

Celebrating
40 YEARS



MONADNOCK
DEVELOPMENTAL
SERVICES

HELPING PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



Fall 2023

THE CLIPBOARD

IN THIS ISSUE

Page 1	Executive Director's Message
Page 2	BDS System Redesign
Page 3-4	News & Notes
Page 5	Project SEARCH
Page 6	Poetry
Page 7	A DSP's Story
Page 8	Family Council
Page 9	Self-Advocacy
Page 10	Resources
Page 11	Run~Walk~Smile
Page 12	Caregiver's Conference

The mission of MDS is to work toward inclusion, participation and mutual relationships for all people who are at risk of isolation from their community.

www.mds-nh.org

Inclusion
Participation
Mutual Relationships



Message from the Executive Director

For 40 years Monadnock Developmental Services has served people with developmental disabilities and acquired brain disorders and their families. Innovation has been a driving force for us, with our mission of inclusion, participation and relationships as our guide.

Currently MDS supports almost 1,200 people in 34 towns in the Monadnock region. Forty years ago, in 1983, our focus was on building community-based services, in large part for several hundred individuals coming out of Laconia State School as it was closing down.

Today, MDS has a network of more than 40 vendor agencies who work with us to provide supports and services. The scope of the services has expanded over the years to meet changing needs:

- ♦ At the core of MDS are our service coordination and self-directed service departments for both adults and children.
- ♦ Services now includes Participant Directed/Self Directed Services and Individual Services Option (MDS-ISO) as well as the Monadnock Center for Successful Transitions which focuses on supported employment and post-secondary career opportunities.
- ♦ Family Support/Children's Services now includes our MDS Birth to Three department, which was created when a provider left the region to ensure that families with young children have more than one option for Early Supports & Services. As well, the department now has two transition coordinators to help young adults prepare for life after high school.
- ♦ Other additions are In Home Supports (IHS) for school aged children, as well as residential and day/employment services for adults.
- ♦ Project SEARCH was launched in 2011 at Cheshire Medical Center. This successful, intensive job training program is for adults with developmental disabilities age 18 to 34, providing training for employment for many individuals over the past 12 years.
- ♦ At MDS we now have a Human Resources department, an Information Technology manager, a Quality Assurance department, Family Managed Services, a larger Business office, and Nursing – all things that didn't exist 40 years ago!

Over the years, MDS has received numerous grants for different initiatives to expand and improve services. In the early 1990s, we received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for a landmark Self Determination project to create a major system change that gave individuals (and families) more control in developing supports that met their needs. MDS has also received specific grants to improve employment services, transition from high school to adult services, and to fund respite. We are especially appreciative of the many annual respite grants from Cheshire County.

Wishing you a happy holiday season!

Mary-Anne Wisell
Executive Director

THE CLIPBOARD



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The Clipboard is an agency-wide MDS newsletter. All departments, families, individuals, and community organizations are invited to submit items to be included in the publication. The opinions expressed in articles are those of the people who have written and submitted the material. Therefore, the information contained in these articles is not necessarily the opinion of MDS.

Send your comments or articles to:

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121 Railroad Street
Keene, NH 03431
603-352-1304 Fax: 603-352-1637
clipboard@mds-nh.org

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BDS System Redesign Update

The NH Bureau of Developmental System redesign over the past several years has reconfigured how we provide services. The two main areas have been “conflict of interest” case management and direct billing by providers. These changes were required by the Center for Medicaid/Medicare Services (CMS) in order for the NH system to comply with their federal regulations.

Conflict Free Case Management/Service Coordination

No agency can provide both service coordination and direct services to the same individual. The Center for Medicaid Services considers that a conflict of interest. Our own Service Coordination department has worked diligently to develop relationships with new service coordination entities so we can offer people choices. We are proud to say that Region V has done an amazing job resolving conflicting situations and providing options for individuals.

