



Fall News 2022

Technology Solutions for Life's Limitations

Greetings!

Happy Fall! October is AAC Awareness Month, half of this month's course releases in the ATIA Learning Center include topics around the many different ways in which people communicate using various devices. Please help celebrate the month with us and help increase awareness of AAC! Explore the free courses here:

<https://www.atia.org/path-lms/?pathPage=%2Fatia%2Fcourses>

Federal Funding

The Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP) facilitates the coordination of state AT Programs nationally and provides technical assistance and support to its members as well as strives to protect and increase funding for the AT Act.

ATAP was level-funded for the 56 State and Territory Programs for AT at \$31 million from 2004 to 2015.

In the FY2016 Federal Budget, the AT Act received the first increase of \$1 million.

Over FY2016 to FY2022, the AT Act received increases to bring the total line item to \$36.5 million – A total of \$5.5 million in increases.

These consistent increases are directly related to the advocacy work facilitated by ATAP and provided by the AT Act programs.

The House FY2023 Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Bill funded the Assistive Technology Act at \$44 million. It now sits in the Senate for final approval.

This is a great start as the House and Senate begin finalizing the FY2023 budget in the coming weeks.

Leadership

Brett Burden and Page Hudson continue our leadership training with Prevailing Leadership. Our next in-person session is in December in Rapid City. It's truly a great experience and gets us working with BHSSC staff that we normally would just email or talk to on the telephone.

The 2023 Leadership Symposium will once again be virtual and will take place March 28-30 from noon to 3 PM Eastern.

DakotaLink Advisory Council

Steve Stewart – Chair, Richard Moeller – Vice Chair, Eric Weiss – Member at Large

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday December 7, 9:30 am MT, 10:30 am CST.

If you or anyone you know would like to be a part of the DakotaLink Advisory Council, I have provided a link to the application:

<https://www.dakotalink.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/DakotaLink-Advisory-Council-Application.pdf>

The agenda and notes are also posted on our website at: [https://www.dakotalink.net/#Advisory Council Activities.](https://www.dakotalink.net/#Advisory-Council-Activities)

New Technology

Honeybee Switch

Easterseals Crossroads Indata Project added a HoneyBee Switch to their library. It is a really cool device for people who cannot operate traditional switches and buttons. The HoneyBee Switch is an “innovative, easy-to-use” switch that senses the proximity of a hand, finger, head, foot, etc. To activate the HoneyBee Switch, the user simply places his or her hand, head, or another body part over the sensor window. An audible tone will sound when there's activation.

Here is a link to their blog: <https://www.eastersealstech.com/2022/08/11/honeybee-switch/>

Outreach

At the end of September Page presented at the Statewide Independent Living Council's (SILC) annual meeting via zoom. He presented about what DakotaLink activities have been happening throughout the state.

Brett Burden, Page Hudson, Joshua Popelka, and James Honomichl attended the Fall Conference, which was in Sioux Falls on October 11, 12, & 13. There were approximately 300 people in attendance. We also participated in the NDEAM (National Disability Employment Awareness Month) celebration luncheon which had about 400 people.

DakotaLink has not extended the KELO commercials out because we were at the end of our budget for the fiscal year, but we will once we get further into our new budget year. Jared Brown in Rapid City attended the Veterans Stand Down in September. Jared also conducted school district training in October.

There is a South Dakota Conference on Developmental Disabilities held in Sioux Falls at the Convention Center September 6 & 7, 2023. DakotaLink is considering attending this conference with a booth. DakotaLink will also be at the Special Ed Conference in March 2023.

Annual Progress Report

We are currently compiling the data for the Annual Progress Report. This is the report that goes to the ACL (Administration for Community Living) for the federal government. This is to be complete by the end of December for the Federal and State government.

MERR Program Year 6

If you or anyone you know needs gently used Medical Equipment, we would encourage you to support this program.

Ron Lien continues to work to expand The Medical Equipment Recycle and Reuse program.

Press releases for MERR are being distributed to the full Department of Social Services media list in periodic increments. This started in July 2022. Specific information regarding MERR is being communicated to Medicaid providers via regular Provider Bulletins by Medical Services staff.

Here is a link to the brochure for the program:

<https://www.dakotalink.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/MERR-Brochure-20181004-1.pdf>

Here is a list of the latest items available from the website:

<https://www.sd.at4all.com/Items/ItemSearch.aspx?Mode=NewItem>

Social Networking

We continue our efforts in social networking getting a great deal of traffic on Facebook and share posts with ATAP, AT3, ILC, DHS, DSS, and MERR. More resource information on our website: <https://www.dakotalink.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/AT-Resource-Directory-2017.pdf>

Low-Interest Loans

We also want to remind everyone of our low-interest loan program. The loans are designed to fit your budget and we will work with you to create affordable payback payments. We will also help you fill out the application if you have any concerns with that process. The application is on our website, but here is the direct link:

<https://www.dakotalink.net/at-funding>

DakotaLink strives to maintain its professionalism by earning a RESNA ATP certification. (ATP – Assistive Technology Professional). We currently have 5 staff with their ATP certification and will continue to help the newer employees gain that status. To maintain these credentials, we must complete a specific amount of CEU's (Continuing Education Credits) on a biennial basis. We have been doing that mostly through webinars that ATAP provides through an agreement with ATIA.



Remember, we are on Facebook! So, be sure to “like” us to see what we are up to daily:

<https://www.facebook.com/DakotaLinkAT/>

Be safe and healthy!

Best,

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DakotaLink is the South Dakota Assistive Technology Program.

Our mission is to assist individuals with functional limitations; due to a disability, illness, injury, or the effects of aging; maximize their potential whether at home or in the community, at school, at work, or at play through the use of Assistive Technology.

An assistive technology device is any equipment or tool that helps individuals overcome limitations in daily activities.

Assistive technology services assist individuals to acquire, use, modify or maintain an assistive technology device.