

GSIL Connections

A quarterly newsletter for GSIL's Consumers & Employees



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Medicare Open Enrollment Period

Submitted by: Donna Potter, Statewide Director PCSP Services

It is that time of year again, when people with Medicare can review their coverage and make changes. The Medicare Open Enrollment period is from October 15th through December 7th.

It is important that you take the time to review your coverage as several companies may no longer be providing coverage in New Hampshire. It is also important to check your Medicare Part D (prescription coverage) as changes to your medications may impact your prescription coverage. Also, many Part D plans may change the medications they cover.

During the enrollment period you may be contacted by many different insurers. Be sure to consider your options, but do not act impulsively when on a phone call. Don't panic, take the time to consider all your options. Take some notes and do your research. You can always call them back. Make informed choices that will best suit your needs.

If you are not sure what Medicare, Medicare Advantage or Medicare Part D plan is best, you can reach out to the following:

- If you need enrollment assistance, please visit [HealthCare.Gov](https://www.healthcare.gov). You can also reach out to an enrollment assister by calling: (877) 211-6284 or (800) 208-5164.
- If you're a senior, contact www.servicelink.nh.gov or call the Service Link Resource Center at (866) 634-9412 for information about Medicare plans.
- If you need more information about using health insurance and navigating the system, please visit [NH Health Cost](https://www.nhhealthcost.com).
- The New Hampshire Insurance Department can help you with questions or concerns about your coverage. To speak to a member of the Consumer Services Department, call (800) 852-3416, (603) 271- 2261 or email consumerservices@ins.nh.gov.

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- You can visit [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov), create a login name and password, and review your medications, current insurance coverage and shop for a new plan.
- If you have a case manager, you may reach out to them for assistance.

[Medicare Open Enrollment FACT Sheet](#) | CMS

Current Medicare Advantage plans will end Dec. 31, although sign-ups can take place as late as Feb. 28, 2025, for people who are losing an existing plan. Please be aware that there are significant changes to these plans this year.

[Click Here](#) to read NH Insurance Dept.'s alert to consumers regarding significant changes in Medicare Advantage Plans

If you are losing an existing Medicare Advantage Plan and do not make any changes by Dec. 31, 2024, you will be automatically enrolled in original Medicare.

The information above pertains to Medicare, however if you are a dual enrollee, and have both Medicare and Medicaid pay attention to your mail for your Medicaid renewal notice. Watch for a renewal notice in a yellow-colored envelope from the NH Health Department. Check the due date. Not everyone will have the same due date! Follow all instructions and submit requested paperwork by your deadline date to keep your coverage. If you have not yet received your yellow notice and think you should have, please call 1-844-ASK-DHHS (1-844-275-3447).

Community Services

Submitted by: Michelle Cutting, Director of Community Services

Independent Living (IL) Services

As we move into the winter months the IL team continues to work to get out into the community to meet with consumers who are requesting support with access modification projects or support towards other goals related to maintaining quality of life and independence. The team is also working with the Development Department to look for additional grants to support requests for funding support as these requests continue to outpace our current grant availability. In that vein we always welcome your success stories and positive feedback about our programs. You can share your stories and feedback with your coordinator directly who will get it to the appropriate person.

The entire Community Empowerment Department (CED) recently met as a group to share details about the supports that each can provide and discussed how to recognize indicators that could indicate another service area may be able to offer help to reach a goal. Our goal as a team is to be able to support consumers effectively and efficiently by helping them navigate through the varied services that GSIL can offer depending on their unique needs.

Work Incentives Planning & Assistance (WIPA)

There has been a significant change related to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) living arrangements that went into effect on September 30th 2024. These changes were made with the intent to reduce the burden on SSI claimants and recipients. Some of the changes are to in kind support for food calculation, the rental subsidy as well as expanding the definition of public assistance household.

If you think these changes pertain to your social security payment please contact your local SSA office, see the sheet in the link below and highlight the changes you believe pertain to you. See the links below to read SSAs blog on SSI related issues.

