



HELPING PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
LIVE AND WORK IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

THE *Winter* 2026 CLIPBOARD

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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

In-  Find us on Facebook

Message from the Executive Director

Redesignation Approved: Moving Forward with Confidence

I would like to take a moment to share an important update with you about MDS' recent redesignation and to thank everyone who helped make this process such a success.



Mary-Anne Wisell
MDS Executive Director

Redesignation is a comprehensive, multi-year review conducted by the Bureau of Developmental Services (BDS). Its purpose is to ensure that area agencies like MDS continue to meet the statutory, regulatory, fiscal, and quality standards required to serve individuals with developmental disabilities. The process looks closely at how we are governed, how services are delivered, how we manage resources, and how well we stay focused on person-centered, community-based supports.

I am very pleased to share that Monadnock Developmental Services has been fully redesignated for a five-year period. After an extensive review under RSA 171-A:18 and He-M 505.09, BDS determined that MDS met all nine redesignation standards, with no remediation or corrective actions required. This outcome speaks volumes about the strength of our organization and the commitment of the people who make our work possible.

Throughout the review, BDS noted consistent strengths across all areas of operation. They highlighted our clear, inclusion-focused mission; meaningful consumer and family representation on our Board; and strong community engagement through efforts such as Project SEARCH and regional coalitions. Our systems supporting individual rights, health, and safety were also recognized as strong, supported by comprehensive training, thoughtful oversight, and tools developed with and by self-advocates.

(Continued on page 2)

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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Message from the Executive Director

(Continued from page 1)

BDS also affirmed the effectiveness of our quality assurance and governance systems. Continuous monitoring through data sources such as surveys, National Core Indicators, and incident trend analysis helps us identify opportunities to improve and remain accountable. Our Board of Directors and Finance Committee were recognized for their active involvement and oversight, and our fiscal practices met required benchmarks across multiple years, even as we navigated challenges in FY2024 with careful planning and responsible use of reserves.

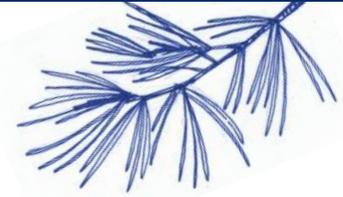
This successful redesignation truly reflects a collective effort. I want to extend my sincere thanks to the individuals and families we serve, our staff, Board members, providers, and community partners. A special thank you to everyone who took the time to complete surveys, attend forums, and share thoughtful feedback—your voices played a meaningful role in shaping this review and strengthening our services.

As we look ahead to the next five years, redesignation confirms MDS's strong organizational health and our continued commitment to providing high-quality, person-centered supports. We are grateful for the trust you place in us and remain dedicated to learning, improving, and serving our community with care and integrity.



Area Plan

By Sheila Mahon



Charting the Future: MDS Unveils Five-Year Area Plan for Region 5

Every five years, Monadnock Developmental Services (MDS) embarks on a critical mission to define the regional roadmap for support and advocacy. The organization has completed its new Area Plan, a strategic framework designed to address the most pressing priorities for individuals and families in the Monadnock region. The plan is currently going through the review and approval process.

The new plan is a community-driven initiative built on a foundation of diverse perspectives. To ensure every voice was heard, the Area Plan Committee employed a multi-channel feedback process, offering surveys via electronic, paper, and voice options. We had 266 responses from a wide cross-section of the community, including: Individuals and families receiving services, Area Agency staff, Provider agencies and community partners, The Monadnock Family Council and the MDS Board of Directors. Additional information came from Region 5's 2025 redesignation report.

The 2025–2030 Area Plan focuses on four key areas designed to modernize and strengthen our support system:

1. **Workforce Stability:** At the heart of quality care is a sustainable workforce. MDS aims to support a diverse and well-trained network of staff, respite providers, and home care providers in the region.
2. **Community Networks:** Strength lies in connection. The plan seeks to broaden access to resources by deepening ties with local civic organizations.
3. **Continuous Learning:** Education remains the cornerstone of a successful system. MDS is committed to enhancing training opportunities for everyone - from families and staff to community partners.
4. **Technology and Operational Efficiency:** To meet the demands of the next five years, MDS is prioritizing modernization. The goal is to streamline workflows and improve communication through advanced systems.

