

Update from our Executive Director Lisa Lepine

The first four months of 2025 have provided extensive opportunities for advocacy on behalf of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Federal activity has the potential to change the lives of people served by The Arc for years to come. Changes in the workforce at the Social Security Administration, challenges to the Department of Education, reduction in staffing at the Centers for Disease Control, and discussion regarding the implementation of work requirements for Medicaid are all changes that directly impact those served by The Arc.

April, Autism Acceptance Month, brought autism directly into the spotlight when Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Director of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) uttered challenging statements regarding autism. The DHHS is the entity charged with managing Medicaid dollars for the federal government. Medicaid provides funding for support services for people with developmental disabilities accessing Community Mental Health services in Michigan. In May, it is expected that the House Energy and Commerce committee will present the actual budget reconciliation bill language for proposed

changes to Medicaid that include the possibility of establishing work requirements for individuals receiving benefits and caps on services for people with disabilities.

The Arc of Macomb is working diligently to advocate for our membership. Staff from The Arc have traveled to Washington, D.C. twice this year to meet with representatives and senators on both sides of the aisle to advocate zealously to maintain the programs, support and services that allow our community its independence. Every effort is being made to educate and advocate to maintain funding, retain laws and preserve regulations that protect and

promote the rights of people with disabilities. It is imperative that we continue to celebrate the value that all people bring to the world. Everyone is important. Everyone has a right to be part of the community. Everyone has value.

The Arc of the United States

reminds us that "The Arc has done hard things before, and will do hard things in the future. The power of our collective voice – advocates, local chapters, state chapters, The Arc of the US – has changed the face of our country for the better, and we are not stopping now." The Arc of Macomb stands with The Arc US, The Arc Michigan and everyone battling to preserve and improve the lives of people with disabilities. We encourage our community to partner with and support us as we continue to rally and advocate!

Yours in advocacy,



Lisa Lepine B.A., J.D.

HOLIDAY CLOSURES AT THE ARC

The Arc of Macomb County will be closed Monday, May 26th for Memorial Day and Friday, July 4th for Independence Day. Enjoy the holidays!

GRATIOT ROADWORK NEAR THE ARC

MDOT is resurfacing five miles of M-3, including the stretch in front of The Arc. Expect lane closures, detours, and traffic delays through July. Pedestrian and business access will remain open –just be sure to plan ahead before your visit.



FREE EVENTS AT THE ARC

Ask The Advocate:
Community
Employment Services
• Tuesday, May 13th

Mental Health
First-aid Training
• June 12th
• July 10th & 11th





The Arc is dedicated to securing for all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to choose where and how they learn, live, and work throughout their lifetimes in the community we share.



Friday, May 30th, 2025

Hickory Hollow Golf Course
49001 North Ave, Macomb

17TH ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

Join Us for a Day of Fun, Golf & Giving!

All proceeds from this event will directly benefit **The Arc of Macomb County** and our mission to empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Your support helps provide essential services, advocacy, and opportunities that allow people to thrive in our shared community.

Whether you're golfing, sponsoring, or simply spreading the word, **YOU are making a difference!**

\$90 » BEFORE MAY 1ST
\$95 » AFTER MAY 1ST

8:00 AM – Registration

9:00 AM – Shotgun Start

2:00 PM – Dinner & Raffle Drawing



For custom sponsorship packages or more information, please contact:

info@arcservices.org

586-630-3046

ArcServices.Org/Golf

EDUCATION RIGHTS ARE UNDER THREAT

Here's What You Should Know

Education is a civil right — especially for students with disabilities. But key protections like the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** and **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act** are currently under threat.

Proposals at the federal level would eliminate the **U.S. Department of Education** and move special education oversight to the **Department of Health and Human Services**. This would drastically weaken the system that ensures students with disabilities have access to individualized supports and inclusive classrooms.

WITHOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION:

- Federal oversight and funding could disappear
- Students could lose the right to an Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Families might lose due process protections
- States could set their own rules and reduce services



Even Section 504, which prohibits discrimination in schools, jobs, healthcare, and housing, is at risk. A lawsuit known as **Texas v. Becerra aims to eliminate 504 regulations entirely**.

At The Arc, we understand the vital role that early access to inclusive education plays in supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Services like IEPs and special education programs are not just beneficial—they are essential for helping individuals lead independent lives. These services provide a foundation that helps reduce the likelihood of vulnerability in the community and the risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system.

