



Arizona Spinal Cord  
Injury Association

# AZSCIA E-NEWS

December 2006

*"A monthly update  
on the happenings  
and upcoming  
events in the  
association."*

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We're on the Web!  
[www.azspinal.org](http://www.azspinal.org)

## Mission OSS - Operation Santa Support Toy Drive

Please donate an unwrapped toy for our third annual toy drive. This year, we are partnering with the 164<sup>th</sup> Corp Support that is based in Mesa. This is the second tour of duty for the 164<sup>th</sup> and it has been hard on the children. There are 65 children between the ages of 1-years old to 16 years old.

The toys will be collected at our office, Arizona Spinal Cord Injury Association (AZSCIA), 901 E Willetta Street #2306 in Phoenix. The main cross streets are McDowell Road and 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Office hours are Monday-Thursday from 9:00AM - 4:00PM and Friday from 10:00AM -2:00PM. If you have any questions, please contact the office at 602-239-5929. The toy drive will end on Tuesday, December 19, 2006.

## Birdies for Charities

We would like to kick off the 2007 FBR Open! This is our second year of partnering with Birdies For Charities.

In recent years at the FBR Open, the PGA professionals have averaged 1400 birdies during tournament play. That means that if you pledged 1¢ for every birdie, your pledge would amount to \$14. In 2007, we will receive 110% of all pledges raised for our Association.

You may either pledge a 1¢ minimum per birdie or make a one time donation with a minimum of \$20. Pledge forms are available at the office. Please contact the Arizona Spinal Cord Injury Association at 602-239-5929 to request forms.

Your pledge gives you the chance to win the Grand Prize of a 2007 Buick Lucerne (courtesy of Buick) and you'll also be eligible for a random drawing for over 100 great prizes! For every penny pledged, you'll be entered into the drawing. So, if you pledge 5¢ per birdie, your name will be entered five times into the random drawing.

All pledge forms must be in our office by January 4, 2007.

## Introducing our partnership with CarePages®

As a service to the spinal cord injury community, we are pleased to make CarePages® available to our members and site visitors. CarePages® are free, private, personalized Web pages that help members and their family and friends stay in touch. They allow families greater control over communication and provide an easy way for friends and loved ones to respond with messages of support. CarePages® comply with all patient privacy regulations. Please visit the

CarePages® site at [www.carepages.com/azspinal](http://www.carepages.com/azspinal). Click on "Create A CarePage." If you have any questions, please contact the office at 602-239-5929.

## The Teddy Pendergrass Alliance and the National Spinal Cord Injury Association Join Forces

The National Spinal Cord Injury Association (NSCIA) and the Teddy Pendergrass Alliance (TPA) have joined forces with other disability organizations in a shared effort to postpone implementation of a troublesome new Power Mobility Devices (PMD) Coverage Policy issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Slated to take effect November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006 the new policy would limit or deny medically appropriate power mobility to Medicare beneficiaries with mobility disabilities such as spinal cord injury, ALS, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, and severe brain injury. The regulatory changes would have wide-ranging impact as State Medicaid agencies and other third party payers adopt this policy and reset their fees.

This is the first joint action taken by NSCIA and TPA since they announced a partnership earlier this week during the 2006 Spinal Cord Injury Hall of Fame Gala at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. NSCIA and TPA have pledged to work together, and with other disability leaders to confront the issues that continue to impact people with spinal cord injuries and diseases.

"I am outraged by the insensitivity, the lack of recognition of the hardships this presents, the limits on independence this would create and the overall cloud of unconcern it shows," said Teddy Pendergrass, founder of TPA.

Marcie Roth, Executive Director and CEO of NSCIA agrees, adding, "This is a critical time to act in collaboration with other organizations in our community, such as TPA, to make sure our community has the strongest voice possible on this urgent and important issue."

Should this new rule take effect, a chain reaction of problems is anticipated. The new coverage policy known as the Local Coverage Determination (LCD) does not address progressive loss of function as a consideration in determining the most appropriate solution for someone needing power mobility. The new fee schedule drastically reduces reimbursement for durable products used by consumers with significant disabilities by up to 40%. Therefore, these reductions will eliminate the availability of the appropriate power wheelchair and service required by most Medicare beneficiaries with complex mobility needs.

An outdated pricing methodology that has been universally recognized as flawed (including recognition by CMS) is the "root" of the CMS fee schedule problem. For example, the fee schedule provides that a Group 2 power wheelchair (less complex) will be reimbursed at a higher rate than a Group 3 power wheelchair (more complex).

In addition to the problems these reductions will and have already caused, CMS published the new policy and fee schedule with an implementation date that gives individuals needing power mobility products, clinicians, manufacturers and medical equipment providers less than 8 weeks to adjust

their practices and businesses. These changes are the most dramatic since the establishment of the power mobility benefit under Medicare with 64 new codes, new pricing, new coverage criteria, and new documentation requirements. There is simply not enough time to make the adjustments necessary to implement these new changes.

