

# People with Disabilities

It is estimated that 19.4% of the U.S. population has some type of disability.<sup>1</sup> With medical advances helping more people survive longer with disabilities than in the past, there is a greater need for communities to provide a network of supports. A top priority among many people with disabilities, and those who help care for them, continue to be improving community-based services, including access to information about services, affordable housing, after-school programs, respite care, employment support, and accessible transportation, to facilitate their inclusion in all activities of daily life.

Note: This chapter will deal primarily with issues related to developmental and physical disabilities. For more information on mental illness, please see *Goal 4: Health Care to Be as Physically and Mentally Fit as Possible*. For more information about *Older Adults or Veterans*, please see these sections under *Specific Populations*.

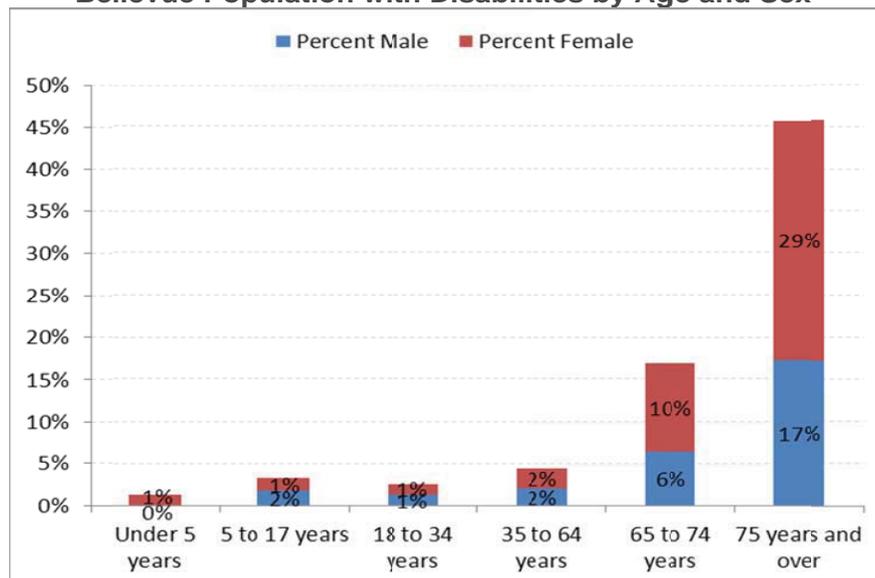
## What's Working?

- AtWork, a non-profit agency that provides

employment services for people with disabilities, participates in a group called the Collaborative with five other organizations that support people with disabilities in finding jobs. The Collaborative is working to place 12 people using their combined expertise and some Federal Recovery Act Funds secured through Washington State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. AtWork! is also in a marketing consortium called CONNECT and are working with 13 other nonprofits to create new jobs through their social enterprises. These are examples of effective collaboration that has been strengthened due to reductions in funding.

- Kindering Center, a neuro-developmental center for children birth to five in Bellevue, provides a support group, CHERISH, for foster parents and kinship caregivers. The groups provide prevention, intervention and family support to improve the emotional attachment between the caregivers and young children who often have experienced trauma or abuse in the past.
- Crisis Clinic has a Disability Information and Assistance Program in King County

**Bellevue Population with Disabilities by Age and Sex**



Source: 2008-2010 American Community Survey

for people with disabilities, their caregivers or family members. A Disability Specialist is able to provide an enhanced level of assistance to people with disabilities to help them connect to service providers. The Specialist can also help with advocacy for those having problems accessing services, and some short term follow-up.

