

AT Key Newsletter
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IPAT Reorganizes!!

Judie Lee, IPAT Director

After careful consideration and much discussion, the IPAT Consumer Advisory Committee recommended that the implementing agency for IPAT be the North Dakota Association for the Disabled (NDAD). Carol Olson, Executive Director, Department of Human Services, Governor John Hoeven and Ron Gibbens, President of NDAD, approved this recommendation. Governor Hoeven designated NDAD the "implementing agency" for the State AT program and effective July 1, 2005, IPAT officially became a part of NDAD.

NDAD is a non-profit organization founded by a group of consumers thirty years ago to assist individuals with disabilities who seemed to "fall through the cracks" and who were not eligible for financial assistance from most agencies. NDAD has helped many individuals obtain AT devices and services. They have also supported various statewide AT efforts to increase people's access to AT devices and services, such as the IPAT Equipment Loan Library. Over the years, these collaborative efforts between NDAD and IPAT have resulted in a close working relationship which will continue to positively impact AT activities.

NDAD and the Department of Human Services worked closely together to make sure the IPAT transition was smooth. NDAD hired all of the IPAT personnel to ensure there would be no disruption of services to the citizens of our State. Services to individuals remain the same. IPAT will continue to do business under the IPAT name with the same IPAT logo. The only notable change for consumers is some different phone numbers and contact information; the new numbers are listed within this newsletter.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) will continue to act as the "lead agency" and will control and administer the funds made available through the grant awarded to the State. NDAD, as the "implementing agency" and IPAT will prepare the statewide AT plan and carry out the State AT activities described within the plan. As a consumer based organization, NDAD will consistently seek meaningful participation by individuals with disabilities and their family members with respect to activities carried out through by IPAT.

NDAD and IPAT are looking forward to this unique opportunity to continue to build and expand AT services within North Dakota.

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CONSUMER CONNECTION

“Bag of Sound” Keeps Instructor in the Classroom

Kathleen J. Obritsch, Distance Video Coordinator, Dickinson State University & Southwest Pipeline of Information for Communities and Education (SPICE)

Teaching in any classroom depends on two basic senses, those of sight and hearing. Interactive videoconferencing uses televisions and microphones to connect a teacher to students at a distance. Technology is the key to creating virtual classrooms. However, what happens if one of the basic senses is altered or missing? Well, of course, find a technically sensible solution. Because of her love for teaching, that is just what this hearing-impaired instructor did.

The IPAT representative located a new device called a “Bag of Sound.” The instructor simply carries the sound amplifier into the classroom where students use wireless microphones to speak to the instructor who is then able to adjust the sound level. Gayle Hofland, a Dickinson State University Assistant Professor of Nursing, immediately responded, “Wow, this really works! But how will it work in the high-tech television classroom?”

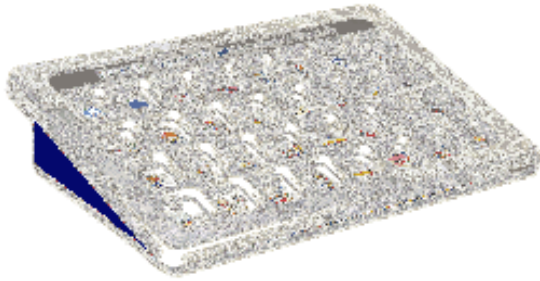
A call to the [DSU] IVN site coordinator, a quick consult with the NDIVN technical staff, and a technical solution was at hand. Simply attach a cable from the hearing amplification device to the videoconferencing computer that controls video and audio transmissions. Immediately the instructor is able to adjust the distance classroom sound to her level of hearing. This instructor’s common sense approach to using technology is keeping her in the classroom and her students interactively connected.

AT FUNDING

AT Assessment Funding

Are you looking for a funding source to pay for an assistive technology (AT) assessment? The North Dakota Association for the Disabled (NDAD) may be the answer you are looking for. NDAD will pay for an AT assessment provided by the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) for anyone living in North Dakota, if they qualify financially for NDAD services **and** they do not qualify for an assessment under other funding sources, such as, education, vocational rehabilitation, Medicaid, and/or insurance. To date, a number of individuals have received an AT assessment through IPAT with financial help from NDAD.

To obtain a NDAD funding application, call 1-800-532-6323 or download the application from their website: <http://www.ndad.org/clientforms.asp> . Please note on the NDAD funding application that you are requesting an AT assessment from IPAT. If you are not sure that you need an AT assessment and would like to discuss it with one of the IPAT AT Coordinators, please call 1-800-265-4728 and you will be transferred to the Coordinator in your area.



AMDi Tech/Speak with Environmental Controls:
Communicate and Control Your Environment with One Device!

The Tech/Speak with Environmental Controls (Tech/Speak with EC) from Advanced Multimedia Devices, Inc. (AMDi) is a 32 location, 6 level augmentative communication device with built in environmental controls! Depending on the model, the Tech/Speak with EC can have up to 4.5 seconds of record time for each message on all 6 levels, totaling 192 messages in all. Each Tech/Speak with EC comes with Tech/Overlay Designer to create customized, interchangeable overlays.

Every Tech/Speak with EC also has locations on each of the 6 levels that allow the user to control (on/off) up to 4 appliances such as a light, fan, blender, and radio—24 appliances in all. Each device comes with four radio frequency controlled receiver modules that connect to the appliances or lights; additional modules can be purchased separately. In the future, they will be releasing a similar model that can control a TV!

The Tech/Speak with EC can also be purchased with the optional 8 built-in input jacks, allowing for an alternative method of accessing up to 8 messages per level with external switches.

The Tech/Speak with EC is available for rent or purchase through AMDi on their website (<http://www.amdi.net/ecuts.htm>) or via toll free number: 1-888-353-2634. The IPAT Technology Access Center also has this device available for demonstration purposes, 1-800-895-4728.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The IPAT Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) has expanded its membership to include four new members; each represents a specific agency supporting persons with disabilities in ND. This expansion is a direct result of requirements found in the new AT Act of 2004. The first two members are:

Bobbi Franks

Bobbi is one of IPAT's 4 newest CAC members. She is a married mother of 2 very busy boys and has been a T-12 paraplegic for 12 years, with numerous friends and family members with a variety of disabilities. She brings in 5 years of experience in the independent living field, and is currently an Information

Specialist at Freedom Resource Center in Fargo. Her favorite pastime is riding horses; she has a passion for the work being done at Freedom and IPAT, and feels that everyone, no matter what type of impairment, needs to be afforded the right to be as independent as possible.

Cornelius P. Grant

Cornelius is a graduate of Turtle Mountain Community High School in Belcourt, where both he and his wife were born and raised. He graduated from UND-Ellendale, with a BA in Industrial Arts Education, and is currently serving as the program administrator for North Dakota's AmeriCorps Disability Inclusion effort on behalf of the North Dakota Workforce Development Division, North Dakota Department of Commerce.