

Statewide Assistive Technology Plan

Judie Lee, IPAT Director

IPAT submitted North Dakota's federal three-year Statewide Assistive Technology Plan in September. This plan describes how IPAT will provide statewide AT services and meet the requirements of the new AT Act legislation. The plan was developed with assistance from the IPAT Consumer Advisory Committee, input from public meetings, and in response to data collected by IPAT. The new AT law requires that funds for the State AT programs go to required activities referred to as state level activities and state leadership activities. The following is a brief description of these activities.

State Level Activities

State Financing Activities

IPAT will implement a statewide alternative financial loan program (AFLP). This activity makes financial loans available for assistive technology devices and services to all eligible state residents. Loans are available from \$500-\$50,000. The partners in this activity are Protection and Advocacy and the North Dakota Association for the Disabled.

Device Reutilization Program

IPAT will administer the AT Swap & Shop, a program that allows individuals to buy, sell, swap, or give away used AT equipment through a statewide equipment database. Individuals can sell, trade, donate, or purchase equipment by calling a toll-free number (voice/TTY), or connect with IPAT through its accessible website. IPAT is not directly involved in the negotiations between seller and buyer and will list all devices that are submitted following the AT Swap & Shop procedures.

Device Loan Program

IPAT will operate a statewide short-term AT equipment loan program known as the IPAT Equipment Loan Library (ELL). The ELL will be available to state residents of all ages with disabilities and/or those family members and professionals that work with them. The ELL will loan a wide range of devices (i.e. augmentative communication, telecommunication, computer access, educational accommodations, vision aids, and environmental control). A small fee will be charged for equipment borrowed from the ELL. IPAT will use a sliding fee schedule for the rental of ELL equipment for individuals with disabilities not covered by an agency.

Device Demonstration Program

IPAT will operate a comprehensive device demonstration center in Fargo and a satellite demonstration site at the Bismarck IPAT office. The demonstration

centers will provide a wide range of devices (i.e. augmentative communication, telecommunication, computer access, environmental control, educational accommodations, vision aids, hearing products and devices for daily living) for on-site exploration by state residents of all ages with disabilities and/or those family members and professionals that work with them. These demonstration programs will provide opportunities for people to explore a number of AT devices, either on their own, or using the expertise of IPAT staff.

State Leadership Activities

Training, Technical Assistance Activities, & Transition

IPAT will engage in a number of training activities, including the development and updating of training modules covering a range of specific topics related to assistive technology (AT). IPAT staff will deliver AT training upon request to individuals with disabilities, their family members and the professionals that support them. There is a fee schedule for the provision of AT training, including a sliding fee schedule for individuals not covered by an agency. IPAT will also consider special contracts to provide training based on the staff's expertise and availability.

IPAT will engage in a number of technical assistance (TA) activities. These activities may include identifying AT device options for individuals, providing implementation strategies for agencies and troubleshooting specific AT equipment. IPAT staff will respond to TA requests via phone, on-line, through the mail, videoconference or person-to-person.

IPAT will take part in trainings and TA for transition. This includes transition for students with disabilities who are exiting high school for employment or post-secondary schooling and transition for those entering or maintaining community living.

Public Awareness Activities

IPAT will increase awareness about the benefits, range, funding options, and policies governing assistive technology (AT) devices and services. This will be done through mailings, Internet postings, exhibits, presentations, and trainings. Activities will include:

- Information and Referral – IPAT will make available to all residents of North Dakota a toll-free (voice/TTY) AT information and referral line.
- Newsletter – IPAT's newsletter, the AT KEY, will be published bi-monthly. It will be made available online at IPAT's accessible website or mailed in hard copy with alternative formats available upon request.
- Website – IPAT's accessible website will include information on IPAT activities, products, AT laws and regulations, and national AT resources and links. The website will provide a link to contact IPAT staff directly.
- Publications – IPAT will develop and disseminate AT publications covering a wide range of topics for individuals with disabilities, their family

members, professionals in the field of disability and other interested parties.

- Statewide AT Conference – IPAT will help plan and participate in the, 3rd annual, statewide, Assistive Technology Expo, held in Fargo, North Dakota.

Coordination and Collaboration

IPAT will engage in coordination and collaboration activities with public and private entities through participation as members of organizations and task forces to address emerging, new or changing AT policies and procedures. These organizations and task forces are sponsored by state agencies, hospitals, community groups and disability networks throughout the state.

The IPAT staff looks forward to this opportunity to continue to build and expand AT services within North Dakota.

Assistive Technology Tidbits

From: www.microsoft.com

Speech recognition or voice recognition programs, allow people to give commands and enter data using their voices rather than a mouse or keyboard. Voice recognition systems use a microphone attached to the computer, which can be used to create text documents such as letters or e-mail messages, browse the Internet, and navigate among applications and menus by voice.