The goal of the plan is clear: creating a resilient, connected, and efficient system that empowers every individual and family in Region 5. More information will become available soon.

Announcements



 MONADNOCK
DEVELOPMENTAL
SERVICES

**Congratulations
Shelly
Patenaude!**

**30 Year Work
Anniversary**



Please join us in celebrating Shelly's
30 great years!

 MONADNOCK
DEVELOPMENTAL
SERVICES

**Congratulations
Joel Fitzpatrick**

**20 Year Work
Anniversary**



Please join us in celebrating Joel's
work anniversary!

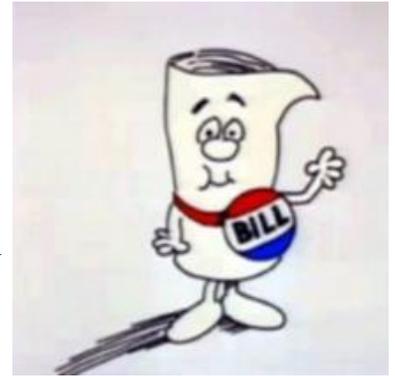


Legislative Update

By Angela Fletcher

A Busy Start to the Legislative Season

It's the beginning of a new year and the legislative season is off to a busy start. As of January 7th all Legislative chambers (House and Senate) have been determined and all bills have been assigned numbers. Each bill has now been assigned to a committee based on its topic. The committees are reviewing them and have opened the floor to hear from their constituents. Every day they hold public hearings for several bills which allows everyone the opportunity to provide in person or written testimony in support or in opposition of a bill.



We, as Legislative Liaisons, are currently tracking many different bills and closely monitoring them to ensure we stay on top of any changes. This is the time when changes to the bill language are made. As topics arise that we feel will impact families we are giving testimony and working to ensure everyone is being well represented. Currently, there are numerous bills which require our attention, including housing, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, special education, and mental health. Any of these bills could potentially impact our community which means we need to pay attention. It seems that some of the bills might offer positive changes while others would not.

Once the committees have held hearings and digested what their constituents have said they will hold a discussion called an executive session. This will be when they may propose changes that could modify the language, potentially changing the whole bill. At this time they also vote on their recommendations whether it "Ought To Pass" (OTP) or not move forward which is referred to as "Inexpedient to Legislate" (ITL). Once this is complete, the full House or Senate then vote on the bills that have been reviewed. The bills they pass will then go to the other chamber, where the same process will repeat itself.

Constituents will have an additional opportunity to give testimony either in person or written during this next committee hearing. I will be sending out updates as needed throughout the season.

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month! This month is about celebrating people with developmental disabilities and promoting a world where everyone is valued and included. MDS is committed to supporting individuals and families to be fully immersed in their community and to live life to the fullest!

DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES
AWARENESS
MONTH



Workforce Development Grant

By Sheila Mahon

Wrapping Up a Major Recruitment Effort for Direct Support Professionals

In mid-December, MDS celebrated the successful completion of its year-long Workforce Development Grant project with a lively gathering at the MDS office. Participants and staff who appeared in photos and videos promoting Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) enjoyed seeing the campaign materials displayed and recognized for their contributions.

Concluding at the end of 2025, the grant-funded project focused on strengthening DSP recruitment and retention through new marketing materials, targeted digital, video, and audio advertising, improvements to the online application process, and a paid DSP internship program for college students. The campaign was a success! It increased MDS's visibility in the community, simplified applying for positions and we hired more DSPs.

As a capstone, a 2–3 minute recruitment video was produced in December by Jennifer Paone of The Production House, in collaboration with MDS staff. A former MDS DSP herself, Jennifer brought a personal connection to the project. The video is available on the MDS website and will be used at recruitment and marketing events.

MDS extends sincere thanks to the individuals who participated in the photo and video shoots, as well as to the many community partners and media professionals whose support helped make this project a success.