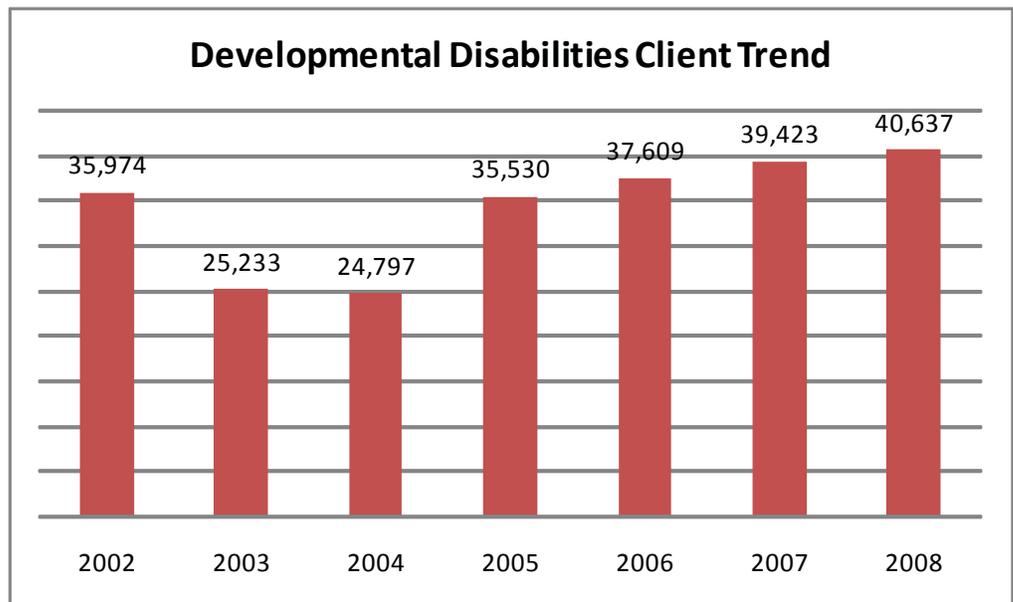
## Prevalence Adults

- According to the 2008-2010 ACS estimates, about 36 million people in the U.S. have some type of long-lasting condition or disability. This represented 12% of the population aged five and older.<sup>2</sup>
- Approximately 7% of Bellevue's population 5 years and older has a disability. More specifically, approximately 4,300 residents reported having at least one disability. Among the different disabilities reported, 17% were hearing; 6%, vision; 16%, cognitive; 27% ambulatory; 12% self-care; and 21% independent living.<sup>3</sup>
- Developmental disabilities are severe physical and/or mental impairments that occur before adulthood, are permanent and limit an individual's ability to function. Washington State's current definition includes epilepsy, autism, cerebral palsy and mental retardation. The prevalence rate of developmental disabilities, as defined in federal law, has been estimated to be 11.3 people per thousand (1.13%) of the non-institutionalized U.S. population. Based on this rate, the estimate of King County residents who

have development disabilities is 21,108. The estimate is likely lower than the actual number due to the increase in the prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorders during the past ten years.<sup>4</sup>

## Service Trends People with Developmental Disabilities

- The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Division of Developmental Disabilities' (DDD) most recent client participation report indicates that there were 40,637 persons in the State who were enrolled in their services at the end of September 2008, about 5% more than the 39,423 enrolled in 2007.<sup>5</sup>



Source: Washington State DSHS Client Participation Report

- Enrollment has also increased over the last few years for services offered by the King County Division of Developmental Disabilities (KCDDD). Since 1980, the KCDDD client caseload has increased by about 6% per year; between 2004 and 2005, there was a 10% increase. KCDDD forecasts a continued annual increase in caseloads, based on Washington State population estimates and a national trend in which the number of babies born with developmental delays and special health care needs is increasing. This increase is partly due to

medical advances that enable infants who might not have survived several years ago to live. Another factor is longer life expectancies for persons with developmental disabilities.<sup>6</sup>

- As of December 2009, there were 10,511 people with developmental disabilities enrolled in the State program in King County.<sup>7</sup>

<b>Individuals Enrolled in DSHS/DDD, Region 4 as of December 31, 2009, by Age Group</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>No. of Individuals Enrolled in DSHS/DDD, Region 4</b>	<b>Percent</b>
0-2	1,898	18.1
3-5	1,663	15.8
6-9	1,024	9.7
10-13	550	5.2
14-17	595	5.7
18-20	485	4.6
21-61	3,998	38.0
62-80	288	2.7
80+	10	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,511</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Source: KCDDD 2010-2013 Plan for DD Services CMIS</b>		

waivers - Basic, Basic Plus, Core, and Community Protection – were renewed effective April 1, 2007. The newest waiver, the Children’s Intensive In-home Behavioral Support (CIIBS) waiver, was effective May 1, 2009. Each of the five waivers provides an array of services tailored to the specific populations they serve. However, the capacity of the waiver program is limited based upon State funding. As a result, there are many more clients who are eligible and want to participate in the waiver programs than there are available slots. As of August 2009, there were 1,576 DSHS/DDD clients in Washington State who were eligible and waiting for a space in one of the waiver plans. In King County (Region 4), as the chart below shows, only 7.1% of clients ages 0-20 are on a waiver plan, and 53.2% of clients age 21 or older are on a plan.<sup>9</sup>