[SS to expand SSI rental subsidy policy - Agency continues to remove barriers to accessing SSI payments](#)

[SS Blog: SS to remove barriers to accessing SSI payments](#)

Additionally Social Security announced a 2.5% cost of living adjustment for 2025 which will go into effect in January 2025. You can read more about this change below:

[Social Security Administration / COLA](#)

[SSA Press Release / COLA Facts 2025](#)

Peer Support & United Spinal

Submitted by: Jen Crowell, Peer Support Mentor & Coordinator

On Saturday, August 24th a group of peers got together at [Nature's Way/SHEI](#) in S. Sutton, NH. It couldn't have been a better day to have a BBQ, social gathering with friends, some dog love from Echo, Ellie and Journey and a little exercise. Thank you to David Doremus for bringing his Action Trackchair for people to try out in terrains that a wheelchair cannot do. We

give a big shout out to GSIL, [The Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation](#) and Sunset Hill Educational Institute for making this possible! (Pictures below from the SHEI BBQ)



Yet another amazing Peer event, as seen in the pictures below, it was a great day of laughter, socializing, food and GAMES at [Dave and Buster's!](#)



A heartfelt thank you to [Touchstone Farm](#) in Lyndeborough, NH, for the wonderful opportunity for the Peer Group to interact with barnyard animals! It was a delightful experience spending time with farm friends! A special thanks to Keith for adding a memorable touch by serenading us—and the animals—with his banjo.



The Peer Support group had another beautiful **annual hike up Crotched Mountain's accessible trails** on Wednesday, September 18th! There was a lot of laughter, catching up with peers, and enjoying the outdoors on the Crotched Mountain accessible trails. Thank you Wheelchair Health in Motion and Granite State Independent Living for supporting this annual event and to [The Crotched Mountain Foundation](#) for maintaining these trails!



Submitted by: Alexandria Teixeira, Lead Coordinator/NH Chapter of United Spinal Association

[Chuckster's](#) mini golf has a completely accessible mini golf course! We were able to enjoy 18 holes with no issues whatsoever! There was even an adaptable golf club! There is also an accessible bathroom, and we were able to enjoy ice cream after being in the heat!



Is there a fun event happening in your area? Would you like to be the "host" and share tips on the best parking spots and accessible bathrooms? If you're interested, please reach out to us at peersupport@gsil.org. We'd love to connect with you to promote and support an enjoyable and accessible event!

Accessible Transportation

Submitted by: Derek Lavoy, Transportation Services Manager

The winter months bring the cold and eventually the “white stuff”, please remember to leave time to clear your cars completely.

Now is a wonderful time to check your tires and do routine maintenance to ensure your vehicle is ready for winter months.

Do you have a snowbrush/ice scraper, ice cleats, a cell phone charger, first aid kit, or a blanket in your vehicle?

Check out the National highway Transportation Safety Administration's website for some great resources including this [link about tire safety](#).

Employment Department

Our employment department has recently added a new Employment Coordinator – Solethu Machaba. Solethu is a recent graduate of Lesley University in Boston with a degree in Human Services and hopes to be able to use her skills to support consumers in reaching their career goals, Solethu brings her experience as a volunteer with Catholic Charities Adult Education programs helping people prepare resumes for work, practicing interview techniques and completing job applications. Solethu grew up in South Africa and I recently learned she speaks 8 languages! We are excited to have her join our team.

Empowering Ourselves by Empowering Others

Submitted by: Jonthan Belmont, GSIL Employment Coordinator

The work done in GSIL's employment department is truly an empowering experience. One of the greatest opportunities we have is to empower our consumers that are going through a process of change. It can be easy at times for all of us to lose sight of the potential we have each day to make a positive change in the world. These changes do not need to be grandiose in nature, they can be small things that we do to brighten another person's day. Ultimately, this process of making a positive change in the world begins with us reflecting on how we can make a positive change in ourselves. Waking up each morning with the mission to do something to give back to others can illuminate the path to empowering ourselves and making a positive change.

Sometimes people are affected by different factors or experiences that inhibit them from pursuing their employment goals. What we seek to do in our Employment Department is to empower our consumers in the change they are seeking to make in their lives. In this process, we support consumers as they identify their employment aspirations and bring them into fruition.

Jonathan was recently asked and accepted a position as a board member with the National Employment Network Association (NENA). Jonathan's dedication to supporting people to realize their employment goals goes hand in hand with the mission of GSIL and NENA.

NENA is an organization of Employment Networks with a mission to provide training, advocacy, technical assistance, and networking to Employment Networks and their partners under the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Ticket to Work program with a focus on increasing program participation and employment outcomes.

The Ride Ahead Coming to NH!



We are excited to spread the word about [The Ride Ahead](#) coming to New Hampshire! The film follows Samuel Habib as he navigates the path to adulthood with a disability. The film was screened on October 17 at the [New Hampshire Film Festival](#) in Portsmouth and will be again on December 2nd at Bank of NH Stage in Concord.

Both events will be followed by Q&As with co-directors Samuel and Dan Habib. The film will be shown with open captions and audio description, and the venues are wheelchair accessible.