If these protections were to disappear, the consequences for our community would be profound. Without access to the specialized education and support that IEPs provide, individuals with IDD would face even greater challenges in achieving independence, finding employment, and fully participating in society. The risks of increased vulnerability and criminal justice involvement would only grow, making it crucial to defend these vital protections for future generations.

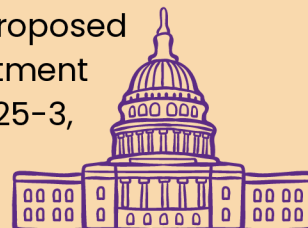
WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Contact your members of Congress
- Share your family's education story with elected officials or local media
- Join statewide coalitions like the Michigan Parent, Advocate and Attorney Coalition (MiPAAC)
- Stay informed by signing up for updates from The Arc Michigan, Michigan Alliance for Families, and Disability Rights Michigan

The Impact of Federal Medicaid Cuts

A Critical Update for Michigan

Medicaid is essential for the well-being of millions of Michiganders, and proposed cuts to this program could have devastating effects. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has issued Executive Directive 2025-3, outlining the severe consequences these cuts would have on healthcare access for Michigan residents, particularly those with disabilities.



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Federal Medicaid Cuts: Key Impacts

2.6 Million

Michiganders currently rely on Medicaid for health coverage, including 300,000 people with disabilities.

45% births

in Michigan are covered by Medicaid, which is critical for maternal and child health—especially in rural areas where healthcare access is already limited.

70% funding

of Medicaid in Michigan comes from the federal government. Reductions in federal support would result in cuts to services and strain Michigan's budget, jeopardizing coverage for vulnerable populations.

A Vital Resource for People with Disabilities

Medicaid serves as a lifeline for people with disabilities in Michigan, covering over 300,000 individuals who depend on Medicaid for access to healthcare, long-term care, and other essential services. These cuts could result in the loss of care for individuals with disabilities, many of whom rely on Medicaid for critical support that allows them to live in the community.

Economic and Healthcare Impact

- Medicaid supports Michigan's healthcare infrastructure, including hospitals, nursing homes, and community mental health centers. These institutions rely on Medicaid funding to provide services and support to people with disabilities.
- The proposed cuts could result in a \$2 billion loss in Medicaid funding for Michigan annually. This loss would disproportionately affect individuals with disabilities, who are more likely to rely on Medicaid-funded services.

Protecting Medicaid for Michigan's Future

We must continue to advocate for the protection of Medicaid funding. The proposed federal cuts will threaten access to care for 1 in 4 Michiganders, including children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. We encourage everyone to stay informed, voice their concerns, and advocate for policies that protect Medicaid and its vital services. To read the full executive directive and learn more about the proposed changes, please visit our Media Center for updates and further information.



For key stats and the full state report,
visit: arcservices.org/hands-off-medicaid



HANDS-OFF MEDICAID!

Last month, a group of enthusiastic advocates from **The Arc of Macomb County** headed to **Congressman John James' office in Warren** to rally in support of Medicaid. Before the event, we gathered at our office to create handmade posters highlighting just how important Medicaid is to the people we serve.

For many, it was their first time attending a rally—and their energy and pride were inspiring. We are also proud to share that our **Executive Director, Lisa Lepine**, spoke with the **Macomb Daily** about the critical need to **protect Medicaid** and the vital role it plays in supporting individuals with disabilities.



Thank you to everyone who helped make our voices heard!

A Picture of Progress: The Arc's Impact in Action



Since the groundbreaking, **Clinton Township's new inclusive playground** has undergone an incredible transformation—and it's now officially open for play! This beautifully designed space offers **children of all abilities a chance to connect, explore, and enjoy playtime together**. With thoughtful features that cater to a wide range of needs, **the playground fosters inclusion and accessibility, allowing kids to build friendships, engage with one another, and experience the joy of play, no matter their abilities**. It's a wonderful addition to our community, and we're thrilled to see children of all backgrounds enjoying this vibrant new space.



The Arc of Macomb County Selected for National Employment Initiative

This spring, **The Arc of Macomb County continued its partnership with the National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON), a project of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).** NEON representatives visited our offices in April as part of our ongoing work to strengthen employment services and expand inclusive opportunities for people with disabilities.