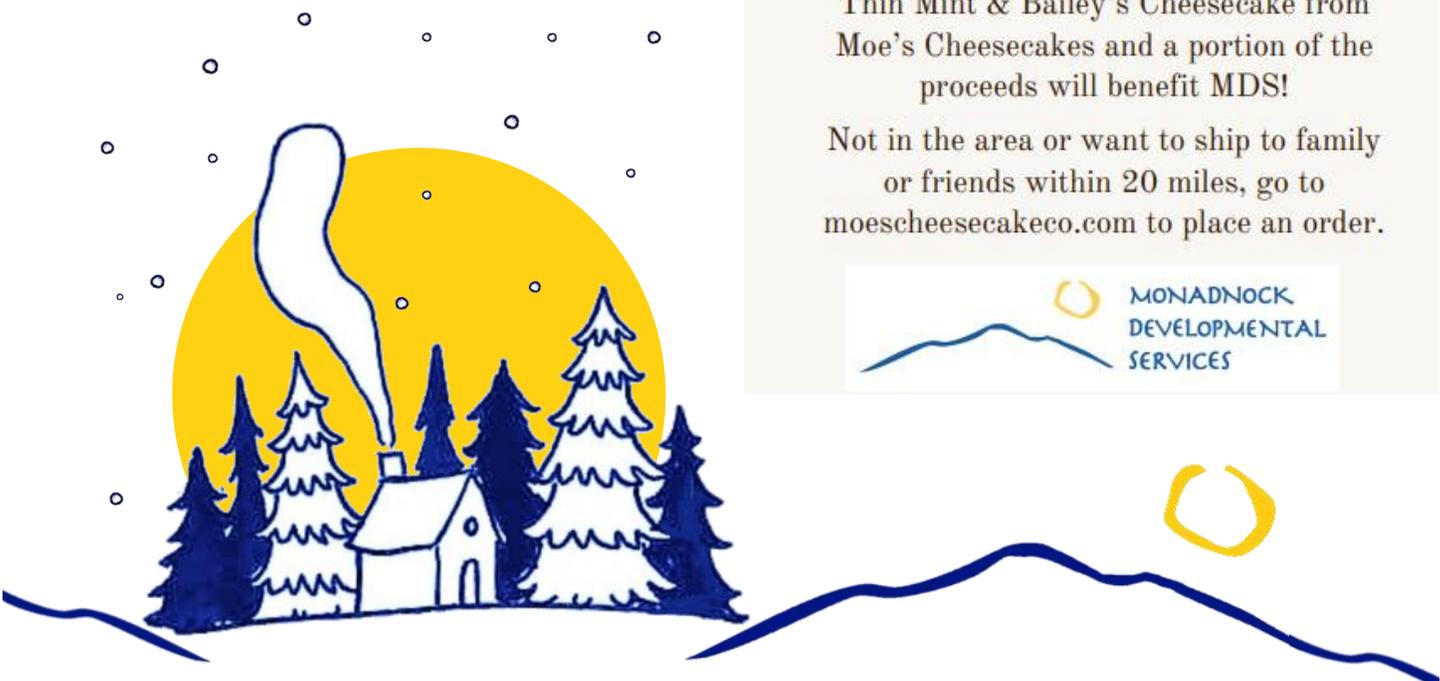


Fundraising



Join us at The Grove Restaurant at Woodbound Inn in Rindge for a special fundraiser benefiting Monadnock Developmental Services. Attend Wednesday night buffet and MDS will receive proceeds from the meal. The cost of the buffet is \$16.00 per person. The below voucher is required in order for MDS to receive proceeds.

Wednesday, April 15th and Wednesday, April 22nd



APRIL 2026 FUNDRAISER

Visit Jenna's Market at 255 West Street in Keene in April and pick up a Thin Mint & Bailey's Cheesecake from Moe's Cheesecakes and a portion of the proceeds will benefit MDS!

Not in the area or want to ship to family or friends within 20 miles, go to moescheesecakeco.com to place an order.