- Services for clients who have waivers include Adult Residential Care, Emergency Assistance, Employment Services, Personal Care, Respite Care and a long list of other opportunities. Services for clients without waivers include some of the same pro-

- In 2010, 454 adults ages 18 and older living in East King County were enrolled in DSHS/DDD. Of these, 353 were Bellevue residents.<sup>8</sup>

### Support Services With and Without Waiver Plans

- The State DDD replaced its Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Community Alternatives Program (CAP) Waiver with five waivers. Waivers are agreements between the State and the Federal agency responsible for Medicaid. The State receives Federal matching funds for services provided under the waiver plan. Four

<b>DSHS/DDD, Region 4 Clients by Age Group and Waiver Status as of May 4, 2010</b>	
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>No. of DSHS/DDD Region 4 Clients</b>
Clients ages 0-20 on a waiver plan	445
Clients ages 0-20 not on a waiver plan	5,808
<b>Total Clients ages 0-20</b>	<b>6,253</b>
Percent Clients ages 0-20 on a waiver plan	7.1%
Clients ages 21+ on a waiver plan	2,393
Clients ages 21+ not on a waiver plan	2,104
<b>Total Clients ages 21+</b>	<b>4,497</b>
Percent Clients ages 21+ on a waiver plan	53.2%
<b>Source: KCDDD 2010-2013 Plan for DD Services Data from State CMIS</b>	

grams, such as Respite and Employment Services, but access depends on eligibility and funding availability.

## Residential Habilitation Centers (RHC)

- Since the 1960s, there has been a decrease in the number of people with all disabilities living in institutions and an increase in the number living in the community. The civil rights movement was a motivator for people with disabilities to seek jobs, housing and activities in their own communities instead of institutions. The Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law in 1990, eliminating discrimination in housing, employment, transportation, and public accommodation. More recently, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Olmstead v. L.C.* that states must place people with disabilities in community settings when appropriate.<sup>10</sup>
- Statewide, the number of persons with developmental disabilities living in residential habilitation centers (RHCs) and nursing homes, which are facilities which provide intensive nursing care and skill development for those who are severely disabled, has decreased dramatically. As of January 2011, there were fewer than 900 individuals in one of these 5 facilities in the State, compared to 4,145 at their peak in 1967. By the end of 2011, one of these RHCs, Frances Haddon Morgan Center in Bremer-ton, will be closed and Rainier School in Buckley will be closed by 2014. The residents of these facilities will be given the choice of either moving to another RHC or to a community based residence. The average annual cost per client living in RHCs is \$172,000 compared to \$43,000 per client annually to receive personal and community support services in the family's home or community residential facilities.<sup>11</sup>

## Residential Services

- In Washington State, the majority of people with developmental disabilities (97%) live in the community, most with their families. The remaining 3% either lives in their own homes receiving non-facility supported living services or in licensed

group care, such as adult family, boarding, or nursing homes. For those who can't live independently, supported living services offer instruction and support to persons who live in their own homes in the community. Supports may vary from a few hours per month up to 24 hours per day of one-to-one support. Clients pay for their own rent, food and other personal expenses.<sup>12</sup> Adult family homes (licensed facilities for six residents or more) and boarding homes (licensed facilities for seven or more residents) are available as an intermediate level of care. Nursing homes support people who need the assistance of 24-hour nursing staff. In 2011, there were 134 adult family homes, 11 boarding homes and 2 nursing facilities licensed by the State in Bellevue.<sup>13</sup> Some of these facilities also serve frail elderly people and individuals with other disabilities, such as those related to head injuries, strokes or chronic diseases.