[Click here for ticket information](#)

[Click here to watch the film trailer](#)

GSIL Development & Events

Submitted by: Terri Voth, Donor Relations Specialist & Event Planner

Another fantastic event is in the books! On September 19th we hosted 100 golfers at Stonebridge Country Club, and we could not have asked for a better day. The sun was shining, it was in the 70s and the leaves were starting to turn. We continue to grow this event, bringing in new sponsors and golfers each year, and surpassing our financial goals! A huge shout out to Jenny Crowell, Tiffany Gladu, Diane Burke and Michelle Cutting for volunteering for the day. We also had 8 volunteers from Associated Grocers of New England as well as 3 from Bangor Savings Bank. Thanks to our Board Members and staff who donated to the raffle prizes. Below are just a few pictures from the day, the rest can be found in our [Photo Gallery](#) on the website. A huge thank you to Kara LaMarche from TCB and Michelle Cutting for these pics!



GSIL's Annual Dinner & Awards Night was held on November 19th at Pembroke Pines Country Club. It was an evening of giving thanks to the partners and community members that have played a crucial role in advancing our mission to promote quality of life with independence for people with disabilities. Below, you'll find details about each award and the remarkable individuals and organizations receiving them this year.

Our Awardees were:

GSIL President's Award was given to GSIL Employee Maryanne MacLeod, for her work commitment and significant impact on those we serve.

GSIL's NextGen Award was presented to Connor Dixon, a student who has provided outstanding dedication and commitment to GSIL's IMPACCT program.

GSIL's ACE Award is given to an attendant care employee who continues to provide outstanding service to our consumers. We were proud to recognize Jaymie Bouchard as this year's recipient.

GSIL's Business of the Year Award was given to USI Insurance for their longstanding commitment, driven by a deep passion for

our mission. Their unwavering support has profoundly impacted the lives of thousands and helped us advance our work and create meaningful change in the lives of those we serve.

GSIL's Community Partner Award, in recognition of dedicated service and advocacy on behalf of the disability community and their families, was given to Vocational Rehabilitation of NH. They have been a long-time supporter and partner of GSIL's IMPACCT and Earn & Learn education programs.

GSIL's David B. Robar Advocacy Award honors a citizen of NH for their efforts in support of disability rights and policies through the legislative process to ensure the voices and stories of those living with a disability are heard. This year we were honored to recognize Senator Jeb Bradley, who has been a staunch advocate and steadfast supporter of NH citizens with disabilities throughout his public service career. His leadership in championing essential legislation has been instrumental in advancing the rights and opportunities for thousands across the state, empowering them to lead fuller, more independent lives.

We're excited to announce a meaningful new addition to the 2024 GSIL Annual Dinner & Awards Night—the "Jeff Dickinson Service Dog of the Year" award. Created in memory of beloved former Director of Advocacy, [Jeff Dickinson](#), this award honors his legacy of relentless advocacy and his deep connection with service dogs, including his own.

Jeff's life was defined by resilience, collaboration, and empowerment—the same qualities that service dogs bring to their handlers every day. Through this award, we celebrate Jeff's profound impact on the disability community and his commitment to fostering a world that is accessible and inclusive for all. We are proud to recognize SWIRL, service dog of Randy Pierce, President & CEO of [Future In Sight](#), as the very first recipient of this award.



YOU
CAN'T START
THE NEXT
CHAPTER
OF YOUR LIFE
IF YOU KEEP
RE-READING
THE LAST ONE.

Holidays Observed

GSIL's corporate offices will be closed on the following dates:

November 28 & 29, 2024 in observance of Thanksgiving

December 22-26, 2024 in observance of Christmas

January 1, 2025 in observance of New Year's Day

January 20, 2025 in observance of Martin Luther King

February 17, 2025 in observance of Presidents Day

Holiday Meal Resources

[Portsmouth Rotary - Free Meal](#)

[NH Magazine - Thanksgiving dinners you don't have to cook](#)

[Patch - Free dinners & where to volunteer](#)

[Servicelink Resource Directory](#)



Linkables

*Submitted by: JoAnn Miller,
Administrative Assistant*

[14.3 Million Americans are Caring for an Ill or Disabled Veteran](#)

[Valuable advice on parenting a disabled child shared in new book](#)

[Efforts to Protect Accessibility of the Electoral Process](#)

[Thousands Scramble for Health Coverage as Medicare Advantage Firms Leave NH](#)

[NH to spend additional million dollars to improve suicide prevention hotline](#)

[NH to start distributing summer EBT funds in November](#)

['She could fly': 86-year-old woman in wheelchair goes on hot air balloon ride](#)

[SHEI's November Newsletter](#)



[DREDF Newsletter](#)

[BAAS Newsletter](#)

[NH Prescription Drug Affordability Report](#)

[DRC NH Newsletter](#)

[Northeast Passage Winter Calendar](#)

[North Country Adaptive Sports Events](#)

[UNH IOD Upcoming Events & Trainings](#)

[Holiday Lights, Tours & Events](#)

[Toys for Tots](#)

[Christmas in the White Mountains](#)

[Winter Holiday Happenings](#)

[Wobble N Gobble 5k Race](#)

[Lancaster Stuff a Cruiser \(toys\)](#)

Congratulations on ACE Anniversaries!

