. This vast operation is driven by our mission to prepare, empower and support persons with developmental disabilities and their families to participate fully in the life of the community. We continue to achieve our mission primarily through the dedication of our employees despite significant and sustained rate reductions.

Our major funding comes from Indiana's Family and Social Services Administration through Medicaid. In 2009, the State cut our Medicaid waiver reimbursement rate by 7 percent returning to the same rate as in 2002 where it remains today.

Our highest priority is to provide quality services that promote outcomes through employment, community living and optimal health. We'd like to see a reimbursement system that recognizes rising costs and is tied directly to outcomes. And that's what we'll be advocating for in the upcoming legislative session.

All providers of services for the intellectually and developmentally disabled are reimbursed on an hourly basis and have no way to make up the difference in rising costs. As expenses rise each year our rates remain stagnant forcing us to pay low wages and forgo staff raises—which we haven't been able to provide since 2008. Our dedicated staff are essential to the success of people we serve and they deserve to make livable wages.

In order for us to pay equitable wages and provide the best care to our clients, policymakers must establish a rate methodology that recognizes costs and regularly accounts for inflation. The current administration seems open to discussing these issues, and there are some positive indications that they recognize the stress on our staff and the stress on the people we serve who often have nowhere to turn and are unable to care for themselves.

We expect a partial rate restoration in the coming year, however that alone will not be sufficient for us to operate at optimal levels. Our staff retention rates are low and turnover directly impacts clients who need consistency and support each day.

This important issue impacts not only Stone Belt employees and similar service providers, but also the communities where we operate. As one of Bloomington's largest employers, the ability of our clients and staff to fully participate in the life of the community is at risk.

This is a human issue, one of equality and opportunity. We hope to inspire people to speak up and advocate for positive change in 2014 so we can continue to provide quality programs and services to people with developmental disabilities and fairly compensate our devoted staff.

Postcard Invitation:



Stone Belt presents

The
**CARE GAP
CRISIS:
A COMMUNITY
DISCUSSION**

Join Stone Belt for a **community discussion** on the issues **most impacting** our **agency, clients, and staff**. Learn how to **get involved** in our **advocacy efforts** and help us effect **positive change**.

Wednesday, May 21, 7 p.m.
First United Church
2420 East 3rd Street
Bloomington, IN 47401



PANELISTS INCLUDE

Phil Meyer, (Moderator)
WTIU Station Manager, Board Member

Leslie Green
Stone Belt CEO

Jacqueline Hall
Stone Belt Client and Board Member

Tiba Walters
Stone Belt Direct Support Professional

Rep. Matt Pierce (D)
Indiana State Representative

Rep. Matt Uebelhor (R)
Indiana State Representative

John Dickerson
The Arc of Indiana Executive Director

Kim Opsahl
INARF President and CEO

This event is **free and open to the public**, but space is limited. For questions, or to **reserve a seat** contact 812-332-2168, ext. 269 or rsvp@stonebelt.org.

Learn more at stonebelt.org/cgc



Making Your Voice Heard in Washington, D.C.

A community discussion on federal advocacy for people with developmental disabilities

Featuring Former Congressman Lee Hamilton

People with disabilities have a lot at stake. Members of the U.S. Congress and candidates for office are now **discussing possible changes to Medicaid** and Social Security that could threaten our lifelines. It is time to take our advocacy efforts to the national level and tell policy makers in Washington just how important these lifeline programs are to us and to our families.

This interactive session will include:

- Advice from Former Congressman Lee Hamilton on how to effectively advocate with our representatives in Congress. He'll explain why your voice is important and crucial.
- Information from The Arc of the United States about its efforts to educate Congress on the impacts of possible changes in Medicaid & Social Security.
- Guidance from staff in current 9th District Congressman Todd Young's Bloomington office about how to best communicate with your Congressman. You'll also learn Rep. Young's position on budget discussions regarding lifeline programs.
- Information on how to take action and sign up to receive important updates.

