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**Independent Living**



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**Top Five Issues That Must Be Addressed During the Next Ten Years for People With Disabilities to Participate Fully in Their Communities**

LAWRENCE, KS — Health care, employment, technology, long-term care, and civil rights enforcement need to be included in the research advocacy agendas in the next 10 years, said Bonnie O’Day and Marcie Goldstein after an analysis of disability literature, two discovery conferences, and interviews with representative leaders of disability organizations.

The discovery conferences – “The New Paradigm on Disability: Research Issues and Approaches” in January 2000 organized by the Research and Training Center on Independent Living staff at the University of Kansas researchers and funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation and the June 2000 National Council on Disability Americans With Disabilities Act conference – served to identify key leaders to interview and to refine the interview instrument.

Besides the top five disability issues, other concerns emerged, including the impact of poverty among people with disabilities, the connections among various advocacy issues, participation in the broader disability movement, problems with service systems, and cultural issues.

The 16 leaders interviewed said research was needed on the effectiveness of disability services and legislation, integrating disability issues

into the broader research agenda, and quantifying the characteristics of the disability population.

When asked what advocacy strategies should be used to promote their disability agenda, participants said current strategies such as community organizing, litigation, public education, and public demonstrations had worked relatively well. They also recommended building a stronger, more inclusive disability rights movement and becoming more involved in the political process.

Further information about this research study can be found in the spring 2005 *Journal of Disability Policy Studies* article "Advocacy Issues and Strategies for the 21st Century: Key Informant Interviews."

The study was part of the Research and Training Center on Full Participation in Independent Living project, a division of the Research and Training Center on Independent Living (RTC/IL) at the University of Kansas. The RTC/IL furthers independent living for people with disabilities by collaborating with target populations on productive research and innovative knowledge distribution.

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