

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WORKFORCE ISSUES IN A CHANGING SOCIETY IS THE FOCUS  
OF A CONTINUING LEGISLATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERIES**

CONCORD – More than 100 state representatives and senators are expected to attend the third session of an educational series for the NH State Legislature in May entitled *Workforce Issues in a Changing Society*, sponsored by the Real Choice Advisory Council, in collaboration with Rep. Peter Batula and Sen. Jane O'Hearn.

The Real Choice System Change Project is a collaborative effort between New Hampshire's Department of Health and Human Services, Granite State Independent Living, the Institute of Health, Law and Ethics at Pierce Law Center and the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire.

Robyn I. Stone, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Institute for the Future of Aging Services in Washington, D.C., will present the third session for legislators only on May 13, 2003 in Concord. A presentation for state department and community agency staff will be held on May 12, 2003. Stone is a noted researcher and leading international authority on aging and long-term care policy.

For information about the May series contact Susan Fox, Real Choice Project Director, at (603) 228-2084 or e-mail [swfox@cisunix.unh.edu](mailto:swfox@cisunix.unh.edu).

More than 120 NH state representatives and senators packed the community room at St. Paul's church in Concord for the March session to hear Dr. David Braddock, Ph.D., from the Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities at the University of Colorado talk about financing community-based long-term care. With much of the current conversation in the Legislature centered on the state budget, this topic was of particular interest.

While Dr. Braddock commended the state on its progressive service system, particularly for persons with developmental disabilities, the data he presented did not paint a very positive picture for the future of these services. His data indicate that: the number of people on NH's waiting list for community services for persons with developmental disabilities is growing, from 157 in 1994 to 391 in 2003; family caregivers are aging and only 37% are under the age of 41; people with developmental disabilities are living longer; direct support staff earn below poverty-level wages; and NH ranks 6<sup>th</sup> nationally in per-capita income yet ranks 50<sup>th</sup> in state and local taxes as a percentage of personal income.

The series is an initiative of the Real Choice Systems Change grants awarded to New Hampshire by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The \$2.3 million three-year project is in response to President George W. Bush's New Freedom Initiative *"to help ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to live close to their families and friends, to live more independently, to engage in productive employment, and to participate in community life."*

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*The Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire, is a University Center for Excellence on Disability, established in 1987 with a mission to promote the full inclusion of people with disabilities into their communities.*