

**“The Person with a Disability is a Person First.”**

– Author unknown

**P**ERSONS with a variety of disabilities are leading fuller, longer, more active lives. This is especially the case with regard to developmental and intellectual disabilities. Advances in pre- and perinatal care, surgical correction of congenital defects, early childhood programs and the understanding of the aging process and related morbidities have all contributed to these improvements. In this special edition of *Connecticut Medicine (Emerging Issues in the Care of Persons with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities)*, we have included various articles that focus on the current state of health and related care in populations of individuals with disabilities. These articles review what may be the most appropriate goals in the provision of care in the future. Realizing that healthcare in these and other populations is not mutually exclusive from the provision of other types of related services, we will present ten articles that cover the continuum of care and service in populations of individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

The articles cover original research on the attitudes and practices of physicians in providing care to individuals with disabilities (*Physician Attitudes and Practices on Providing Care to Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities: An Exploratory Study*), nursing perspectives to consider in the care of older adults with disabilities (*The Best and Worst of Times: Cautious Optimism and the Care of Older Adults with Disabilities*), and the management of psychiatric issues (*Management of Psychiatric Issues in Patients with Intellectual Disability*). The potential role of physical therapy across the lifespan is examined (*Creating Meaningful Therapy Programs for People with Developmental Disabilities*), as is that of complementary and alternative medicine for older adults with disabilities (*Complementary and Alternative Medicine for Older Adults with Intellectual Disabilities*).

Unique personal perspectives are provided in the form of an essay written by a parent with a child who has a developmental disability (*From a Parent's Perspective*). The role of the pediatrician and other healthcare providers in early childhood intervention is examined (*The Importance of Service Coordination in Early Intervention in Children with Developmental Disabilities; The physician's Role in Educational Planning for Students with Developmental Disabilities*). Additionally, the impact that housing exerts with regard to the care of individuals with disabilities (*Housing Barriers and Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities*) is discussed. Finally, crucial to improving our knowledge in all of these areas is the conduct of quality research; certain issues must be considered in the practice of research with populations of individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities (*Research Issues Related to Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities*).

Dramatic and recent advances in all aspects of the care of persons with developmental and intellectual disabilities have occurred; however, much remains to be done. The ultimate goal of inclusion is best facilitated with continued improvements in health and related care. Such improvements need to take place because these are the right and best things to do, not only for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities but for society at large.

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