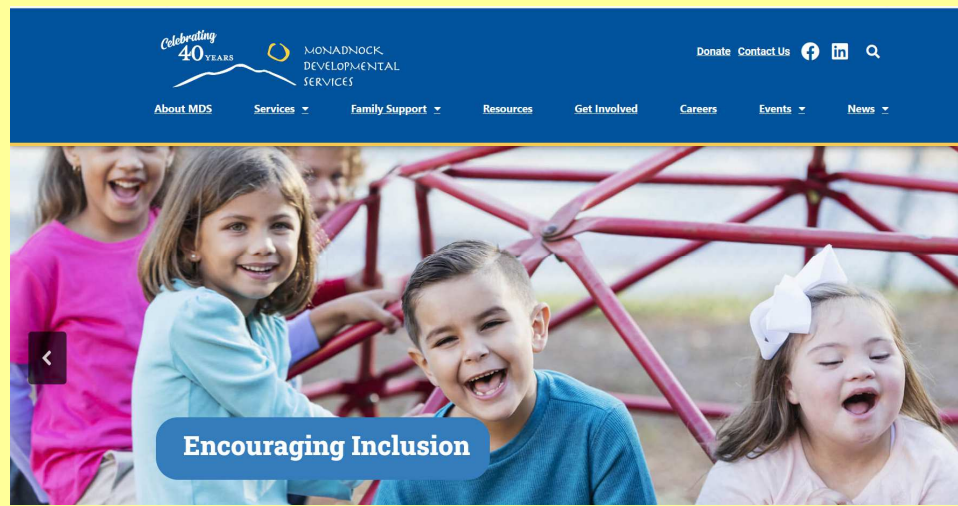
Direct Medicaid Billing

The second part of the CMS/System redesign change involves Medicaid billing. Through the end of fiscal year 2023 (June 30, 2023), MDS was responsible for all the Medicaid billing for the region – approximately \$42 million. As of July 1 of this year, all provider agencies were required to be an enrolled Medicaid provider, ensuring their ability to bill Medicaid directly. Services haven't changed, this is just about who is doing the billing.

For MDS that means we are going from being a \$42 million dollar agency to a \$14 million dollar agency. This is not a loss of funding to MDS per se, because we were previously serving as a fiscal pass-through for our provider agencies. Now, provider agencies do their own billing to Medicaid instead of MDS doing it for them. Again, there has not been a reduction to services for individuals.

As you can see, our system has experienced many changes. Change is the one constant that we all deal with, and MDS is adapting to these new rules. There are growing pains, as well as anticipated and unforeseen challenges, however still the heart of what we do is to support people to live and thrive in their communities.

Have you seen the new MDS website?
Take a look: www.mds-nh.org



News & Notes

MDS Board Member Speaks at BIANH Event



Elizabeth Kenney

In August, Elizabeth Kenney, an MDS board member, shared her survivor story at the NH Brain Injury Association (BIANH) 40th Annual Golf Tournament at The Oaks Golf Course in Somersworth. More than 100 golfers

came together to have fun and raise money for BIANH. After play, golfers attended a buffet lunch for awards, and got to hear Elizabeth tell her story.

In 2006 Elizabeth had been invited to see friends in Portland, Oregon over the 4th of July holiday. After going out for drinks, the friends were walking home when suddenly a car came barreling down the sidewalk at 45 mph hitting Elizabeth and one other in the group.

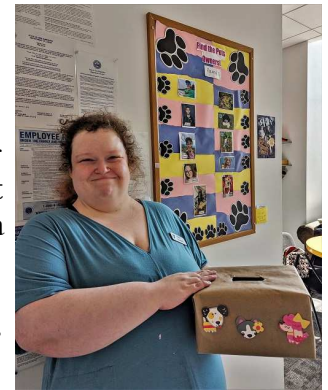
Elizabeth was diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury at Portland's Legacy Emanuel Hospital, where she stayed for treatment for a month after the accident. Then she was transported to the Crotched Mountain Specialty Hospital in Greenfield, NH. She told of her three-month stint at the rehab unit as "a lot of physical, occupational and speech therapy, sitting with different people, meeting with different people. Apparently, I couldn't feed myself, I couldn't dress myself. I don't remember much of that."