We appreciate the commitment and dedication of our Attendant Care Employees (ACEs). Thank you for all that you do in service to consumers. You are valuable members of the team. Congratulations on your service milestones!

Name	Years of Service
Lisa Gallant	25
Kathleen Clark	20
Laurie Dufour	10
Joseph Malachowski	10
Karri Glines	5
Robert Huffman	5
Vicki L'Heureux	5
Hillary Libbey	5
Romel Thomas	5
Menatulrahman Ahmed	1
Irene Alvarado Rivera	1
Lorna Banks	1
Shirley Bertin	1
Marguerite Bittner	1
Samantha Carpenterie	1
Jeremy Cross	1
Kathryn Cummings	1
Tammy DesRosiers	1

Name	Years of Service
William Doucette	1
Qerim Durdia	1
Joy Emery	1
Kian Floyd	1
Cheryl Gallagher	1
Jessica Gurney	1
Bethel Huffman	1
Taylor Leister	1
Walter Lord	1
Dominique Martin	1
Daniel Miller-Cummings	1
Claire Perry	1
Kimberly Plaisted	1
Douglas Rieck	1
Lucy Villeneuve	1
Alissa Vogelsang	1
Katiria Yambo Diaz	1

GSIL is Hiring!

Check out our listings on the GSIL Website's
[Career page](#)

**If you are an ACE looking for more hours,
please contact your Long Term Services Coordinator!**



**The PCA, PCSP & PEDI Programs
provide over 12,600 hours
of service per week!**

Contact Us

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Programs

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SSI Living Arrangements Regulatory Changes - Effective 09/30/24

Background

The Social Security Agency is committed to the following goals: simplifying our policies, reducing burdens on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) claimants and recipients, and reducing burdens on our technicians. We have updated certain regulations relating to living arrangements and In-Kind Support and Maintenance (ISM) to help us achieve these goals. First, effective September 30, 2024, we will no longer include food in ISM calculations, refer to SI 00835.340. Second, we are expanding the definition of a Public Assistance (PA) Household by adding Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to our list of Public Income Maintenance (PIM) payments. We are also revising the requirement that every member of the household receives a PIM payment to one in which the SSI claimant or recipient and one other member are receiving one of the listed PIM payments. Third, we are expanding nationwide the Rental Subsidy Exception rule that currently only exists in Second and Seventh Circuit states, refer to SI 00835.380. This publication provides a snapshot of the policy updates impacted by these regulatory changes. NOTE: A living arrangement period change date of 9/29/2024 is required in the SSI Claims System in order for the regulatory changes to be effective on 9/30/2024.

Public Assistance Household

The definition of a PA Household, [SI 00835.130](#), is expanded to include situations in which the SSI claimant or recipient resides with at least one other person who receives a PIM payment. If there is at least one other person in the household who receives a PIM payment (including SNAP), technicians do not need to develop inside ISM. If this is the case:

- Answer “Yes” to the question “The household has both the SSI claimant and one other household member who receives a public assistance benefit” on the new Household Living with Others page.
- Select the other household member who receives a PIM payment from the drop-down menu.
- Select the appropriate PIM assistance type and verify receipt

SNAP benefits were added to the list of acceptable types of PA and PIM payments, refer to [SI 01320.141](#). Exclude from deemed income, the PIM payment and any income used to compute such payment. This deeming exclusion applies to the income of an ineligible spouse or parent. See SI 01320.141 for another instance when this deeming exclusion applies..

- For deemors (and ineligible children, if any) who receive SNAP benefits, select “Non-Cash Public Assistance” from the Income menu within the SSI claims path.

Omitting Food from ISM

Food is no longer included in ISM calculations when determining if the claimant’s contribution equals or exceeds their share of the household expenses. Determine a claimant’s pro rata share and, if ISM applies, only calculate shelter expenses.