- In 2010, there were 5,097 adults in King County who are identified as clients of the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). 1,290 of these clients live in the City of Seattle with 3,807 living outside of the city. 1,542 clients who live outside of the City of Seattle receive residential services in a variety of settings such as Supported Living, Group Homes, Adult Family Homes and State Operated Living Alternatives; 2,265 clients who live outside the City of Seattle do not receive residential services; this could be because they are living with their parents or relatives and/or cannot afford to live on their own. "Residential services" are comprehensive housing support services provided in community based housing by agencies that contract with the Washington State DSHS/DDD.<sup>14</sup>

## Adults with Developmental Disabilities Living with Aging Parents

- Many providers believe there is a crisis emerging regarding the increased support

needs of aging people with developmental disabilities who live at home with older adult parents. As of December 31, 2009, 572 individuals enrolled in DSHS/DDD Region 4 were age 35 and above and living in their parent's home. This represents a 36% increase compared to 2007. Families who are caring for this population are aging, and need assistance with transition planning, including legal, financial and residential information.<sup>15</sup>

- The Arc of King County Senior Family Caregiver Program provides services to older adult caregivers, usually parents, of adults with developmental disabilities. In some cases, the adults with disabilities have always lived at home, and are not connected with any services. The Arc staff report that transition services, including finding housing, in-home caregivers, sheltered employment and legal help to set up guardianships and trusts, are frequently requested. Gaps include low-cost legal services for caregivers who are not low-income, but still cannot afford the full cost of attorney fees, and housing with support services.<sup>16</sup>
- AtWork! staff report that some of their clients have received services from this agency from several years to over 30 years. As they age, many are developing additional disabling conditions and seeing increased impact from their disabilities. Individuals with Down's Syndrome are living longer and developing early onset dementia. This results in decreased independence and increased reliance on staff and other supports to maintain employment and community living. Specialized supports to assist people with Down's Syndrome who develop dementia are being researched. Many older adults with disabilities are living with elderly parents who are struggling to maintain their own level of independence and continue to care for their adult child with disabilities. There is a growing need for supportive housing for both the individual with disabilities and their parents.<sup>17</sup>

## Affordable Housing for Independent Living

- Finding affordable housing in the community is challenging for many people, but those with disabilities who seek an independent living arrangement, such as an apartment, have additional barriers. In 2011, *Out of Reach*, an annual report of the cost of rental housing affordability in the U.S., stated that there are roughly 8 million individuals receiving federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) because they are elderly, blind or disabled and have few economic resources. With the maximum federal monthly payment of \$674/month in 2011, an SSI recipient could only afford \$202/month rent (30% of income). SSI is the only source of income for 57% of all recipients nationally. The Fair Market rent for a one bedroom apartment in the Seattle-Bellevue Metropolitan area is \$950/month, more than the entire check.<sup>18</sup> For individuals who rely solely on their SSI check for income, or even who receive supported employment services which pays higher wages, market rate housing is not an option.
- In response to the need for more independent housing units, KCDDD has begun to assist in capital funding of housing that reserves the lowest income units in new affordable, multi-family housing for their clients, and also come with an additional operating subsidy, like Section 8, to ensure that units are affordable. On the Eastside, there are a total of 119 beds in 16 facilities for Special Needs populations funded in part by A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH). Of these, 10 facilities with 83 beds are designated for people with developmental disabilities. These include group homes in Redmond, Issaquah and Bellevue as well as condos in Bellevue and apartments in Bellevue and Redmond.<sup>19</sup>
- Locally, affordable housing for people with all disabilities is in high demand. Approximately 20% of Washington adults with developmental disabilities live in their own apartment or home.<sup>20</sup> Besides these indi-