As Elizabeth spoke, the golfers listened intently to her recounting of recovery and rehabilitation, challenges, and determination. Just as importantly, she focused on many highlights over the years since, in particular the overwhelming support of her parents and her husband.

Besides serving more than a decade on the MDS Board, Elizabeth is a BIANH board member, a volunteer at Monadnock Community Hospital, and is an integral part of MDS Run~Walk~Smile 5K/10K race. She lives in Peterborough.

Congrats to Keene YMCA Volunteer of the Month

Angela O'Brien has taken on a YMCA volunteer project. She is creating and implementing staff engagement activities in their new staff breakroom. Her inaugural activity is a Staff/Pet guessing game. She is having a blast with it, and the staff at the Y are loving it. In fact, her energy and work ethic prompted the Y staff to honor her as September's Volunteer of the Month! Congratulations to Angela on her outstanding effort.



Angela O'Brien at the YMCA

Peterborough Artist Exhibits Her Work



Bonnie Castor at the JCC

Bonnie Castor of Peterborough has been showing her artwork around the region. She has exhibited four times at the Jaffrey Civic Center (JCC), and has also donated her work to a Civic Center's fundraiser to help support the non-profit. She has sold several pieces there. She

earns some money from a percentage of the sale; the JCC takes a commission that goes to support the center. Bonnie also goes to all the opening receptions; the folks at her church in Hancock and from Monadnock Worksource come to these openings to support her.

This summer Bonnie was accepted into an art show at the Muse Gallery in Dublin, NH. The title of the exhibition, "Hot Art", featured work from the Women's Caucus for Art.

Bonnie has twice visited the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester, discussing with her staff what she likes and doesn't like. She is particularly interested in looking at Contemporary Art, so she can see how her own work style is represented.

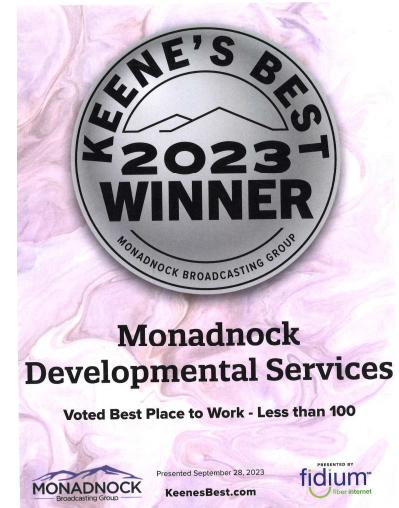
Most recently, three of Bonnie's pieces have been submitted to the Institute on Disability at UNH's calendar contest. We hope her work will be accepted.

Contributed by Polly Pierce, DSP at Monadnock Worksource

News & Notes

MDS Recognized by Regional Media

Monadnock Developmental Services has been honored as one of New Hampshire's top women-led businesses in the October 2023 issue of NH Business Magazine. In the article, Mary-Anne Wisell, Executive Director, reflects on how diligently the MDS team has worked to reduce the risk of isolation by connecting people with possibilities. She highlights that MDS is shoring up staff retention and recruitment, as well as balancing budget concerns with doing the very best for individuals, families and staff.

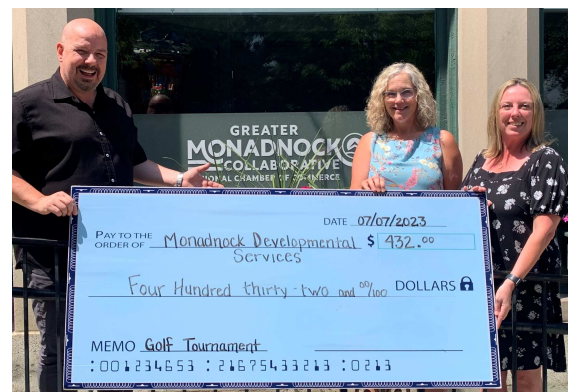


Business NH and the Monadnock Broadcasting Group Recognize MDS.