- The Household of Another and the Household Expenses and Contributions pages have been combined into a new page. This new page is called Household Living With Others. Technicians will only need to consider shelter expenses when developing ISM. Earmarking no longer applies.

Rental Subsidy

In rental subsidy situations where someone in the household is related to the landlord (or landlord’s spouse) as a parent or child, rental subsidy does not apply if the verified required rent equals or exceeds the lesser of either: the Current Market Rental Value (CMRV) or the Presumed Maximum Value (PMV), refer to [SI 00835.380](#). No further development is needed.

- Due to Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA) impacting the PMV each year, an E2 diary will generate in the COLA run for affected cases. Follow instructions in the EM associated with this Policy in Focus.

If the rental payment is less than both the PMV and CMRV, follow guidance in SI 00835.380 to complete development to determine if ISM applies.

Resources

- [SI 00810.005](#) What is Income
- [SI 00835.130](#) Public Assistance Households
- [SI 00835.160](#) Sharing
- [SI 01320.141](#) Deeming: Public Income Maintenance Payments
- [SI 00835.380](#) Rental Subsidies
- [SI 00835.340](#) Computation of In-Kind Support and Maintenance from Within a Household
-

[This information is cited directly from the Social Security Administration](#)

Let's Have Cyber-Safe Holidays!

Don't let cybercriminals ruin your holiday fun!

Whether you are traveling or buying or selling items online this holiday season, keep the following tips in mind.

Online Threat Prevention



Keep an eye out for fake coupons, unbelievable promotional deals, or even fake shipping notices.



Cybercriminals will repeatedly spam you with notifications this season, don't let your guard down. Never assume notifications are safe.



Only purchase and use gift cards with the authorized retailer.



Use verified, secure Wi-Fi connections and avoid connecting to free public Wi-Fi.



Never leave your devices unattended and always secure them with strong passwords.



Research the legitimacy of booking sites before making travel arrangements.



Travel Threat Protection



Cybercriminals will always try to trick you. Remember to **stop**, **look**, and **think** before taking any action!

Have a safe, fun holiday season from **KnowBe4**

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GSIL's Education Programs & Services

The Earn & Learn Opportunities Program is a partnership between the Manchester School District, Vocational Rehabilitation New Hampshire and Granite State Independent Living. The IMPACCT Program is a partnership between New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation and Granite State Independent Living in response to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). IMPACCT was created to help augment and support the transitional services that schools are already providing their students with disabilities.



Student Success Stories

Submitted by: Brianna Smith, Director of Education Services

IMPACCT Summer 2024



Noelle is a recent graduate from Goffstown High School and the Spring cohort for the Manchester IMPACCT Program. Noelle is a resilient student who focused on making sure she graduated from high school. She used the IMPACCT program to earn the necessary credits and learned many new soft skills and work experiences. Noelle completed her career aspirations on

becoming a Sheriff and/or Police Officer. Noelle did a great job researching the information, highlighting education requirements, and what schools and training programs are available. Noelle did research on average salaries, what job prospects look like and how it's a growing field. Noelle spoke about what the work environment looks like, hours of work and other jobs similar to or related to the career she is seeking.

Noelle was interviewed by Sage MacDonald of GSIL Employment Services for a Law Enforcement position at the Goffstown Police Department. During the interview, Noelle made solid eye contact, had a firm handshake, good body language, dressed appropriately and communicated well with confidence. Noelle did a fantastic job advocating for herself, and she showed knowledge of self-help skills related to the job duties. Overall, Sage was impressed with Noelle's knowledge of law enforcement and her motivation to pursue this career path. Noelle is now pursuing joining the National Guard basic training this summer. Once completed, Noelle hopes to attend a small college to study criminal justice in hopes to get in law enforcement.

We are so excited for Noelle, as she has a clear picture of what she wants to do, and she is going for it! Congratulations Noelle on following your dreams and aspirations!!

Alyssa, a 17-year-old from Great Bay Charter School (GCS) her friends and advocates for herself well. Alyssa came to IMPACCT Academy to earn important credits that will put her on the path to high school graduation.

Alyssa was invested in her experience at IMPACCT Academy. She regularly said she did more work at IMPACCT than she

had for a class before. She bonded well with the other students and communicated well in group situations. She advocated for herself in the classroom, at school, and at home. Alyssa worked hard to complete her IMPACCT requirements and earned all her credit at IMPACCT.

Alyssa completed her work experience at the Dover Children's Museum under the direction of Nicole McClain. There, she learned how to work with a team, interact with museum guests, prepare for demonstrations, and lead STEAM Friday experiences. She was a dedicated worker who took the initiative and interacted as a full member of the Children's Museum team. Her supervisors were impressed with her progress and professionalism, and they offered her a part-time paid position as a Museum Experience Guide.