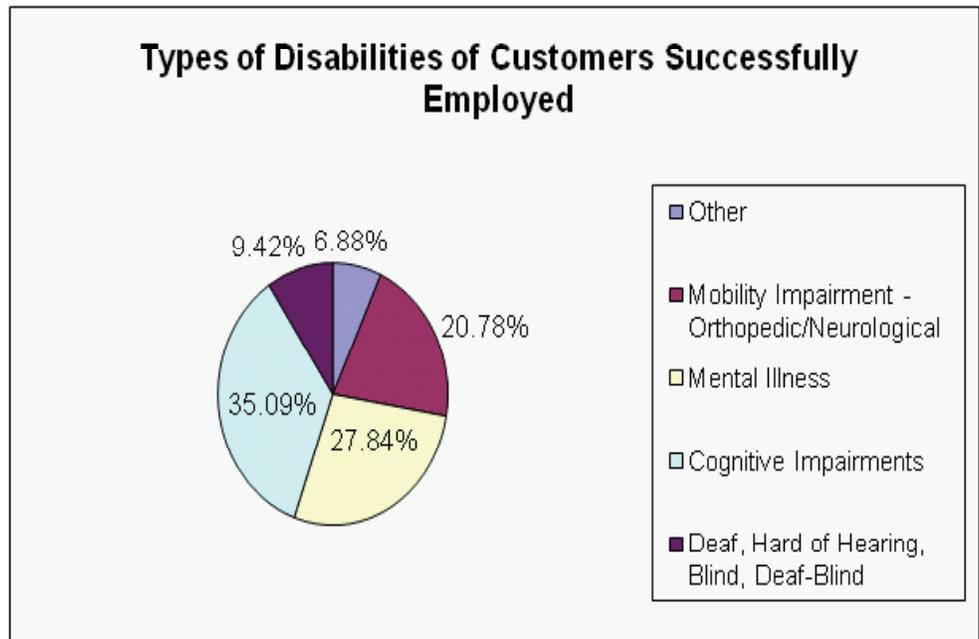
viduals, many other individuals with disabilities who seek low-cost housing. The Alliance of People with disAbilities serves anyone with any disability at any age. A significant percentage (40% +) of people who ask for assistance have multiple disabilities combined with long term complex problems as a result of a lack of resources appropriate to the person's needs and preferences. Housing continues to be the top need followed by legal assistance, transportation, financial problems, health care, Social Security and other issues. The Alliance has a Disabilities Law Project that handles civil rights cases for people with disabilities.<sup>21</sup>

### Employment: Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

- The State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is the primary funder of services for people with disabilities to obtain and keep employment. During State Fiscal Year 2008, 27% of DVR clients had cognitive impairments, 15% had developmental disabilities, 24% had mental illness, 21% had mobility impairments, 8% were deaf, hard of hearing, blind or deaf-blind, and 5% had other disabilities.<sup>22</sup>
- DVR eliminated its waiting list for services effective February 11, 2008. At its peak, the waiting list had over 14,000 individuals. In 2008, DVR received 9,527 applications; as of September, 2010, there were 12,502 new applications. In 2008-2009, DVR reported 2,162 total rehabilitations,

at an average cost of \$5,670 per client.<sup>23</sup>

- Bellevue clients represent 2.4% of the open DVR cases in Washington State as of September 30, 2010. Between October 2009 and September 2010, 306 applications for services were received at the Bellevue DVR office. Bellevue DVR clients had a somewhat lower rate of rehabilitation compared to the State (51.4% vs. 58.2%). Average hourly wages for Bellevue clients when they are placed in jobs are \$12.77, somewhat higher than the State average of \$12.16.<sup>24</sup>
- The high unemployment rate in the State since the recession began in 2007 has made it even more challenging for people with disabilities to find jobs. In a competitive environment, job developers need to be more creative to find work for their clients. The chart below provides the percentage of clients statewide within each disability category who were successfully employed in 2010 through DVR. Compared to two years ago, fewer people with cognitive impairments who are using DVR services are finding employment: in 2008, 41.41% found jobs compared to 35.09% in 2010.<sup>25</sup>



Source: 2009 Data from Washington State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, July 2011.

## Employment: King County DDD Contracts

- KCDDD funds long-term employment services for adults with developmental disabilities (ages 21 and over) who are enrolled with the Division Employment Vendors in the community, such as AtWork! in East King County, to provide ongoing support, job coaching, and job placement services as needed. However, State funding is insufficient to cover the cost of day programs/employment supports for the approximately 4,412 working-age adults enrolled in the KCDDD program.<sup>26</sup>
- AtWork! has found success helping individuals find jobs through Customized Employment. Through volunteering, work trials, and one-on-one job coaching, each person establishes vocational goals and builds a resume that demonstrates skills needed by employers. AtWork! works with companies to customize positions that take advantage of an individual with disabilities' unique talents while meeting a critical business need. Fewer employers have been hiring during the economic downturn and this has greatly impacted the agency's ability to place their clients in jobs. In 2010 only 14 clients were placed in jobs, 40% less than the previous 2 years. Sixteen people lost jobs in 2010, the majority in layoffs.<sup>27</sup>