In addition, MDS was recently voted best place to work in the 2023 Keene's Best survey from the Monadnock Broadcasting Group.

Golf Tournament Proceeds Donated to MDS

MDS participated in the Greater Monadnock Collaborative (formerly Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce) golf tournament this summer at the Keene Country Club. MDS was the beneficiary of the Monte Carlo charity hole, providing \$432 for unmet needs for individuals served by MDS.



Chamber CEO Luca Paris presents a donation check to Mary-Anne Wisell and Heather Kemper.

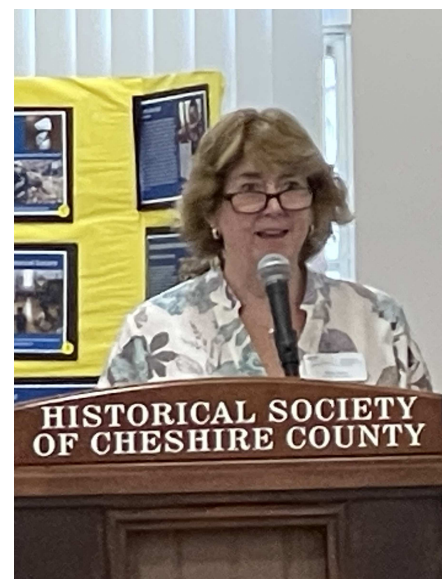
Change is the Focus at the MDS Annual Meeting

On September 14th, MDS hosted its annual meeting at the Historical Society of Cheshire County. Mary-Anne Wisell, Executive Director, used the occasion to update attendees on how 40 years of providing services has changed and what the future holds, particularly in light of Bureau of Developmental Services System Redesign work.

Sheila Mahon, Director of Operations, gave tribute to regional Direct Support Professionals during DSP Appreciation Week. Jenna Tarr, a program manager at MDS, spoke about the joys and challenges of DSP work. Read Jenna's story on page 7.

Longtime MDS Board member and former case manager Jim Schofield shared details about the early years of MDS, including how it was formed. He reflected on the enormous task of bringing people home from Laconia and setting up quality services so they could successfully live in the community.

The meeting will become an annual event.



Sheila Mahon speaks at the first annual MDS Annual Meeting, highlighting 40 years of support and service to our community.

Project SEARCH

Congratulations to the Project SEARCH Class of 2023! This year's graduates are Dylan Coyne, Natasha Oldread, Josh Thieme, and Kelly Thurmond. Kathy Willbarger, Chief Operating Officer at Cheshire Medical Center, and Mike Bowles from the Medical Records department at Cheshire Medical Center spoke at the graduation ceremony, sharing words of praise and encouragement with the graduates and their guests.

Project SEARCH is a collaboration of MDS, Cheshire Medical Center and NH Vocational Rehabilitation. The program provides a comprehensive approach to employment training and career advancement for individuals between 18-34 years of age who experience developmental disabilities. The program provides real world skills training through a series of internships and classroom learning. The next application period will be in early 2024, with training to start in Fall 2024. For more information, visit mds-nh.org.



***Congratulations to the Project SEARCH Class of 2023
Clockwise from bottom left: Kelly Thurmond,
Natasha Oldread, Josh Thieme, and Dylan Coyne.***



***Kathy Willbarger, CEO at Cheshire Medical Center,
speaks to the Project SEARCH Class of 2023 at the
graduation ceremony.***



The four interns get ready for the graduation ceremony.



Accolades and congratulations to the interns.

Poetry

Self-Advocacy Word Poem

by Brianna Barnes

S Speaking up for ourselves
E Embracing strengths
L Living our best life
F Finding yourself
A Advocating for others, ourselves
D Doing group projects, activities
V Voicing our thoughts and ideas
O Opening up to share our stories
C Coming together to work as a team
A Acting out different social situations
C Count on yourself
Y Your voice matters

Family Council Word Poem

by Brianna Barnes

F Families coming together
A Aiming for change
M Meeting monthly
I Inclusion
L Listening to others
Y Yearning to make a difference
C Caring for the community
O Overcoming challenges
U Understanding and caring
N Nurturing
C Compassion and empathy
I Integration and equality
L Learning new things

Contributed by Brianna Barnes, a Family Council member.