Alyssa earned full credit for her IMPACCT experience this Spring. She will return to GBCS to complete her schooling in the Fall. She is excited that part of her return to schooling will involve an internship teaching the younger grades to prepare her for her goal of becoming a teacher. This experience has put her further on the track to graduation. We at IMPACCT wish Alyssa success in all of her future endeavors.

The photo shows Alyssa in a black Champion sweatshirt and glasses standing behind a desk with multicolored pipe cleaners. She is preparing for a STEAM Friday activity.



Nathan attends Milford High School, he is a senior and graduated in the Spring of 2024 from high school. Nathan was shy when he first attended IMPACCT Academy.

His worksite was Granite Town Media, Milford's local public access channel. Nathan completed two projects under the direction of Chris Gentry at Granite Town Media. He produced two videos from start to finish, using the camera, editing and publishing. His projects were featured on the Milford Public Channel 22.

Nathan was also awarded the perfect attendance award for the for the Spring 2024 cohort!

He took the summer off in hopes he gets a job in the fall.

Student Success Stories continued

He will continue to work on his goals with NH Vocational Rehab. We are so proud of Nathan!

Nathan, pictured at Granite Town Media



North Country IMPACCT Tours New England Wire Technologies

Submitted by: April Paye, Transition Specialist

On Monday, October 7, 2024, the North Country 2024 Fall IMPACCT Cohort toured New England Wire Technologies in Lisbon, NH. We were warmly greeted by Megan from Human Resources along with 3 employees Josh Spaulding, Scott Ingerson and Steve Morrison, who kindly gave us the tour.

After getting our safety glasses, we were brought to a nice conference room where the management team shared interesting facts about the mill including what product they make, the customers they make it for, how much they value their employees, and some of the benefits they offer their employees. From there, we were guided through the factory. We were shown the process of how the copper is stretched from the original form, all the way down to an almost invisible wire, then reforming it to the specific requests of their clients. It was interesting to see how each machine has a different role in the finished product. We also learned about the quality checks of the wire before it is shipped out to the customer, as the management and employees are very serious and take pride in the items they produce.

At the end, we were able to get a group picture of the wire mill guides along with our entire co-hort. It was a very interesting and informative tour.



Nashua IMPACCT visits WH Bagshaw Company, Inc.

Submitted by: Marcia Bagley, M.S. - Chief Program Officer

October was manufacturing month, and the Nashua IMPACCT class visited WH Bagshaw Company, Inc. in Nashua. They are the oldest pin maker in America, but also make other precision products for various industries—including parts for Taylor Swift's stage!

The President of the company, Aaron Bagshaw, took time out of his busy day to provide the class with a tour. All of the students (and staff!) were enthralled with the machines, history, and variety of parts they manufacture every day. The machines run 24 hours per day and make products consistently.



The best, and most surprising, part was their newly created Walter Bat Company. We got to see the steps in creating a wooden baseball bat - did you know they look like stair banisters first? On the top floor of the plant, there is even a renovated space with batting cages, weights and several options for practicing batting skills.



The last thing we got to see was the "oldest ipod" - a phonograph that has a Bagshaw pin and still works to this day! At the end of the tour, Aaron "quizzed" the group and two winners received Arctic water bottles as a prize.

This was IMPACCT's first visit to Bagshaw and we look forward to visiting again. Thank you WH Bagshaw Company, Inc.!



Advocacy Awareness

Submitted by: Ryan Donnelly, Advocacy Coordinator

Last month GSIL's Advocacy Team put on the first "How to Make Your Voice Heard" tour and training at the New Hampshire State House! We were pleased and excited to have so many folks turn out to spend the afternoon with us. Not only was it an opportunity for people to get an expert tour of our state's capitol building but also to learn how New Hampshire's legislative branch functions. If you ever wanted to learn how a bill becomes a law, what the public hearing process is like, or what all the buttons on the seats in Representative's Hall do, this was the place to be! If you missed out, don't worry; be on the lookout for announcements on additional tours in the future!



In addition to our tour, we also had the chance to attend a meeting of a study committee established to examine the impact of New Hampshire's ongoing housing crisis on people with disabilities. Peer Support Coordinator Jennifer Crowell and I spoke before the members of the committee to relate the unique challenges that people with physical disabilities (particularly those who use wheelchairs) face when it comes to finding a place to live in New Hampshire. GSIL advocated strongly for a percentage of homes to be built on the principles of Universal Design. Such homes can be lived in by anyone. Not only would this benefit people with disabilities but would also allow able-bodied individuals to age in place and remain in their communities.