There's no better way for you to get involved in these important discussions. These programs are truly lifelines for people with disabilities and must be preserved and strengthened. **Every voice counts. Don't let yours be silent.**

Thursday, October 15, 6:30 pm
IU Cyberinfrastructure Bldg, 2709 E 10th St, Bloomington

The event is free & open to the public

Invitation to Representative Hamilton:

The Honorable Lee Hamilton
1234 Sesame Street
Bloomington, IN 47401

Dear Congressman Hamilton:

You may be familiar with Stone Belt Arc in Bloomington. We are a non-profit organization that prepares, empowers and supports individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to fully participate in the community. We serve the south central Indiana area and have helped hundreds of clients make tremendous accomplishments in their lives. Though it is incredibly important work, we find the need for advocacy at all levels is paramount to our continued ability to support our clients and adequately compensate our staff. More than 90% of our funding, and indeed the funding for all organizations such as ours, comes from Medicaid.

We are writing today to ask if you would speak at an advocacy event in the coming weeks. As you are probably aware, there is much talk at the federal level of significant changes in the Medicaid program. Since this funding is a lifeline for those we support, we want to inform and inspire advocates, including those with disabilities themselves, to get involved. We cannot think of a better person than you to help us with educating these stakeholders in the importance of citizen *advocacy*, and how to be effective advocates with our elected federal representatives in both the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate.

We would like to feature you as a guest speaker at an evening event to be held here in Bloomington. Your remarks would emphasize the most effective way to communicate with our federal legislators regarding the importance of Medicaid to our constituencies. The audience will be people with disabilities, family members, board members, involved community members and staff. We need to impress upon them the importance of their getting involved and also give them ideas about how to most effectively do so. Depending on what format you feel would work best; we might also invite experts from the field of disability services or perhaps staff members of federal legislators to attend as well. We are very open to ideas, but our most ardent interest is what you will contribute to this important effort based on your years of experience as a Congressman.

Suitable dates for this event are between October 12 and mid to late November. We feel Monday, Wednesday or Thursday nights would generally work, dependent upon other community and university events. No venue has been established but we hope to find a suitable site with free parking, on a city bus line, which will accommodate an interested audience.

Please let us know if you have any questions and whether you will be able to accept this invitation. Please feel free to contact Leslie Green at lgreen@stonebelt.org or by phone at 812-327-8723. If you need additional information, either of us would be happy to speak with you. Thank you for your consideration.

Kindest Regards,

Leslie Green
CEO

Steve Moberly
Advocacy Committee Volunteer

SAVE THE DATE | FRIDAY, JULY 7

IT MATTERS TO
Me

A lunchtime seminar presented by
Stone Belt and **LIFE Designs**

Congress is considering **changes to Medicaid** and other benefits that could **affect essential health and community-based services** to people with disabilities for many years to come. If this **matters to you**, join us to learn about how a new health care law could affect you and your loved ones, and how you can **make your voice heard**.

Indiana's Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch will keynote this seminar on the **influence you can have** with your advocacy efforts. A panel of experts will discuss potential changes to Medicaid and the **impact** they could have on community-based services. Information and opportunities will be available for you to easily **take action** before you leave.

Now, more than ever, **IT MATTERS**. Don't miss this chance.



Invitation to Lt. Governor for It Matters to Me

Hello Mr. Lawson -- I've received your name from Kim Dodson at The Arc of Indiana. I am a great admirer of Lt. Governor Crouch and am writing to request that she speak at an upcoming education/advocacy event in Bloomington IN

I am with Stone Belt Arc, a chapter of The Arc of Indiana. We hold regular public education events to keep self-advocates, their families, our staff and other community members informed about public policy that impact them.

We are planning an event in Bloomington in which we would like to feature Lt. Governor Crouch. I heard her speak to the self-advocates on Valentine's day and knew right then that she would be perfect for what we are planning.

The event called "It Matters to Me" is a public forum that features several topics of interest to our constituents. We would like Lt. Governor Crouch to be our keynote speaker. As such we hope that she can give a message of empowerment that will encourage audience members to get engaged in advocacy, emphasizing the power of their own voices in making a difference for people with disabilities. Perhaps she would have examples of how she came to be so committed to the cause and what has inspired her to champion disability issues. I think this would be inspirational and informative to the audience. Our hope is to get up to 100 people for the event.