HAVE YOU REGISTERED FOR RUN~WALK~SMILE?

Saturday morning, November 4, 2023
 Railroad Street & Community Way, Keene NH

All proceeds go to the MDS Dental Fund!

5K (Run or Walk) - 10K (Runners only) - 1-Mile Fun Run

- Dozens of door prizes just for entering
- Snacks, games for kids, loads of fun

Sign up now! More details on the Race Flyer on page 15.

- ♦ Scan the QR code to the right.
- ♦ Go online to mds-nh.org.
- ♦ Stop by MDS to register.



A DSP's Story

How I Got Into This Field

In 2011 I was just 18, a new mom, and I wasn't sure what I really wanted to do yet with my working life. My mother had taken care of a family friend who had developmental disabilities, and I grew up with that experience in my life. As I spent time with that person, I saw how much just simply giving your time to someone made a positive impact, even if it was something as simple as helping with grocery shopping. It was then that I knew I wanted to work with people in some capacity as a career.

Joys of the Job

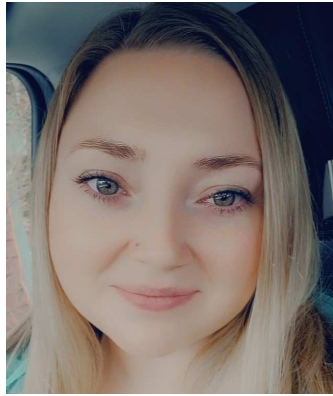
There is a running joke in our office: Why do you want to be a DSP? You literally get paid to eat ice-cream.

Some days that is truly what it is like. We are lucky enough to get to be a part of community activities with the individuals we provide services to. Frequently we get to participate alongside our individuals in exercise classes at the YMCA or play a game of Yahtzee with friends. We go to the local library and participate in Cookies, Coloring and Conversation. We volunteer at local nonprofits such as the YMCA, the Monadnock Humane Society, and the Salvation Army.

Did I mention errands? We run lots of errands. Whether it's going to the grocery store with an individual, picking up a prescription at the pharmacy, or grabbing a few essentials at Walmart, we help by making sure our individuals have everything they need.

Challenges

The most challenging thing for me is work/life balance. I'm constantly in work mode, in or outside of the office. Providing personalized care at times can be challenging, but it also offers many rewards.



Jenna Tarr spent many years as a DSP, and is now a Program Manager with MDS-ISO.

A Success Story

I had the opportunity to support an individual who had never worked before. I was part of the entire process, from filling out job applications to being part of the interview process. Believe me when I tell you I may have been more nervous than the individual at the interview. We did plenty of preparation, doing mock interviews and preparing for possible interview questions. With my guidance and reassurance, this individual did amazingly well at the interview and landed the job.

Once the job started, I served as primary job coach/direct support person through the employer's training process and was able to set up any accommodations they needed to be successful. I continued to be the primary support person on the job until both this individual and the employer approached me stating they were ready for me to leave. We had set this individual up with natural supports on the job, and it was super successful.

Today this individual works independently, and I only provide check-ins with them and the company to see how they are doing. I am happy to report that this has been a perfect fit. He is loving his job and the employer reports that he is a wonderful employee and jokingly asks when they can get another employee just like him.

DSPs Do Make a Difference Every Day

The work in this field is hard but really so rewarding. I have found a passion for the work that I do. I know I speak for many of my colleagues in saying that we learn as much as we may guide and support others. I am happy to be part of MDS and am grateful for this opportunity to share my experience.

Jenna Tarr has worked at MDS for more than 10 years, much of that time as a DSP. She was recently promoted to Program Manager in the MCST-ISO department. She shared this story of life as a DSP at the MDS Annual Meeting in September.

