



Spinal Connection

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Spinal Connection is published quarterly by the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission.

1501 N. University Ave., Suite 470, Little Rock, AR 72207

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From the Director ~ Terra Patrom

ASCC - Growing and Changing

I hope this newsletter finds you all well! Change is always hard but needed in more ways than one. As we look forward to the new year, we at ASCC are growing and changing. We needed to change because we were growing so fast! In the past legislative session, our Legislators very graciously listened and heard testimony to the concerns and needs of our Client Services Program and the frontline staff that serve you. With that, they approved the addition of two (2) new Rehabilitation Counselor positions (better known to you as a "Case Manager") for this fiscal year.

We had to work through some bumps and bruises during the beginning of the year and a lot of paperwork. We recently received approval from the Governor's office to begin the hiring process to fill those positions. As you are reading this, those 2 new Case Managers are completing their training and orientation so they can begin providing you with necessary services and follow-up.

These two new positions will create a shift in county coverage throughout Central Arkansas to the northern borders of the state. Hence, if you have a Case Manager that you have worked with in the past or presently, that person might change effective February 1st when we implement the rezoning of the service areas for the state. Adding these two new Case Managers will allow areas that have a client



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Donations

The Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission accepts tax-deductible donations to support ASCC.

Send your donation to:
AR Spinal Cord Commission
1501 North University Ave.,
Suite 470
Little Rock, AR 72207

Acknowledgments

The ASCC would like to acknowledge donations made to the Commission...

In memory of Theodore Lamb:
• John C. Sloan

In memory of Grover Evans:
• Glenda & John Brownlee
• Shawn & Jim Drake
• Junior League of Little Rock

In honor of ASCC Case Management:
• Walter "Skip" Green

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caseload in excess of 200+ clients (some with as many as 265+ clients on their caseload) to be brought down to a more realistic and manageable number.

Though the goal of our Case Managers is to always focus on you and your needs, getting the caseloads to manageable numbers will allow for a more proactive timeframe versus a reactive timeframe for your service needs. With the growing SCI/D population and the fact that we serve clients on a lifetime basis that meet our criteria, several Case Managers had to become more reactive and spent most of their time "putting out fires." It is better to deal with a match stick versus a bonfire. This is your life, your independence. Any proactive assistance we can provide within our policies and guidelines that will keep you as independent as possible, for as long as possible, is our mission.

We will have additional changes as the new calendar year moves forward as we begin the implementation of our new statewide electronic record keeping system. Yes... we still work from an old paper file system designed in the 1970's. I think it is time we catch up with technology to hopefully allow added timeliness and a more cost-effective means of serving you as a client of ASCC!

I also want to take the time to say 'thank you' to the Legislators, Governor's Office, and staff at DF&A that heard our concerns and voice so we could get to this point. I also sincerely appreciate our staff, and especially the Case Managers that stuck with us during these difficult years. I know many of our Case Managers felt like they were drowning at some point and spent numerous hours and days outside of their normal schedules to ensure client needs were met. It has been a long haul with more changes to come. I am confident these changes will bring the most benefit to our clients.

Please bear with us as we implement rezoning and move forward with these changes in the new year! I truly hope you will see and feel the benefits behind the thought process. I always love to hear your feedback - let us know your thoughts as we move along with GROWING AND CHANGING!



Also, don't forget to visit our ASCC website (ascc.ar.gov) to download the application form for the Van Accessible Decal that went into effect on November 13, 2017. If you do not have access to the internet or a printer, please contact your ASCC Case Manager to obtain a copy of the form. Please note, enforcement of the law will go into effect on January 1, 2019.

New Commissioner Appointment

LeDanté Walker was appointed to the Commission by Governor Asa Hutchinson on October 16, 2017. LeDanté sustained a spinal cord injury in a single car accident in 1997. He was ejected from the back seat of the car causing a fractured neck and an SCI at the C4-C5 levels.



In 2010, LeDanté began working at the Spa Area Independent Living Center (also known as SAILS). He is currently working as an Independent Living Advocate / Targeted Case Manager and assists individuals with resources to ensure successful community living.

LeDanté is also a certified Medicare counselor, homeowner advocate for Garland County Habitat for Humanity, member of the Difference Makers of Hot Springs, and currently sits on the Transportation Advisory Committee for the city of Hot Springs.