To prevent major access problems for Medicare beneficiaries, CMS MUST postpone the November 15<sup>th</sup> Power Mobility Device LCD Determination and Fee Schedule in order to resolve all of these pressing issues.

In addition to postponing the power mobility reductions, Roth, Pendergrass and others recommend that a new Fee Schedule is established using a rational methodology and accurate product classifications and pricing data and that the necessary changes to LCD are made to eliminate the risk of Medicare beneficiaries not receiving appropriate power mobility technology. Once all identified issues are resolved, final pricing, coverage policy, and documentation requirements should be published, and allow for a 120 day implementation period prior to the effective date.

The number of people who will ultimately be adversely affected by this is too large to ignore. The urgency of this matter is clear, as the November 15<sup>th</sup> implementation date approaches. Medicare's power mobility reductions must be postponed. Failing to meet the mobility needs of people with disabilities has a significant impact on the individual, states and taxpayers. Inadequate mobility devices will lead to dangerous and costly secondary complications, limit independence and employment options and deny equal access to programs and services which will trigger unnecessary and costly legal action.

The mission of the Teddy Pendergrass Alliance is to urge and assist individuals with spinal cord injuries to lead a productive life through education and employment.

For more information, visit [www.spinalcord.org](http://www.spinalcord.org), <http://teddypendergrass.com/alliance.htm> or call (800) 962-9629.

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## The Governor's Volunteer Service Awards Nomination

"The Governor's Volunteer Service Awards recognize those who exemplify the motto, "Give Today, Touch Tomorrow" by giving selflessly of their time and effort to help improve the quality of life for the citizens of Arizona."  
Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano

There is still time to nominate an individual, organization, business, National Service member, and/or service-learning practitioner in your community for the Governor's 2006 Volunteer Service Awards, which is considered to be the highest volunteer award in the state. At a special reception in April 2007, Governor Janet Napolitano will recognize and honor 16 deserving recipients who have performed exceptional volunteer service in their communities.

All nominations are due by December 8, 2006. All those nominated will also receive special recognition for their nomination. If you have any questions, please contact Bob Shogren at (602) 364-2248 or [bshogren@az.gov](mailto:bshogren@az.gov).

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## Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation Resource Guides

The office just received the recent copies of the Resource Guides. If you would like a copy, please call the office and we will mail to you.

## A Holiday Workshop

Delicious snacks and refreshments will be provided by the Brain Injury Association of Arizona, Maricopa County Chapter. Please register early because space is limited by calling 602-808-9500.

### **Your Dependent with Special Needs:**

Planning for your family member or loved one with Special Needs – Making their future more secure and Mistakes to Avoid.

Kay Vilay of United Cerebral Palsy will present: Support and Services for families; Advocacy and Public Policy issues.

Carolyn Warden of Asperger Parent Network will present: Hope and Community; Creating Support Networks that are right for you.

Date: Wednesday, December 6, 2006

Time: 5:30PM – 6:45PM

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## Arizona Heart to Heart, LLC

The Arizona Heart To Heart is a unique educational life skills and etiquette program designed and developed for all children and adults including people with special needs and sexual/domestic violence victims. The program promotes and embraces:

Education, storytelling, literacy  
Values, life skills, etiquette, inner/outer beauty, self esteem  
Family unity, friendships, and cultural diversity  
Community outreach and acts of kindness  
Appreciating people with disabilities

**MISSION:** To educate children and their families on the importance of an education, life skills, personal and character development, and etiquette, to create a stable home life and social environment while implementing values in the lives of clients served.

**VISION:** No matter who we are, what we look like or where we come from, we all want the same things from life. Our goal is to ensure that every child and their families, served by the Arizona Heart To Heart gains a sense of value in themselves and the people around the world, only to acknowledge their is only one race, the human race.

### **PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

*Etiquette dinner and tea workshops, educational life skills program, beauty workshops,*

*Storytelling, special events, networking group, and personal assistance services*

Children Ages (6-8) (9-12) (13-18) Adults

Contact: Helen Noonan at 602-957-2594 or [helen@azhearttoheart.org](mailto:helen@azhearttoheart.org)  
[www.azhearttoheart.org](http://www.azhearttoheart.org)

"Nobody has measured, not even poets, how much the heart can hold."  
Zelda Fitzgerald

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## Roommate Wanted

Quad, C4/5 is looking for a roommate. He is willing to relocate to South or

North Scottsdale or East Phoenix areas. If you are in need of a roommate, please email [ljblack@aol.com](mailto:ljblack@aol.com). Thank you.

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## Upcoming e-news information.....

If there is anything that you would like to share with your fellow members, please contact Vangie Mortenson. She will ensure that the information will be posted on the e-news.

**THANK YOU!**