MDS Family Council



"The mission of the Monadnock Developmental Services Family Council is to support, assist, and educate families, individuals, and the greater community. Our purpose is to ensure greater access to the community, increase engagement, and strengthen families by working in partnership with MDS. We strive to empower families and to be a voice for change and inclusion through advocacy and inclusiveness throughout the lifespan."

The Monadnock Family Council is a voice for families. We are a group of families who support family members with intellectual disabilities both living at home and independently, who are supported by Monadnock Developmental Services. Family Council membership is representative of the various ages, diagnosis and geographic locations of individuals and families served in the Monadnock Region.

New Hampshire has ten family councils, one for each of the ten Area Agencies in the state. All are created by New Hampshire legislation to advise on the needs of families in their region. Each family council has a budget, which is provided by the State of New Hampshire. These funds are used to support families in need of respite, home modifications, camp inclusion, family training, and emergency family assistance.

The Monadnock Family Council meets the 2nd Monday of each month from 6 to 7pm, and meetings are open to everyone. Anyone who would like to observe or provide input is encouraged to attend a meeting, participate in an activity or training, volunteer at a fundraising project or family outreach event, or simply just let the Council know how your family is doing.

We encourage families to share their concerns, confusion, observations, suggestions, and needs at any time. For more information about the Monadnock Family Council, please contact Lynn Yeiter at 603-352-1304 or lynny@mds-nh.org.

Hello! I would love to hear from you!

Our Region 5 Area Agency serves about 1,200 individuals and families in the Monadnock Region. You are the reason we are here. We want to be sure your voice is heard.

Your input is valuable to us.

- Do you have feedback you'd like to share?
- Do you have unresolved concerns?
- Do you have questions about your current services or the BDS system redesign?
- Do you want to find out more about our MDS mission of inclusion, participation and mutual relationships?



Mary-Anne Wisell
MDS Executive Director

Please reach out — 603-352-1304 or MaryAnneW@mds-nh.org.

Self-Advocacy Connections

Self-Advocacy Connections – All About Us

The Connections—All About Us self-advocacy group is a safe and friendly group that meets the third Monday of each month via Zoom from 10:30 to 11:30am.

Self-advocacy is about making connections and friendships. It's about learning how to speak up for yourself, thinking about what your own good life should look like and how to move in that direction. The Connections—All About Us group is a safe place to learn about our rights and responsibilities, talk about things that we are struggling with or hoping for, make connections in our communities and share our thoughts. Join one of our meetings and see what we do. We like to have fun and invite you to join us!

Recently, the Connections—All About Us group published the Rights & Responsibilities Handbook, which talks about abuse, neglect and exploitation and how you can identify these behaviors. The handbook also explains your personal rights and provides many real life examples to help us better understand how we should expect to be treated. The Rights & Responsibilities handbook is available on the MDS website at www.mds-nh.org.

Meetings are posted on the [MDS training calendar](#) where you'll find a Zoom link to each session.

Contact Mari Schacht by email: mari@mds-nh.org or by phone: 603-352-1304, ext 212.

S Speaking up for ourselves
E Embracing strengths
L Living our best life
F Finding yourself

A Advocating for others, ourselves
D Doing group projects, activities
V Voicing our thoughts and ideas
O Opening up to share our stories
C Coming together to work as a team
A Acting out different social situations
C Count on yourself
Y Your voice matters

By Brianna

MDS Self-Advocacy Connections

Come join us on the 3rd Monday of every month – 10:30 am to 11:30 am
In person – MDS office – 121 Railroad St, Keene or via ZOOM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87016696979?pwd=d1JuckU3NVg0dTlyV01ubFc2cDYvZz09>

Meeting ID: 870 1669 6979
Passcode: 407639



Resources

New Hampshire Resources

ABLE NH

2 1/2 Beacon Street
Concord, NH 03301
(765) 4ABLENH
www.ablenh.org

Advocates for the civil and human rights of all children and adults with disabilities. Promotes full participation by improving systems of supports, connecting families, inspiring communities, and influencing public policy.