Text-to-Speech (TTS) or speech synthesizers receive information going to the screen in the form of letters, numbers, and punctuation marks, and then “speak” it out loud in a computerized voice. Using speech synthesizers allows computer users who are blind or who have learning difficulties to hear what they are typing and also provide a spoken voice for individuals who can not communicate orally, but can communicate their thoughts through typing

CONSUMER CONNECTION



IPAT Consumer Advisory Committee – September 2005

The IPAT program continues to recognize that the advice and counsel of persons with disabilities and their family members provides a vital link to meeting the AT needs of people in North Dakota, and extends a sincere thank you to IPAT's Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) for providing that link. The current CAC has 18 members; fourteen individuals who have a disability and use AT or have a family member that does, and 4 members who have been appointed to represent their respective agencies as required by the amended Assistive Technology Act.

The CAC strives for a membership to represent all geographical regions of the state, a variety of conditions leading to disability, and a diverse age range. Meetings are held every other month via conference call, with 2 face-to-face meetings per year. Committee members are reimbursed for travel expenses incurred while attending CAC meetings. If you or someone you know are interested in becoming a member of the CAC, please call the IPAT office for an application form, 1-800-265-IPAT(4728).

FUNDING NEWS

Hearing Aid Coverage Available for Active Duty Family Members

From: <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/news/2005/news0523.cfm>

As of September 1, 2005, TRICARE began offering a hearing aid benefit, to include supplies and services, for active duty family members (ADFM) who meet specific hearing loss requirements. Previously, TRICARE offered this benefit only to beneficiaries who were in the Program for Persons with Disabilities.

Separate criteria for children and adults were established with the assistance of service physicians and audiologists from both the Department of Defense and Veteran Affairs. "The criteria for an adult ADFM to qualify for hearing aids and services are:

- 40 decibel (dB) hearing loss (HL) or greater in one or both ears when tested at one of the following frequencies; 500, 1,000, 1,500, 2,000, 3,000 or 4,000Hz; or
- 26dB HL or greater in one or both ears at any three or more of those frequencies (mentioned previously); or
- A speech recognition score less than 94 percent

The criterion for children of active duty service members to qualify for hearing aids and services is:

- 26dB HL or greater hearing threshold level in one or both ears when tested in one of the following frequency ranges; 500, 1,000, 2,000, 3,000 or 4,000Hz

Eligible TRICARE beneficiaries will receive all medically necessary and appropriate services and supplies, including hearing examinations administered by authorized providers that are required in connection with this benefit.

Eligible beneficiaries who suspect they or a family member may have a hearing loss should schedule an appointment with their primary care manager or medical provider for an examination. Beneficiaries will then be referred to an audiologist for any necessary tests."

For more information, beneficiaries may visit the TRICARE Web site at www.tricare.osd.mil or call the TRICARE Regional Office (TRO) North (1-877-874-2273), TRO South (1-800-444-5445), or TRO West (1-888-874-9378). Overseas beneficiaries may call 1-888-777-8343.

Equipment Spotlight



Wk610 Slim Mini USB Keyboard

Are you limited to using only one hand? Is it difficult for you to use a standard keyboard? The Wk610 Slim Mini keyboard may provide a solution. Flat surface keyboards like the Slim Mini, are the latest trend in keyboard design. The main advantage of such keyboards is their ergonomic benefit - your fingers do not have to travel as far during typing and their small size keeps the mouse closer.

Features:

The Slim Mini is fully compatible with Windows 98/98SE/ME/2000/XP; measures 11.4"L x 5.3"W x .80"H; has the functionality of a 101/102 keyboard, and is available in PS/2 or USB.

The Wk610 Slim Mini keyboard can be purchased for around \$25 on websites such as <http://www.directron.com/wk610usbhub.html> or http://www.ergonomickeyboard.biz/product1.aspx?Product_ID=116. If you would like to try the Slim Mini keyboard before purchasing, please contact the IPAT Loan Library at 1-800-895-4728 or email ipatloan@integra.net.

For Your Information

Introducing New CAC Members

As a direct result of requirements found in the new AT Act of 2004, IPAT is pleased to announce two more representatives that have been appointed to the IPAT Consumer Advisory Committee by their respective agencies:

Corinne Hofmann

Corrine graduated from NDSU, with Bachelor degrees in Psychology and Social Studies and a Masters degree in Counseling. Prior to attending graduate school, she taught high school and junior high and worked as a housing administrator in higher education, after which she attended law school at Brigham Young University. Corinne is currently Director of Policy and Operations at ND Protection & Advocacy, a state agency whose purpose is to advocate for, and protect the rights of people with disabilities.

Teresa Monicken

Teresa graduated from Minot State University with a Masters degree in Audiology and has practiced in this field in medical, clinical, and school settings

for 20 years, much of it out of state, but, when she returned to North Dakota, she worked for MSU Communication Disorders and Lutheran Social Services. Teresa is currently Regional Coordinator for Department of Public Instruction-Special Education, where she holds the Dispute Resolution, Speech-Language Pathology/Audiology and Assistive Technology portfolios.