More than a day of fun and learning though our tour and training also highlighted the importance of being engaged in what's happening in Concord. Newcomers to the world of advocacy can sometimes find the prospect of getting involved to be intimidating. The fact is though that New Hampshire has one of the best state legislatures in the country. It's large, accessible, and incredibly transparent. With a House of Representatives alone that stands 400 members strong, there's a good chance you might know someone who serves our state in Concord! These folks aren't just politicians but neighbors, friends and members of your community working hard to serve us. Our legislators are easy to approach and always eager to hear from one of their constituents, presenting the opportunity for anyone to help affect change in our state. The goings-on in our state legislature are also easy to keep up with. Regular business such as public hearings and executive sessions are streamed live via YouTube and archived for later viewing, allowing anyone anywhere to stay connected to the legislative process.

Additionally, the legislature features a robust website for tracking legislation or looking up information on our legislators and the committees they serve on.



All of these are tools that anyone can use to advocate for themselves and others. Many of the bills that move through the legislature every year become law, but these bills are not written in stone. By engaging with our State Representatives and Senators, you can help to make a good bill better or ensure a bad bill gets squashed before it reaches the finish line. All you have to do is take that first step and make your voice heard. If you are interested in finding out more about how to be engaged the Advocacy page on our website is a good place to start.

Human Resource Corner

Submitted by: Justina Johnson, HR Coordinator

CAUTION



**GSIL wants to keep you safe
from all slips and falls!**

If you need ice cleats for the upcoming winter weather, please reach out to your coordinator to request a pair.

Whenever ice cleats are given to an ACE, the ACE is required to sign off that they received the ice cleats, and the signed and dated receipt is returned to HR.

Have a safe and happy holiday season

LTS Skills Training

Submitted by: Donna Potter, Statewide Director of PCSP Services.

Granite State Independent Living prides itself on assisting our consumers to assure their current services best meet their needs.

To best support our consumers, GSIL's Long Term Support Program requires we meet our consumers face-to-face at least 4 times a year. These visits may be in person or virtually.

However, at least two of the face-to-face meetings must take place in the consumer's home, with one of those being the Annual Review of the consumer's LTS program (PCA or PCSP). This has shown to be the best way to address consumers' changing needs.

Do not hesitate to contact your coordinator with any questions.



**91% of
consumers say
GSIL is helpful
with Care
Planning**

A Moral Obligation to Reform Mental Health Care

excerpt from National Disability Rights Network

The recent New York Times investigation into Acadia Healthcare's treatment of psychiatric patients presents an alarming crisis within our nation's mental health care system. The Times found that Acadia detains individuals in psychiatric care without a legal basis long after the individual is ready to return to the community. Their motive is profit, sometimes charging patients up to \$2,200 per day. As a top executive at Acadia hospitals said, "If there were insurance days left, that patient was going to be held."

This appalling practice is more than just a failure of one company – it's a reflection of systemic neglect and exploitation of vulnerable populations that runs rampant within the mental health service system.

The allegations in the Times are consistent with Acadia practices highlighted in our 2021 report *Desperation Without Dignity* which revealed widespread abuse and neglect at similar for-profit residential treatment facilities for youth.

In June, the Senate Finance Committee held in-person hearings on youth residential settings that featured testimony from NDRN member agency Disability Rights Arkansas. In that testimony, DRA's attorney described the ways Acadia manipulated Arkansas Medicaid regulations to create new facilities in the state for out-of-state residents. These practices, however, are not limited to any one state.

Disability Law Center of Utah's advocacy, for example, contributed to the closing of Acadia-owned psychiatric hospital Highland Ridge. In a letter to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, DLC Utah noted that former Highland Ridge staff called the facility 'The Rape Hospital' "because of how often patients were sexually assaulted and how infrequently the staff reported these incidents to police."

Psychiatric facilities are not prisons, but clearly some are being run that way, trapping individuals in a system that is more about dollars than health care while subjecting residents to unthinkable horrors. Imagine being held, against your will, for an arbitrary amount of time like some *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* nightmare. The traumatizing effects this must have on people with mental health disabilities are immeasurable and does not support this evidence-based truth: Treating people in the community with appropriate services is less expensive, more humane, and more effective than confining them in institutions.

It is incumbent upon regulators, lawmakers, and mental health advocates to take immediate action. While we are grateful to the NY Times for exposing this practice - media absolutely has a role in public safety – oversight is the job of the government agencies charged with that responsibility.

[Click Here](#) to read the full article!

