



## Priorities for 2010

by Cynthia A. Smith, JD, MS

**EVERY OTHER YEAR CHADD'S PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE** oversees revisions to the organization's public policy agendas. Posted prominently on the website, the two agendas—one addressing the needs of children and the other of adults—set out CHADD's position and parameters for advocacy work for the next two years. Given the ever-changing nature of public policy, in the late fall the public policy department decides on specific priorities for the following year based on what appears to be feasible within the political climate. In 2010, CHADD's advocacy work will focus on the activities described below.

**1** An increase in funding for CHADD's **National Resource Center on AD/HD**, which is funded by the CDC's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (including strengthening the NCBDDD mental health work). The National Resource Center provides information and referral to almost 10,000 individuals each year. The NRC is a congressional-funded program that must be appropriated funds on a yearly basis. Each year, CHADD staff works to increase the resources available to the public from the NRC. CHADD CEO E. Clarke Ross was elected chair of the NCBDDD External Partners Group for 2010-11.

**2** Continued advocacy to implement the **Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act** to ensure that all children and adults with qualified disabilities do not experience discrimination in the employment process, or in accessing state and local government services. On January 1, 2009, the ADAAA went into effect, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission issued a draft of revised regulations in November 2009. It is anticipated that the EEOC will issue final regulations this spring, and CHADD's public policy department will continue to work to ensure that the ADAAA is implemented in a manner that provides adequate protections from discrimination for qualified individuals with AD/HD.



**FOR MORE INFO:**  
Visit CHADD's public policy webpage for updates on our activities, to view the public policy agendas for children and adults and, most importantly, to have your voice heard in 2010 when the public policy staff sends out "take action now" alerts.

AD/HD are safe in school, and receive the necessary supports and services to ensure they are able to be productive and self-sufficient adults.

**4** Continued advocacy to implement the **Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act** to prevent current discrimination on the basis of mental disorder in health insurance benefit design. The mental health parity law became effective on October 4, 2009. However, most people did not begin to see the changes in their benefits until January 1, 2010. The three federal agencies with the authority to interpret the

law still need to issue regulations. CHADD's public policy department will continue to monitor developments to ensure that the parity law is implemented as Congress intended, and that children and adults with AD/HD received equitable treatment by insurance companies covered by the new law.

**5** Support at the state level when needed for "open" formularies rather than "closed" formularies. An open formulary allows health plans to pay for all FDA-approved medications at physician and family/consumer decision without arbitrary health plan limits or health plan preferences for one medication in a class over all other medications in the same class.

**6** Support for provisions in the implementation of healthcare reform legislation that focus on increasing access to and availability of the children's mental health professional workforce, the integration of physical and mental health (including medical homes and electronic medical records), increased family and consumer involvement in informed medical decision making, and concrete activities to address disparities in health care, including race, culture, and disability. For the last year, the House and the Senate have been working to overhaul the healthcare system, and CHADD's public policy department will continue to monitor developments to ensure that children and adults with AD/HD have access to affordable, equitable and high-quality healthcare.

Other issues will arise during 2010, but these are primary issues that we know CHADD's public policy department will be working to address. ●

Cynthia A. Smith, MS, JD, is CHADD's public policy specialist.