LeDanté currently resides in Hot Springs, AR. His work with independent living services and advocacy for individuals with disabilities brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Commission. He continuously strives to reach others by setting an example based on how he lives.

Medically Speaking

Thomas Kiser, MD

Annual Flu & Pneumococcal Vaccinations

There are two vaccinations that are important to you if you have a Spinal Cord injury - the pneumococcal and influenza vaccinations. I recommend anyone with a spinal cord injury get an annual (once a year) influenza vaccination unless you have had some type of severe allergic reaction (shortness of breath and swelling) or suffered from severe neurologic weakness after a previous flu vaccination. Also, if



you live with someone or care for someone who is at high risk of medical problems if they develop an influenza infection, you should be vaccinated to protect them. This includes the family of spinal cord patients, especially children and caregivers.

You should get your vaccination as soon as it is available, preferably by October, but you can get it throughout the flu season (usually October to May). It takes about two weeks for your immune system to build up antibodies against the virus after you get your vaccination, and protection lasts several months to a year.

The pneumococcal vaccine is only needed once when you are injured and then again at age 65, although some experts argue for revaccination every 6-10 years. Pneumococcal vaccination is recommended for all children, for adults who have a condition that places them at increased risk for pneumonia or invasive pneumococcal disease, and for all adults 65 years of age or older.

Pneumococcal infections, including pneumonia and invasive diseases such as bacteremia and meningitis, remain an important source of illness and death in adults, especially older adults and those with certain conditions, including immuno-compromise (e.g., spinal cord injury) and asplenia, if the spleen was removed due to trauma. Two types of pneumococcal vaccines, both shots, are approved for use in the United States: a pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV23; *Pneumovax 23*, *Pnu-Imune*) that includes 23 purified capsular polysaccharide antigens; and a pneumococcal protein-conjugate vaccine (PCV13; *Prevnar 13*) that includes capsular polysaccharide antigens covalently linked to a nontoxic protein. The *Pneumovax* has been used in adults for decades in the United States but is not recommended for infants or toddlers under age two because it is poorly immunogenic in this age group. A 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, *Prevnar* is recommended for infants and children and in selected high-risk adults.

The *Pneumovax* is recommended for all adults 65 years of age or older and in people 19 to 64 years old who have a condition that increases the risk of pneumococcal disease (e.g., SCI). The *Prevnar* followed eight weeks later by the *Pneumovax* is recommended for use in people age 19 or older without a spleen or with an immuno-compromising condition (e.g., SCI, HIV infection, cancer). If such adults have already received *Pneumovax*, at least one year should transpire before they are given the *Prevnar*. Both types may be administered concurrently with other vaccines, such as the influenza

Our sincere condolences to the friends and family of...

Nanette Minor 03/13/2013
Joan Gunter 01/06/2014
Earl L. Johnson 01/04/2016
Lindell Rowan Slayton 03/16/2016
John Gage 05/19/2016
Jessie Gene Robinson 01/09/2017
Evelyn E. Tate 03/08/2017
Dennis Herrington 06/24/2017
Sonya Woodley 08/23/2017
Stella Rounsaville 09/15/2017
Clifton Cochran 10/25/2017
Bradley Morris 10/25/2017
Jason Sizemore 10/30/2017
Kari N. Christian 11/01/2017
Charles Lee Colbert 11/11/2017
Natalya L. Dixon 11/19/2017
Irwin L. Towell 11/20/2017
Phillip Lloyd Hays 11/27/2017
Grover M. Evans 12/03/2017

vaccine. However, *Pneumovax* and *Prevnar* should be administered at different times as outlined above; the schedule depends on which formulation was given first. Some experts continue to recommend administration of *Pneumovax* every six to seven years for asplenic individuals. Revaccination with *Prevnar* is not recommended.

2018 Tax Season

As we begin the new year, W-2 (Wage & Tax Statements) will begin arriving in the mail or become available online. As such, it is important to think about WHEN to file your tax returns. With the security breach of a major credit bureau in 2017, it becomes even more important to take



steps to prevent identity theft related tax fraud.

The simplest step you can take is to file your return as early as possible.

Filing early will preempt any attempt by identity thieves to fraudulently file your tax return. If you suspect tax fraud, call the IRS Tax Fraud Hotline at 1-800-829-0433. If you suspect any other kind of fraud via phone, email, postal mail, etc., contact the US Federal Government Information Line at 1-844-USA-GOV1 (1-844-872-4681). You will be directed to the most relevant agency based on the type of fraud you wish to report.