Philanthropy

Philanthropy:

**the desire to promote the welfare of others,
expressed especially by the generous
donation of money to good causes.**

2025 was a great year for philanthropy! Thank you to these organizations that generously contributed to MDS in 2025:

	Tito's	
	Hannaford	
C&S Wholesale Grocers	Panera	Kiwanis of Peterborough
Northeast Delta Dental	Applebee's	Mascoma Bank
W.S. Badger Company	Woodbound Inn	Kiwanis of Keene
Savings Bank of Walpole	Harlow's	Homestead Thrift Store II
The Nash Casino	Waterhouse	M&T Bank
	Granita Enoteco	
	Margarita	



Community

By Traci Blain

The Story of Winterberry

Winterberry is an elf that was born at the North Pole on a cold July day when Santa was just getting ready to begin checking his lists. She was a happy little elf all through her school years, she excelled in joy and caroling at school. Her favorite class of course was cookie decorating with Mr. Sugarwhisk. She sailed through all her elf-aminations and graduated at the top of her class. Her parents Twindle and Lala were thrilled that Santa had chosen Winterberry for his Special Projects team following her graduation. Winterberry has supported children in hospitals, been on the board for Elf Disability Awareness, and served as the chairperson for inclusive elf games since 2015.



Winterberry decided to join the MDS team in December of 2025 after seeing all the good work being done. She wanted to support the hard working staff by spreading cheer and giving a prize to those who were good enough to spot her, and so she enlisted the help of others in the MDS office. She told them that she had been watching with Santa at the North Pole and felt the people that had been serving others all year long needed a little extra Christmas Spirit. She told Santa she was the elf for the job! She asked if they could help her in her quest to make the spirit bright at MDS and they agreed to help in Operation Holiday Happiness.

The first day she hid, the team did great finding her and pointing her out to others. She merrily sat overlooking the kitchen on the 2nd floor. On the second day, she went to the mail room to see who was being naughty or nice while getting their mail or making copies. Then, out of nowhere, she was kidnapped by naughty little elves who stole her away to a whole new office. She was in a freezer, near a toaster, and stuffed in a jar. She was even held for ransom. Santa watched the whole time shaking his head wondering what was becoming of his sweet little Winterberry.

Finally, she was rescued by her team and placed back in the safety of an office to recover and maybe apologize a little for her antics in the downstairs offices of CSS. Although she did not seem that sorry.... She decided that despite the dramatics of the day before and after being thoroughly examined by her support team and Nurse Debi she was ready to return to work hiding around the 2nd and 3rd floors of MDS.

Staff merrily look for her and email her staff to say where they found her. She continues to move about the office until she has to go back and help Santa. She wants the MDS team to know that she will return each year as long as they keep up the good work and stay on the (mostly) nice list.

Community

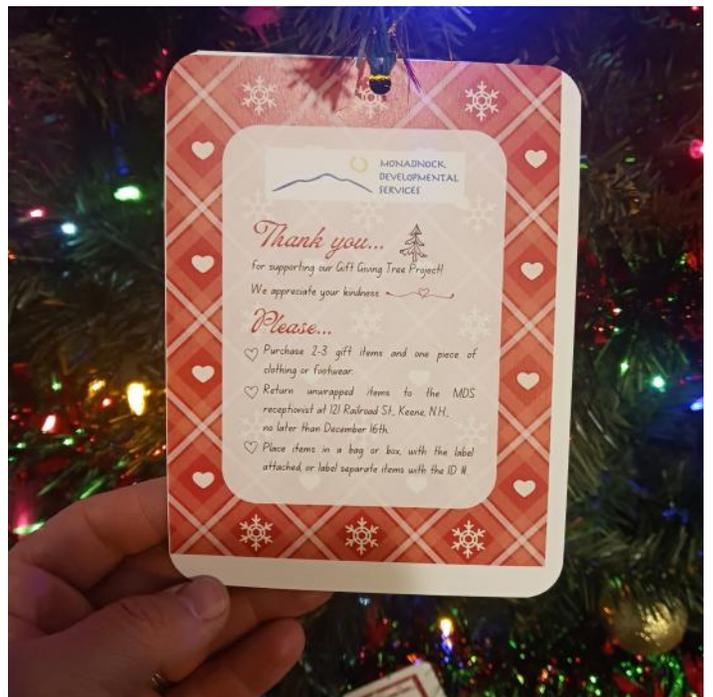
By Alison Scalia

The ASC “Giving Tree”

Over the past few holiday seasons, the MDS Adult Service Coordination (ASC) Department identified an unmet need among adults who receive few or no holiday gifts due to limited family involvement or financial barriers. Many individuals served by ASC do not qualify for other community programs that support children or families.