Disabilities Rights Center

64 N. Main Street, Suite 2
Concord, NH 03302
(800) 834-1721 (603) 228-0432
www.drcnh.org

Provides advocacy assistance, information and referral services to families and individuals with disabilities.

Governor's Commission on Disability

54 Regional Drive, Suite 5
Concord, NH 03301
(800) 852-3405 (603) 271-2773
www.nh.gov/disability

Information and referral service, Client Assistance Program for vocational rehab clients, Barrier Free Committee, and newsletter.

NH Council on Developmental Disabilities

2 1/2 Beacon Street
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 271-3236
www.nhddc.nh.gov

Recommends policy and advocates for legislative change on issues affecting people with developmental disabilities. Not a direct service agency, but likes to hear your thoughts.

NH Family Voices

129 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 271-4525
www.nhfv.org

Family organization that provides services to families and professionals caring for children with special health care needs and/or disabilities. network of families speaking on behalf of children with special health care needs.



People Can't Wait

Make your voice heard by our legislators!



Looking for rewarding work?

Are you dedicated, creative, committed, team-oriented, with a good sense of humor?

MDS is hiring Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) for children and adults in Keene and Peterborough.

You could make a huge difference in someone's life!

Call 603-352-1304 or send an email to us at employment@mds-nh.org for more information.



Inclusion • Participation • Mutual Relationships

MDS is hiring! Email employment@mds-nh.org

Medicaid False Claims Act

False claims are not claims with innocent billing mistakes. False claims include services that are:

- ♦ Not rendered
- ♦ Not supported by patient's medical record
- ♦ Part of a previously submitted claim
- ♦ Upcoded

Watch a brief video on the False Claims Act to help you understand and comply with this law:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbZ78QTLztQ&feature=youtu.be>

Want to file a complaint?

Call 1-855-450-3593

To file a complaint with the Bureau of Developmental Services (BDS), call 1-855-450-3593. After you file a complaint, an investigator will contact you directly.

Respite Providers Needed

Part time hours with flexibility.
Email employment@mds-nh.org

Mack's Lunch Stop

Mack's Lunch Stop meets at the United Church of Christ (UCC) Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week from 11am to 2pm. The UCC is located on Central Square in Keene.

Annual membership fee is \$30 and is used to cover the cost of using UCC facilities.

For more information and to become a member, contact Chad and Bob at : mackslunchstop@gmail.com



9th Annual Run~Walk~Smile

Saturday, Nov 4th

Registration starts at 8:30am

All proceeds go to MDS Dental Fund



10am start time



10am start time



9:15am start time

**For more event details
and to register, scan the
QR code below!**



Thank you to our generous sponsors!



Bowman Dental—Connecticut Valley Oral Surgery Associates
Electronic Imaging Materials, Inc.—GemGraphics—Hastings Dental Health
Matthew J Cielinski, DMD—Miller Orthodontic Specialists—Monadnock Food Co-op
Northeast Delta Dental—The Richards Group—Whitney Brothers
Register online at mhs-nh.org or scan QR code above.



Save the Date!

17th New Hampshire Caregiver's Conference
Wednesday, November 8, 2023, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm
Grappone Conference Center, Concord, New Hampshire

Keynote Becky Rule, Storyteller



**"We Cried So Hard We Laughed:
Stories From New Hampshire Caregivers"**

Rebecca Rule is a writer, storyteller, and host of Our Hometown for NHPBS. Author of a dozen books, her latest is That Reminds Me of a Funny Story. In her keynote, she'll tap the experience of caring for her parents plus 16 years with the Coalition of Caring by telling—with love--caregiver stories from our own community.

Lead Sponsors: Bureau of Developmental Services, NBM, New Hampshire Family Caregiver Support Program, WellSense Health Plan

For more information contact: Ellen at Ellen@bianh.org or visit the Coalition of Caring's website at www.coalitionofcaring.org
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CoalitionofCaring/>
Twitter <https://twitter.com/coalitioncaring>