

# OPHA DISABILITY SECTION

Volume 1 / Issue 1

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Legislative Breakfast Forum: Aging in Oregon

**When:** Friday, February 24th,  
8:00am to 9:30am

**Where:** Alzheimer's Association  
1650 NW Naito Pkwy #190  
Portland, Oregon 97209

<http://www.oregongero.org/event-2451040>

### nTIDE Lunch & Learn: Disability Employment

**When:** Friday, March 10, 9 AM (PST)

**Where:** Webinar

<http://www.researchondisability.org/home/events/2016/04/01/ntide-lunch-learn-webinar-series>

## NEW YEAR, NEW BUSINESS

We are just dipping our toes into 2017, but have already been feeling the impacts of our recent political changes and the winter weather here in Oregon. We hope everyone is faring well, and feeling inspired to advocate for positive reform during this unpredictable time!

Speaking of unpredictable weather, The American Public Health Association has declared 2017 the **Year of Climate Change and Health**. This is an extremely important issue for individuals with disabilities, due to the vulnerability of being disproportionately affected by extreme environmental change. This is a call to action to create strategies and interventions that will protect everyone's health in the future.

### Show Your Support for the ACA

ACA provisions expanded positive reform for individuals with disabilities in a multitude of ways, not limited to, but including:

- Access expansion to insurance coverage
- Improvement to long-term supports and services for PWD
- Enhanced protections for PWD facing discrimination based on pre-existing conditions
- Improvements and accountability for accessibility and quality of healthcare for PWD

Now is the time to show your support, educate, and fight for protection of the ACA! Here are some talking points to inspire your own ideas: [http://www.apha.org/~media/files/pdf/topics/aca/no\\_aca\\_repeal\\_tlgpts.ashx](http://www.apha.org/~media/files/pdf/topics/aca/no_aca_repeal_tlgpts.ashx)

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*“The mindset needed for great change is built upon respect, empowerment, inclusion, and action.”*

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## OREGON POLICY SPOTLIGHT

New for 2017, we are lucky to have section member Ashley Krollenbrock as our OPHA Health Policy & Advocacy committee representative and liaison. She will be providing us with noteworthy disability related Oregon policy briefs. These are great opportunities for awareness building and potential engagement.

### Medicaid Block Grants

As the US healthcare system faces likely changes in the coming years, the idea of Medicaid block grants has been popular among Republicans in Congress. A transition to block grants would have dire implications for Oregonians with disabilities,

especially if the block grants are paired with fewer federal coverage requirements in state Medicaid programs, which is a likelihood, and with the state budget shortfall in Oregon, which is a certainty. Read more here:

<https://droregon.org/medicaid-block-grants-high-risk-pools-threaten-oregonians-disabilities/>

## Junction City Closure

Amid Oregon's looming budget shortfall, Governor Kate Brown has suggested closing the newly-constructed Junction City psychiatric hospital. Disability advocates had opposed the construction of the facility, but are concerned with the impact that closing the facility would have on patients if they are not provided with community-based resources upon discharge.

Read more here: <http://registerguard.com/rg/news/local/35046852-75/governors-plan-to-shut-junction-city-psychiatric-hospital-stuns-employees-local-residents.html.csp>

## Excessive Force

In 2014, the city of Portland, Portland Police, and the Department of Justice reached a settlement agreement after the DOJ found a pattern of excessive force against people with mental illness. The settlement required changes to PPB's policies, training, supervisory oversight, community-based mental health services, crisis intervention, and community engagement and oversight, among other changes. Public health professionals have a role in the success of these changes by being engaged with the community-based mental health services and crisis intervention policies, especially as community engagement attempts have thus far been fraught. Read more

here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_v.\\_City\\_of\\_Portland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_v._City_of_Portland)

## MEET OUR MEMBERS

This edition will be introducing us to two women who are working hard to improve the health and quality of life of individuals with disabilities. These lovely ladies also make up our fearless disability section leadership duo.

### Alicia Ibarra-Dixon, OPHA Disability Section Chair

#### **Tell us about yourself and the work you do here in Oregon...**

*I am a post doctorate scholar at Oregon State University working under the mentorship of Dr. Gloria Krahn. I have a PhD in adapted physical activity and an MPH in epidemiology. My current research uses large datasets to examine the health status of older adults with early onset disabilities. I am particularly interested in understanding factors that influence optimal aging for persons who are aging with early and mid life disabilities. I also work with Special Olympics Oregon to aid an evaluation of a health promotion program called Oregon Team Wellness. Our disability and health team at Oregon State University is also pursuing a collaborative project to analyze Special Olympics' Healthy Athletes data.*

#### **How has your work influenced the health of people with disabilities?**

*I have developed and implemented multiple physical activity health promotion programs that have directly influenced the health of people with disabilities. My epidemiological work advocates for additional health promotion and policy changes to improve the health of persons with disabilities. It highlights an undeserved and overlooked group of the aging community (i.e., adults aging with early onset disability). My collaboration with Special Olympics will ultimately lead to improved health outcomes for persons with intellectual disabilities through evidence-based programming.*

#### **Why was joining the OPHA Disability section important to you?**

*To become an advocate for persons with disabilities at the state level, specifically making sure people with disabilities are included in all aspects of public health including policy, health promotion, etc. I also wanted to join the disability section to network with other professionals in disability and health.*

**Beyond your professional work, what is it that has the greatest impact on your personal quality of life?**

*Staying physically active and spending time with my husband and two little girls!*

**Jana Peterson-Besse, OPHA Disability Section Representative to the Board of Directors**

**Tell us about yourself and the work you do here in Oregon...**

*I am on the faculty of the undergraduate program in public health at Pacific University in Forest Grove. It is a generalist undergraduate program situated in the social sciences, so we approach public health from perspectives of social justice and community engagement. My favorite class that I have taught so far is Disability and Health, an elective that contributes to our public health major and disability studies minor at Pacific.*

**How has your work influenced the health of people with disabilities?**

*My research focuses on health promotion and access to care for people with disabilities. I have studied social support for physical activity for adults with developmental disabilities, best practices in health and wellness for people with disabilities, measurement of health and the distinction of health from disability, and disparities in access to clinical preventive services for people with disabilities. Much of this work has been collaborative, and I am lucky to have worked with several members of this section of OPHA! Besides research, another way I hope to influence the health of people with disabilities is through my students. I work to integrate disability examples into all of my courses and raise awareness of disparities among all of my students, and a number of them are pursuing practicum placements and careers in the disability field. I am just starting a research study with several of my students focused on online social network resources for women with disabilities in pregnancy.*

**Why was joining the OPHA Disability section important to you?**

*Being a member of OPHA helps me stay current in public health practice throughout the state of Oregon, beyond the academic world. I appreciate the opportunity to learn from colleagues from across the state and across multiple areas of public health. I also really enjoy the opportunity to meet disability and health professionals through this section, and to represent disability issues on the Board of Directors.*

**Beyond your professional work, what is it that has the greatest impact on your personal quality of life?**

*My passions include spending time with my family and time pursuing sports in the outdoors. I have two children, who bring me so much joy. I love camping, hiking, and running in the beautiful Pacific Northwest.*

**Oregon Public Health Association**

Disability Section Newsletter

[HTTP://Facebook.com/OPHADisability](http://Facebook.com/OPHADisability)