## Transition Programs for High School Graduates with Developmental Disabilities

- If high school students with disabilities do not have appropriate work experience and transition services while still in high school, they are often unsuccessful in finding employment. In King County, an estimated 641 individuals will be exiting high school transition programs for classes 2012 through 2015. To address this need, KCDDD, in collaboration with a series of partners, provides the *King County School to Work Project*, (S2W) a program that helps young adults ages 20-21 with devel-

opmental disabilities transition from high school to the community, hopefully to a job. This program, in partnership with the Bellevue School District, provides work experience while students are still in school, and has been highly successful.<sup>28</sup>

- AtWork! provides School to Work Transition services to students in local school districts through KCDDD. Working with high school staff, AtWork! Professional Employment Consultants serve the needs

"Jobs are more difficult to secure. Some people in stable jobs were laid off and finding new jobs has been difficult and taken longer. Gaps in services such as residential and respite for families living with adult children with disabilities at home have made it more difficult for families to meet their resource needs."

*Provider Survey, AtWork!*

of individual students through community work experience, job trials, resume development, job search, job placement and on the job coaching while in school and after graduation. AtWork! is the "embedded provider" for the Bellevue School District. Staff reports that schools are asking them to work with younger students to help them and their families understand the system and access services. It is a growing need as families can have a significant disruption when school ends and the student does not have a job or services. In 2011, the program served 10 Bellevue residents.<sup>29</sup> Another organization, Alliance for People with disAbilities, sponsors the Youth Transition Program which focuses on preparing students age 13-24 for work, school or volunteer opportunities. There are currently 504 students in the Lake Washington School District and Bellevue College enrolled in the program.<sup>30</sup>

## Increasing Cultural Diversity

- The 2010-2013 King County Plan for Developmental Disabilities Services identified a need for culturally competent services and outreach for the increasing number

of people from diverse ethnic and cultural communities. According to the 2008 ACS, King County as a whole has about 21 % of its population age 5 and older who are foreign born and 23 % speak a language other than English at home. In King County, 18 % of clients enrolled for DDD services speak a primary language other than English. In East King County, 16 % of the population enrolled in DDD services speaks English as a second language.<sup>31</sup>

- In Bellevue, some providers of services for people with disabilities describe a growing trend of diversity among their participants. Kinderling Center reports an increasing number of diverse families using their services; 48 languages are spoken by their participants, and 50 % are non-Caucasian.<sup>32</sup> KCDDD worked with the Early Intervention (EI) Action Team of the King County Interagency Coordinating Council and established targeted outreach strategies for underserved minority populations: Somali, Vietnamese, and Hispanic. The Arc of King County with its federal funded “The Family Support 360 Program” and SOAR Promotores Program both worked actively with KCDDD to provide this outreach.<sup>33</sup>

### Need for Additional Recreational Opportunities

- The City of Bellevue Department of Parks and Community Services provides specialized recreation opportunities for those living with disabilities as well as inclusion support to participate in generalized recreation. The majority of specialized programs occur at the Highland Community Center and several programs are based at the Tennis Center and the Aquatics Center. The Bellevue Youth Theater, Kelsey Creek Farms, Northwest Center and the Crossroads Community Center experience a high number of participants living with developmental and physical disabilities. In 2010, 425 individuals participated in 125 different programs at the Highland

Community Center, which is one of the highest drop-off and pick-up sites for the Metro Access Van program. A Recreation Inclusion Coordinator is in place to assist with accommodations or adaptations to reinforce successful experiences in general recreation programs. Bellevue has financial agreements with Kirkland and Mercer Island to provide specialized services to residents of these two cities, as well. Highland Center staff report that boys living with autism now make up about 90 % of their after school programs and their summer camps. As a result of more children with autism in their programs, a higher child to staff ratio is needed. Another issue is with funding for respite care decreasing, more

“There is a need for affordable respite care. The State is cutting funding.”  
*Community Conversation, The Arc of King County*

parents of children with disabilities who are seeking other programs so they can get a break come to Highland Center looking for programs. Other specialized recreation programs in Bellevue are offered by Catholic Community Services, Special Olympics of Washington, Special Care and OUTDOORSFORALL.<sup>34</sup>