To bring holiday cheer to these adults, the ASC “Giving Tree” was created. Information about each individual’s interests and needs was gathered and turned into gift tags displayed in the MDS lobby. Donated items were wrapped by ASC staff and delivered to recipients.

In its first year, the Giving Tree supported 20 individuals and received an overwhelmingly positive response from recipients, families, guardians, and provider agencies. Many shared how meaningful it was to feel remembered and cared for during a difficult time of year. The ASC Department hopes the Giving Tree will continue to grow and thanks everyone who made this effort possible. Look for more information in October 2026 for the next holiday season.



Nikki Negron’s Hooked on Happiness: Now on Facebook

You may remember the article in a past *Clipboard* featuring Nikki Negron and her business, Hooked on Happiness. We’re happy to share that Hooked on Happiness now has a Facebook Business Page, offering another way to stay connected and follow Nikki’s work. Hooked on Happiness is dedicated to promoting positivity, personal growth, and overall well-being. Nikki can also be reached at hookedonhappiness90@gmail.com.



Monadnock Family Council Events

By Alissa Delaney

Family Council Holiday Gathering a Wonderful Success

This year’s Family Council Holiday Gathering was a joyful and well-attended event. We extend our sincere appreciation to the Troy Recreation Department for generously donating their facility and providing staff to prepare a delicious spaghetti meal for our families.

Attendees enjoyed the opportunity to connect with one another, participate in festive crafts, and share in the excitement of a special visit from Santa. We are grateful to everyone who joined us and helped make this annual celebration such a meaningful experience.



Staff Spirit

MDS Door Decorating Contest

First Place:

Business/Development Office



Second Place:

Intake & Eligibility



Monadnock Family Council

MONADNOCK Family Council



FAMILIES SUPPORTING FAMILIES



Family Education

Arranging education sessions and advocacy by providing a forum for families to make their concerns, needs and preferences known to MDS and to its policy makers.



Creating Connections

Funding events and activities that bring families together. For example: camp scholarships, support groups, and recreational gatherings among families



Meeting Needs

Vetting requests from MDS families for respite, home modification, and emergency family assistance



WE ARE YOUR PEERS

MDS families: moms, dads, guardians, AND advocates of children and adults who experience developmental delays, intellectual disabilities, and acquired brain disorders.

JOIN US

- Second Mondays at 6pm. Meetings are open to everyone. Anyone who would like to observe or provide input is encouraged to attend.

FIND US

- 121 Railroad St, Keene, NH 03431
- (603) 352-1304
- FamilyCouncil@MDS-NH.org
- MDS-NH.org/Monadnock-Family-Council
- facebook.com/MonadnockFamilyCouncil

The mission of the Monadnock 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.

Run~Walk~Smile

11th Annual MDS Run~Walk~Smile event had record-breaking attendance and donations!

This year’s Run~Walk~Smile 5k/10K/1 Mile road races mark the eleventh year that the community has come together to ensure that adults with developmental disabilities get the critical dental care they need. Our deepest thanks go out to the record number of 306 registered runners/walkers as well as our sponsors, volunteers, donors, and staff for their support of this event. We raised \$29,225 in 2025 – a 9% increase over 2024!

We want to give special recognition to Keene High School Interact students and the volunteers from Franklin Pierce rowing team and Keene State College cheer team. Their efforts and enthusiasm were greatly appreciated.

A very special thank you to the volunteers that worked the event through helping with registration, food, course marshals, gifts, medals, water, set up and break down and all the other various jobs needed to have a successful event. We couldn’t have the race without our wonderful volunteers.

Dozens of area businesses and dentists played a key role as sponsors. We’re especially grateful to our Platinum sponsors: Children’s Dental Care (1-Mile Fun Run Sponsor), Savings Bank of Walpole, Hilb Group, and Spoonwood Dental. We are also grateful to the local businesses who donated gift cards to be used as prizes and food for the day of the event.