Earlier this year, **Community Employment Services Coordinator Michele Bachler and Community Support Services Director Kelly Harrington traveled to Washington, D.C. for a NEON-hosted Managing Employment Services Workshop.** There, they joined a small group of leaders from across the country to explore strategies for advancing competitive, integrated employment.

We're proud to be one of just 12 organizations selected nationwide to take part in this important initiative.



CONGRATS!



Helen Hugos
on moving into
your new home.

CONGRATS!

Stephanie McClendon
on your CMH Mental
Health Award
nomination!

Promoting Safety Through Special Needs Registries



The Arc proudly supports the growing network of Special Needs Registries, in collaboration with Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training, which help first responders assist individuals with disabilities safely and effectively during emergencies. Through SpArc, we encourage families to enroll in these voluntary programs, allowing caregivers to share vital information—such as medical conditions, communication preferences, and de-escalation strategies—with local law enforcement.

Special Needs Registries are currently available through: Sterling Heights Police Department, Clinton Township Police Department, and Michigan State Police – VIP Program (Vulnerable Individual Program). Programs like these promote dignity, inclusion, and safety—values we advocate for every day.

Thank You

TO OUR NEW & RETURNING MEMBERS

We are incredibly grateful for the support from our members. Your generosity helps us provide essential services and create opportunities for individuals with IDD in our community.

- Lawrence Ferrara
- Don & Kim McCloskey
- Bradley Byrne
- Dennis Spends
- David Schultz
- Alexander Silva
- Cathy Martlock
- Robert Auten
- Mary Vick-Spaulding
- E. Agata Powalka
- Richard & Ann Deering
- Mark Allen
- Mary O'Halloran
- Diane Krycia
- James and Donna Hughes
- Nikki & Ken Charrette
- Jen Dera
- Gwen Ahearn
- John & Katherine Colombo
- Grace Niekra
- Andrea Downie
- Karen Whitcomb
- Sandra Doucet
- Bob & Marian Cunningham
- Bailey Talaska
- Richard Johnson
- Richard Hughes
- Carrie Contrera
- Nicole & Margaret Estfon
- Nancy Walker
- Nancy Gregory
- Lisa Decker
- Patti and John Haver
- Shari Fitzpatrick
- Lisa Joseph
- Maria Messina-Wiersma
- Rachel Babbitt
- Ted & Brenda Kotsis
- Rebecca Verschaeve
- Janet Boatman
- Romy Patterson
- Marilyn Brown
- Barbara and Charles Dodd
- James & JoAnn Neill
- Christine and Charles Frank
- Mitchell Malek
- Rachel Babbitt
- Shauna McManus
- Lisa and Gregg Lepine
- Michael Kolb
- Donice Breza
- Ronald Buck
- Emmanuel Boykin
- Matilda & Richard Hart
- Vincent & Yvonne Grainer
- Louise Kimball
- Edwin O'Donnell
- Linda Paeth
- Kimberly Kulas
- James Walsh
- Jorden Nowak
- Dorine Vanderzyppe
- Justin Crosby
- Laurie Dawes-Collins
- Nancy & Gary Paja
- Mary Mendez
- Jody Woodley
- Joe Tinson
- Beth Carleton
- Nancy Kaye
- Cheryl & David Dau
- Ryan Dau
- Janet Boatman
- Suzanne Fontaine

A Special Thank You to **The Page Foundation, The Siebert Family,**
and **Mr. Richard Asunto** for their generous donations
and support of our mission!

YOUR IMPACT

Because of you, we can continue empowering individuals with IDD to lead fulfilling lives. Thank you for being a vital part of our mission.



STAY CONNECTED

Want to do more? Visit our 'How You Can Help' page to learn more.

arcservices.org/donate/

The Arc of Macomb County in the News!

We're excited to share that The Arc of Macomb County has been featured in the news several times recently! Our efforts to advocate for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), as well as our work on programs like SpArc, are making a significant impact in the community, and the media is taking notice.

To stay up-to-date with all the latest news, articles, interviews, and press coverage about The Arc, we invite you to visit our Media Center page on our website. It's a great place to find everything in one spot!

At The Arc, we truly value our partnerships with local media outlets.

Working together, we can continue to raise awareness and spark conversations that create real change for individuals with disabilities. We're grateful for the support we've received from the media and the community in spreading the word about the important work we do.

We encourage everyone to follow us on our social media channels to keep up with news, events, and updates. Join us in amplifying the voices of those with disabilities—together, we can make a lasting difference!



MEDIA CENTER



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The Arc**

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