



Dear Member,

By now, you should have received a letter from our Executive Director Doreen Croser and your dues statement for the year (more about that at the end). I hope the first thing that you noticed is that you are now officially a member of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). The vote to change the name was overwhelmingly in favor, and we contracted with a branding firm for our new look.

I would like to give you an update on the current activities of the association.

In December we held our mid-winter leadership meeting. Association leaders from across the US and from several other countries met for several days in Crystal City, Virginia. As we progress into the New Year, we have many successes to share with you.

New name, logo and video clip. At the leadership meeting, we were treated to the official unveiling of the new logo and tagline for the association to match our new name, and we viewed an excellent video clip explaining our new look. The video clip is now available on our website (http://www.aamr.org/About_AAIDD/name.shtml). We hope you will take a look at this clip to learn more about our new look. Also, please note that in addition to a new log and new colors, we have a 3 word tag line: Knowledge /Support/ Empowerment.

The Board and staff of the Association are thrilled with the new name, and the new look, and we are moving forward to make all of the changes and updates that are a part of branding our association for the future.

Committee Work. We have a number of committees working on important topics. The Mid-winter leadership meeting was an opportunity to bring together for face to face meetings two large committees working on two important projects. Our Adaptive Behavior Scale Committee met and worked for 2 days on our new adaptive behavior instrument, and the Terminology and Classification Committee met and worked for 2 days on the next edition of the terminology and classification manual which will be addressing the term %at intellectual disability+for the first time.

Strategic Planning: Our Vice President Steve Eidelman also started us on a new strategic plan. National, regional and state leaders in the association will all be asked for input as we develop the plan.

Implementing the new look: Preliminary changes have been made to our website, including a new address. Please go to www.aaid.org and see our new home. Incidentally, you may want to make this page the default page for every time you open your browser. That way you will notice the exciting changes as they appear on the site.

Upcoming events: We have many activities planned for the year. On March 4-6th. We will hold our annual **Disability Policy Seminar** in conjunction with our public policy partners, The Arc, UCP, AUCD, and NACDD in Washington DC. Details are on our website at <http://www.aaid.org/Events/Disability%20Policy/index.html>

Plans also continue for our **Annual Meeting** to be held in Atlanta in May. Please plan now to attend this annual event. http://www.aamr.org/Events/2007_Meeting.shtml. The planning committee and the local arrangements folks have put a great deal of effort into insuring that this year's meeting will be another exciting and informative event. See you in Atlanta!

Policy Issues: We are reviewing all of our policy statements for updating. Some only need to have their terminology changed to reflect current usage. Others will receive more substantial editing. We will seek input on those in need of substantial revision through AAIDD FYI and on our website.

While there are a great number of issues that we are involved in, I wanted to share with you our actions on one specific topic. Recently the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine published an article describing a therapy administered to a young girl with significant disabilities to prevent her growth and maturation as an attempt to minimize the future burden she would present to her parents.

The Board decided unanimously to protest this procedure. We have written a letter to the editor of the journal, which has been accepted for publication. Part of the publication agreement with the journal is that the letter is embargoed until publication, so we can not share it with you yet. The Board - lead by Wayne Silverman - wrote a much more substantial response to the article which will be available on our website under "What's New". We trust that you will see this activity as important and as representative of our association's ability to respond quickly to national matters of importance in the field.

Back to that dues statement again. Please note that there is a box to check off additional donations to special purposes. The Student Scholarship fund box is an opportunity to designate donations to assist students in participating in association activities. We have a strong commitment to supporting students. Please consider a targeted donation for this important work. The Hurricane Relief Fund continues our efforts to target support to disability programs in the areas devastated by Katrina. You should know that our small but mighty office staff made personal contributions to this fund over the holidays totaling \$1,000. There are many ways to donate to the continuing need in the Gulf States, but I am not aware of any other group that is targeting 100% of all donations directly to disability related projects in the gulf. We take no administrative fees for this work.

That is all the news from now. We will be sending you more frequent updates to keep you informed. Thanks for your continued involvement in AAIDD, and I hope to see you in Atlanta.

Knowledge/Support/Empowerment

Hank Bersani Jr., Ph.D.
President AAIDD