Bringing Independence to Life!

Recently GSIL was contacted by Danielle from Tay & Tay Law Offices in Exeter, owned by Mark Tay, to inquire about our ability to facilitate the removal of a ramp from one of their properties. The ramp was new, and they were hopeful that it could be used by someone who needed it.

GSIL was able to partner with Level Ramping Solutions in Dover, who were able to remove the ramp from the original location in Milton and install it for a waiting consumer in Seabrook in the span of 1 week.

Roberta had been waiting for a ramp since April and was ecstatic about being able to receive a ramp and now can easily safely enter and leave her home.

GSIL would like to thank Tay & Tay Offices, Level Ramping Solutions, for their partnership and support.



Peer Thank You! "Thank you so much for the 4 free tickets to the NH Fisher Cats game. Our seats were perfect, and my friends and I really enjoyed the game.

I really appreciate the opportunity to enjoy events with friends outside. Sometimes I get bored being inside and events like this get me out and socializing.

Thanks again GSIL!"

Chris L., GSIL Consumer

Health Awareness

Submitted by: Diana Bailey, RN, BSN - LTS RN Coordinator

November is [National Family Caregivers Month](#)! It's observed to call attention to the hard work of more than 50 million family caregivers across the country. During National Family Caregivers Month, we raise awareness of the societal value provided by caregivers and ask for greater support. Follow GSIL's Facebook page as we recognize our caregivers!

December is National Influenza Awareness Month: The flu comes from influenza viruses A and B. There are different strands of the flu virus every year. The flu causes fever, body aches, a headache, a dry cough, and a sore or dry throat. You will probably feel tired and less hungry than usual. For people with higher risk, the flu is more likely to lead to severe complications resulting in hospitalization or even death. Most people will recover in several days to less than two weeks. Some people will develop serious flu complications.

You can help prevent the flu by getting a flu vaccine each year. It's best to get the vaccine as soon as it's available. See a medical provider immediately at the onset of symptoms. Stay home, keep your distance from others, cover your nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, wash your hands frequently, and wear a mask if you must leave home. Flu symptoms can be treated at home by getting rest, drinking plenty of fluids, and taking medicine to lower your fever.

National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW), recognized from December 2 - 6, 2024, is a national awareness week focused on highlighting the importance of influenza vaccination. This is a great reminder for everyone 6 months and older that there's still time to get a flu vaccine this season. [2024 NIVW Digital Media Toolkit & Flu Resource Center](#) | CDC

January is [National Glaucoma Awareness Month](#): More than 2.8 million Americans age 40 and older have glaucoma. Nearly half do not know they have the disease as it causes no early symptoms. [Prevent Blindness](#) provides insightful information about this "Sneak Thief of Sight."

Granite State Independent Living 2024 Payroll Calendar

SA	SU	M	T	W	Th	F	SA	SU	M	T	W	Th	F	SA	SU	M	T	W	Th	F
January							February							March						
		1	2	3	4	5						1	2							1
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
														30	31					
April							May							June						
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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July							August							September						
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October							November							December						
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31			
							30													

 Corporate Offices Closed

 Pay Date

PAY WEEKS	PAY DATE	PAY WEEKS	PAY DATE
12/16/23 – 12/29/23	01/05/24	06/29/24 – 07/12/24	07/19/24
12/30/23 – 01/12/24	01/19/24	07/13/24 – 07/26/24	08/02/24
01/13/24 – 01/26/24	02/02/24	07/27/24 – 08/09/24	08/16/24
01/27/24 – 02/09/24	02/16/24	08/10/24 – 08/23/24	08/30/24
02/10/24 – 02/23/24	03/01/24	08/24/24 – 09/06/24	09/13/24
02/24/24 – 03/08/24	03/15/24	09/07/24 – 09/20/24	09/27/24
03/09/24 – 03/22/24	03/29/24	09/21/24 – 10/04/24	10/11/24
03/23/24 – 04/05/24	04/12/24	10/05/24 – 10/18/24	10/25/24
04/06/24 – 04/19/24	04/26/24	10/19/24 – 11/01/24	11/08/24
04/20/24 – 05/03/24	05/10/24	11/02/24 – 11/15/24	11/22/24
05/04/24 – 05/17/24	05/24/24	11/16/24 – 11/29/24	12/06/24
05/18/24 – 05/31/24	06/07/24	11/30/24 – 12/13/24	12/20/24
06/01/24 – 06/14/24	06/21/24	12/14/24 – 12/27/24	01/03/25
06/15/24 – 06/28/24	07/05/24	12/28/24 – 01/10/25	01/17/25