Spina Bifida Tax Credit

We want to remind parents of children with Spina Bifida that they may qualify for a \$500 tax credit. When you complete your state tax return, be sure to include **Form AR1000RC5: CERTIFICATE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.**

Have a medical question?

Experiencing issues and need immediate answers?

**TRIUMPH
Help Line**

FREE

24 / 7 Access

1-855-767-6983

**Help & Information
for Arkansans with
Spinal Cord Injury &
Healthcare Providers**



You can find the form on the AR Department of Finance & Administration Income Tax Forms page under the title "**AR1000RC5** Individuals With Developmental Disabilities Certificate."

DFA Tax Forms: [Click here](#) or type goo.gl/6vrCVw in your web browser.

You must have a physician complete the form before submitting it. With the form, the head of household will be eligible for a \$500 tax credit for the 2017 tax year. The form must be attached to your individual income tax return the first time this credit is taken. It is good for five (5) years from the date the original tax credit is filed. At the end of five (5) years you must have a new certificate completed and attached to your individual income tax return. The credit is in addition to your regular dependent tax credit.

If you have questions, contact:

AR Department of Finance and Administration
Individual Income Tax Section
501-682-1100



Client Feedback



If you are a client of the Commission and would like to make a suggestion or provide us with positive or constructive feedback, we would be glad to hear your thoughts!

You may choose to remain anonymous or identify yourself in order to be contacted regarding your feedback. Please visit the link below to take the short questionnaire.

Client Feedback Form: goo.gl/dY9GsX

ASCC Facebook Page

Like or follow the Spinal Cord Commission's Facebook Page to receive the latest news and announcements in your Facebook News Feed. We will post information on upcoming conferences, legislative changes, scholarship opportunities, support group meeting info (where available), links to the latest newsletter, and other SCI/D related information.



Visit facebook.com/arspinalcord or scan this QR code with a smartphone.

SCI/D Financial Scholarships for Education

Arkansas Spinal Cord Foundation announces scholarship opportunities to help pursue your education

Arkansas Spinal Cord Foundation (ASCF) announces the Sandra Turner Memorial Scholarships for **2018-2019** with a "CALL FOR APPLICATIONS." We encourage those wanting to further their education to apply. ASCF's mission is to improve the quality of life for persons with spinal cord injuries and those who live with challenges associated with spinal cord diseases such as Spina Bifida, Multiple Sclerosis, ALS, and Spinal Spondylosis. A large part of fulfilling our mission is to help individuals like you to achieve their education goals.

Applications for the Fall semester are due by February 15. Applications for the Spring semester are due by September 15. We encourage any individual with a spinal cord disability who is enrolled or planning to enroll in college or vocational/technical school to take this opportunity to apply for assistance.

Scholarship application and instructions for completion may be downloaded from the ASCF's website at www.spinalcord.ar.gov.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be an Arkansas resident.
- Must have a medically documented spinal cord disability and be a client of ASCF.
- Prior acceptance to a college, university, or vocational/technical training program. This will include undergraduate or master's level programs.
- Must complete and submit the ASCF Sandra Turner Memorial Scholarship application and all required documents.

All applications will be reviewed by ASCF's Scholarship Selection Committee.

For additional information or questions contact Mandy Carmack by calling (501) 247-1977 or sending an e-mail to mandy@asilr.com.

Deadline for applications is on or before February 15 (for the Fall semester) and on or before September 15 (for the Spring semester).





Spinal Connection (Winter 2018)
Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission
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Little Rock, AR 72207

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- Change name or address on address label
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- Please remove me from your mailing list

ASCC Mini-Conference Held in Springdale, AR

A single-day conference was held in Springdale for clients living in the Northwest corner of Arkansas. The conference was held on November 15, 2017 and was free to clients, family members, and caretakers. Topics included: Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES) Powered Systems, Medical Marijuana In Arkansas, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services – A Division of Arkansas Department of Career Education, and Inclusion in Community Activities: Options and Resources. We plan to hold additional mini-conferences in other areas of the state in odd-numbered years. This year, 2018, we will be holding our large conference in Central Arkansas. Look for more information in the next Spinal Connection newsletter!



The Jones Center, Springdale