After the keynote, we will have some break out sessions to discuss issues such as employment, autism awareness, the Able Act and Special Education issues. She would be welcomed to stay and be a part of these activities as well.

We would like to have this occur before the end of the legislative session. Therefore we are looking at the dates of April 8th or April 15th -- both Saturdays. The event would start at 10:00, so that is the time we would ask the Lt. Governor to present. We would have her speak 20 minutes or so and then answer audience questions. We do have the capacity to have an audio-visual presentation.

Can you please check with Lt. Governor Crouch on her willingness and availability to do this? She will make our event really special

Thanks for your assistance and I'll look forward to your reply.

Best Regards,

Invitation to State Representative for It Matters to Me

Hi Mark -- I hope you are doing well this summery day. I'm writing to invite you to be a part of an event we are co-sponsoring with LifeDesigns.

In this short seminar entitled "It Matters to Me" we are trying to educate self-advocates, families, staff and other constituents on Medicaid changes that are being discussed in Washington and what that might mean for services in Indiana for people with disabilities. We hope it will engage them in becoming more vocal advocates regarding this significant legislation.

The event will be on Friday July 7 from 11:00 to 1:15. at St. Marks Methodist Church. Our opening session from 11:00-12:00 will be a panel of people to speak about various aspects of the health care reform issue, but most specifically the changes to the Medicaid system (i.e. per capita caps or block grants)and the impacts they might have on Hoosiers with disabilities.

We hope you will participate on the panel. Your expertise as an Indiana legislator and a member of the Health and Provider Services committee would be very beneficial in helping people understand the issue. Representative Ed Clere has also been invited to be a panelist and we will seek a third person to share the latest information from Washington on the bill. We ask that this be a "non-partisan" fact-based discussion i.e not a debate.

Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch will be our "keynote" speaker while we have lunch, which I hope you can also join. We have asked her to talk about the importance of getting involved as an advocate for issues that matter. We will also have a powerful testimony from a Cyndi Johnson, a local mother of a daughter with Down Syndrome and her experiences with health care and disability supports.

Thank you for your consideration and please let me know if you have any questions. I will be eager to hear back from you.

Postcard distributed to participants at *It Matters to Me* as a Call to Action

"No parent should have to worry that providing life-saving care to their children might send them into bankruptcy. The Affordable Care Act, and the accompanying changes to Medicaid, **quite literally meant the difference between life and death for my daughter**, and have given my family a chance to live the financially secure life we've worked so hard to achieve."

- *Cyndi Johnson, mother of Becca*

"Medicaid and Medicaid-funded services, such as clinical and psychological services, as well as support from a direct support professional, **enable me to live a healthy and independent life** away from my parents."

- *Adria Nassim, Bloomington*

"Without Medicaid, **my son** who has autism would be at home every day instead of spending time in the community and working at his job, which **enables him to be a productive member of society**. Medicaid-funded services help him learn how to navigate and cope in an overpowering environment that stresses him in ways that the rest of us cannot imagine."

- *Natalie Brewington, mother of Carrick*

"Medicaid matters to me because its loss will disproportionately affect people with disabilities and seniors. **Within the next 10 years I will be one of those seniors**. I was also born with a serious autoimmune disorder that will worsen with age."

- *Cindy Fleetwood, Bloomington*

"**My adult son** has developmental disabilities and other health issues. Thanks to Medicaid, he has support services to help him **live independently** and his medical needs are provided for."

- *Vonnie Peischl, Bloomington*



Dear Senator Young,

As a person with a personal interest in the health, safety and community inclusion of people with disabilities, **I am asking that you oppose the Better Care Reconciliation Act** or any other bill that reduces funding for Medicaid. Such action would devastate the systems of health services and community supports for people with disabilities and those with complex medical needs.

It matters to me because _____

Senator Todd Young
46 E Ohio St, Ste 462
Indianapolis, IN 46204