This was our second year working with the Flutie Foundation and it has been a great partnership.

We are grateful for the community’s continued support of the work of MDS and its partners so that people with developmental and related disabilities are able to lead meaningful lives and contribute to our community.

The 12th annual Run~Walk~Smile road race will be on November 7th. Please mark your calendars. Registration will be open by May.

Thank you to our generous sponsors!



Miller Orthodontic Specialists • Keene Chrysler Jeep Dodge • Delta Dental • Kapiloff Insurance Agency, Inc. • Hilb Group – Bellows Nichols NuCar Nissan of Keene • The Richards Group • Peterborough Family Dental & Implant Center • Cielinski Family Dentistry
NBT Bank • Fairfield’s • The Thompson Family



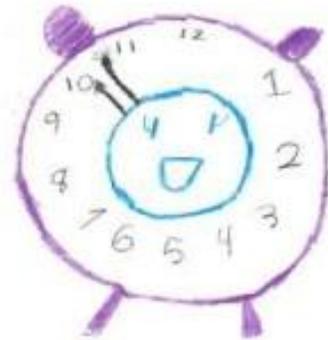
Self-Advocacy

Self-Advocacy Connection

Region 5

Tick Tock! It's time to join Self Advocacy!

We meet on the 3rd Monday of every month! 10:30AM!
Set your alarm and come on over!



Meetings are tentatively held on the 3rd Monday of the Month unless noted otherwise. Hosted in-person at the Keene, MDS Office *OR* Provider Agency Host locations as arranged. [Check the MDS Training calendar for that session for more information.](#)

You can also attend via ZOOM! ZOOM Links will be provided *unless* we are hosting a special event that does not have access to wifi.

Day	Time	Location
Monday, March 16th	10:30 am – 12:00 pm	The Conference Room at Railroad Square 49 Community Way, Keene, NH Across from the Co-Op or join via ZOOM
Monday, April 20th	10:30 am – 12:00 pm	MDS (Male Dyer Room) 121 Railroad St – Keene, NH or join via ZOOM
Monday, May 18th	10:30 am – 12:00 pm	MDS (Male Dyer Room) 121 Railroad St – Keene, NH or join via ZOOM

**Location is subject to change.*

If you can not attend in person - Join the Self-Advocacy Connection Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/96861377008?pwd=8NUOm04WUzJjwKdOFHWAbYKvYhA9Si.1>

Meeting ID: 968 6137 7008
Passcode: 692791

(If a provider agency is interested in hosting one of our meetings, please let us know)

For more information, contact: Mari Schacht at MDS – selfadvocacy@mds-nh.org

603-352-1304 ext 212

Resources & Opportunities

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, 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.

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

MDS is Looking for Creative, Compassionate People Join Our Team!

MDS provides comprehensive paid training and continued support so you are well-equipped to help people with disabilities navigate life at home, in the community, or at work. All experience levels are welcomed. Must be 18 years or older.

If you are compassionate and creative, you're perfect for our team!

Visit our website to apply at mds-nh.org.



The preparation of this advertisement was financed under a contract with the state of NH, DHHS, with funds provided in part by State of NH and/or such other funding sources as were available, e.g., the US DHHS.

Medicaid False Claims Act

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

- ♦ Not rendered
- ♦ Not supported by billing for service
- ♦ 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>

Rights & Responsibilities Concern?

Concerned about paid support to you, a family member, or services provided? Contact the Office of Client and Legal Services at 855-450-3593 or ask your Service Coordinator or other trusted person to assist you in calling.

Concerned about abuse, neglect, or exploitation, by people who are not paid to provide support? Contact the New Hampshire Bureau of Adult and Aging Services (BAAS). Their phone number is 603-271-7014. Here's the link to the Rights & Responsibilities brochure: [dltss-individual-rights-brochure.pdf](#)

Mack's Lunch Stop

Mack's Lunch Stop meets at UCC in Keene
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays from 11am to 2pm.
For more information and to become a member, contact Robb Hobbs at:
robb22281@gmail.com.