- Elder and Adult Day Services provide a program for adults 18-45 years old with developmental disabilities. This program provides activities for them, five days/week and also serves as respite for their older parents. During the 2011 State Legislative Session, a new policy was passed that would mandate that people with developmental disabilities must participate in a supported employment program for nine months before receiving approval to participate in a day program. Workgroups around the state were formed to bring a proposal to the 2012 Legislature that would provide specific details for this change. Due to the State budget deficit, these funds are in jeopardy.<sup>35</sup>

## Transportation Gaps

- The demand for transportation for special needs populations, defined as older adults, people with disabilities, youth and people with low-incomes, is growing steadily. The King County Mobility Coalition (KCMC), a group addressing this need, is the outgrowth of a group of King County agencies that came together informally several years ago under the leadership of the Seattle-King County Area Agency on Aging. After new legislation was passed in 2005 by the *Federal Transit Administration, called Safe Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users*, (SAFETEA-LU), this group was formalized as the King County Coordinated Special Needs Transportation Steering Committee. Planning efforts already underway by Sound Transit led to the development of the first local and regional Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plans for King County and the Puget Sound region. KCMC projects include the development of forums and trainings on mobility options, transportation brochures, and long-range planning for improving access.<sup>36</sup>
- King County Metro's Access program fills some of the need for door-to-door service for eligible people with disabilities, but continues to have gaps for many customers. In 2011, the King County Accessible Services Advisory Committee and the King County Transit Advisory Committee were merged and became the Transit Advisory Commission. This body will advise Metro and King County on issues related to transit service in the county, including matters of concern to the elderly and persons with disabilities.<sup>37</sup>

"Tolls on the SR520 Bridge will affect Eastside families who have children with disabilities because many of them need to travel to Children's Hospital in Seattle for their doctor's appointments because there are fewer time slots at the Bellevue site. The tolls will be a hardship."  
*Community Conversation, King County Interagency Coordinating Council*

## Prevalence Children

- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that in the United States, 17% of children have a developmental or behavioral disability such as autism, mental retardation, and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. In addition, many children have delays in language or other areas, which also impact school readiness. However, less than 50% of these children are identified as having a problem before starting school, by which time significant delays may have already occurred and opportunities for treatment have been missed.<sup>38</sup>

## Service Trends Need for More Funding for Early Intervention Services

- All children age birth to three who have disabilities are guaranteed early intervention services under a federal regulation called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C. King County Developmental Disabilities Division is the Local Lead Agency that contracts to provide these services to children and families. As of December 1, 2009, 1,315 children age birth to three are enrolled in King County Early Intervention (EI) Services. This represents 3.8% of the County's estimated birth to three population as calculated using birth data; the rate required by the state is 3.1%. As of December 31, 2009, 129 children aged birth to three living in the Bellevue School District were receiving services. In 2009, of the 668 children who exited EI services countywide, 180 (27%) no longer needed special intervention services.<sup>39</sup> Since 2008 DSHS/DDD funding for this entitlement service has been lidded so even though there has been a substantial increase in the number of children served, there has been no increase in state funding.

- Kindering Center, one of two Eastside providers of early intervention services, reports that within the last five years, their enrollment has doubled. They are currently the largest early intervention provider in the State. At the same time growth is so tremendous, a number of funding sources, such as Medicaid and federal dollars for children with special health care needs, have decreased beginning in 2008.<sup>40</sup>

## More Support and Information for Caregivers

- Early screening of children birth-three for developmental delays is critical to helping families get the services they need as soon as possible. Kindering Center, with a grant from United Way of King County, and SOAR, provided seven free screening events at Crossroads Community Center in Bellevue in 2008. Of the 65 children screened, 10 (15%), needed further evaluations, and five (7%) were advised to have a rescreening. In 2011, KCDDD EI program funded more screenings, using federal Stimulus funding, focusing on minority populations who are often underserved.<sup>41</sup>
- According to the King County Early Intervention Service Plan, families of infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities report the need for more information and assistance from a skilled, knowledgeable person to help them with assessing and coordinating services. To address this need, KCDDD provides multiple ways for families to receive this information, including more opportunities for families whose children are in home and community settings to connect with other parents of children with disabilities.<sup>42</sup>
- As more people with disabilities choose to live at home, respite care for their caregivers is a growing need. More than one in ten U.S. households report that at least one person has served as a family caregiver to an adult or a child. About 2% state that they have cared for a child, and 21% have cared for an adult.<sup>43</sup> Many families do not have public funds to pay for respite care, and cannot afford to pay privately for it.<sup>44</sup> Due to State cuts, fewer hours of respite care are being funded.<sup>45</sup>

## Community Perceptions

- In the 2011 phone/online survey, 24% of respondents indicated that *lack of services for people with disabilities* was a major or moderate problem in the community which was a significant increase compared to past survey results. Roughly 5% of respondents reported in the same survey that *not being able to find programs or affordable care for someone with a disability* was a major/moderate problem in their households, similar to 2005, 2007 and 2009 results.
- In the 2011 consumer survey, *not being able to find enough support as a caregiver for an elderly or disabled person* was rated by 28.2% of respondents as a major or moderate problem in their household compared to 10% in 2007; 15% said that it was a major or moderate problem finding affordable care or programs for a person with a disability which was similar to responses in 2009.
- Providers working with adults with disabilities frequently mentioned unemployment as a growing issue since the current economic downturn. Many of their clients working in supportive work settings have been laid-off. The lack of employment is causing a gap in basic needs for many people with disabilities, some of whom use their earnings to help support their families.
- Information gathered from focus groups of adults with disabilities and their families by KCDDD in fall, 2009 included feedback about the constant coordination and perseverance required to obtain the services needed. Suggestions included forming stronger partnerships in communities to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities and maintaining residential and employment services through waivers and other county programs.

"Limited English residents and people challenged with physical and mental disabilities are more vulnerable and needing more help. There is less of a willingness on the part of businesses and non profits to sponsor and mentor folks with disabilities. People do not feel supported by their organizations to say "Yes" and dedicate time to be inclusive as they once were a few years ago."

*Key Informant Interview, Bellevue Mini-City Hall at Crossroads Shopping Center*

- Staff from Child Care Resources reported an ongoing shortage of both childcare and after-school care for children with special needs. Funding that was once available for staff to help families find special needs care has been discontinued. Many providers are reluctant to take on special needs kids due to concerns about how to accommodate them without hiring extra staff.

## Implications for Action

- Funding for services to people with all types of disabilities continues to lag behind the growth of this population in the State, in King County, and in Bellevue. The result is that there are wait lists for certain services such as housing and family support from KCDDD. And for those programs in which waiting lists are not allowed, agencies are strapped to find additional resources to fill the funding gap. This trend is predicted to continue over the next several years due in part to the higher life expectancy of the aging population with developmental disabilities, the increase of referrals of children with disabilities, and the continued development of medical procedures that now save the lives of those who in the past may not have survived trauma or complications at birth.
- Lack of affordable housing is as much of a problem for people with disabilities as it is for the rest of the population, if not greater. The need is growing faster than housing stock is produced. It is especially critical for people with disabilities to find housing in familiar neighborhood settings, near support systems and convenient

amenities, in order to maintain their independence to whatever extent they are able. Another growing need in the economic downturn is for more paid and volunteer positions for people with developmental disabilities.

- Early intervention services for children birth to three with disabilities are underfunded. Early intervention saves costs later; for some children whose special needs are identified when they are older, critical time is lost. All sectors of the community-medical, business, education, public and non-profit could increase their efforts to promote early screening and make it easier for parents and caregivers to find help.
- Childcare for children with special needs continues to be in very short supply in the community, as are programs appropriate for children age 12 and older. Community-based organizations already providing such services to typically developing children could, with training and support, help to fill this gap.
- Inclusion of people with all disabilities in all communities needs to be a priority. People with disabilities who experience inclusion early in their lives are more likely to live in and actively contribute to their community as adults.

"There are more children on Medicaid with special needs than on private insurance now that many parents have lost their jobs. Private insurance pays for many therapies that the children need are not covered by Medicaid so the child cannot access them."

*Community Conversation, King County Interagency Coordinating Council*

## Endnotes

1. National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research. (n.d.) *Chartbook on disability in the U.S.* Retrieved September 15, 2011, from [http://www.infouse.com/disabilitydata/disability/1\\_1.php](http://www.infouse.com/disabilitydata/disability/1_1.php)
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