

# P&A TIDBITS

LEGAL NEWS & other

Disability-Related info

OCTOBER 2020

## OCTOBER IS:

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Down Syndrome Awareness Month

National Spina Bifida Awareness Month

## AND INCLUDES:

Mental Illness Awareness Week – October 4 through October 11th

People With Disabilities World Mental Health Day – October 10th

World Cerebral Palsy Day – October 7th

## A Commemorative Year

This year marks not only the 75th observance of **National Disability Employment Awareness Month** (NDEAM), but also the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Both milestones are being commemorated with a range of events and activities centered on the theme “Increasing Access and Opportunity.” The observance of NDEAM is administered by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).

“Ensuring that America’s workplaces continue to include and accommodate people with disabilities will be an important part of our economic rebound,” said U.S. Secretary of Labor Eugene Scalia. “Looking ahead, the DOL will remain focused on the policies that led to a strong economy and record-low unemployment rates for persons with disabilities prior to the pandemic. A vigorous economic rebound and job growth will, alongside the Americans with Disabilities Act, increase access and opportunity for Americans with disabilities.”

“People with disabilities are experienced problem solvers with a proven ability to adapt,” said Office of Disability Employment Policy Deputy Assistant Secretary, Jennifer Sheehy. “Now more than ever, flexibility is important for both workers and employers. NDEAM celebrates the ingenuity people with disabilities bring to America’s workplaces.”

The mission of the Department of Labor is to foster, promote and develop the welfare of the wage earners, job seekers and retirees of the United States; improve working conditions; advance opportunities for profitable employment; and assure work-related benefits and rights.

The DOL notes that the Library of Congress also prepares resources listing national organizations that provide information on a range of issues related to recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining employees with disabilities. See, Employment Resource List from the National Library Service (NLS) for the Blind and Print Disabled (<https://www.loc.gov/nls/resources/employment/>).

Sources: <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/odep/odep20200630> and <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/ndeam>



My disability  
is one part of  
who I am.

At work, it's what people  
can do that matters.

National Disability Employment  
Awareness Month –  
Celebrating 70 Years!

OFFICE OF DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT POLICY  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



## HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

OUR OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED  
MONDAY OCTOBER 12, 2020

## HAPPY HALLOWEEN!



## It's not too early



## THEY'RE VOTING. ARE YOU?

General Election.....November 3, 2020

Voter Registration Closes: Pre-General.....October 19, 2020  
(Voters may still register in person and cast an absentee ballot October 20 – November 2, 2020)

### Absentee Voting:

Absentee ballots may be requested at any time in 2020 prior to the day of an election.

\*General Election.....September 18 – November 2, 2020

(\*UOCAVA absentee voting will begin September 18th for the General Election. Please contact your County Clerk for further assistance.)

## MAKE THE DISABILITY VOTE COUNT

## DISCLAIMER

P&A Legal Tidbits is provided to clients and other interested persons. No legal advice is intended nor should this publication be interpreted as providing legal advice.

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INFORMED**



### EEOC Updates COVID-19 Technical Assistance

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) updated its technical assistance document, "What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws" to address common questions about COVID-19 and federal equal employment opportunity laws (for technical assistance document, go to: <https://www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-covid-19-and-ada-rehabilitation-act-and-other-eeo-laws>).

The technical assistance document is useful not only to employers but employees as well for information about various situations that could be presented.

The EEO laws, including the ADA and Rehabilitation Act, continue to apply during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, but they do not interfere with or prevent employers from following the guidelines and suggestions made by the CDC or state/local public health authorities about steps employers should take regarding COVID-19 (for CDC link, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>).



Employers should remember that guidance from public health authorities is likely to change as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves. Therefore, employers should continue to follow the most current information on maintaining workplace safety. Many common workplace inquiries about the COVID-19 pandemic are addressed in the CDC publication "General Business Frequently Asked Questions" (found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html>). All EEOC materials related to COVID-19 are collected at [www.eeoc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.eeoc.gov/coronavirus).

Source: <https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-updates-covid-19-technical-assistance-publication-0>

General Election absentee and early voting starts Sept. 18



**DON'T FORGET**

**about absentee voting**



Absentee Voting in Wyoming

The following information on absentee voting in Wyoming applies to any Wyoming county in which you reside. You must be registered to vote in Wyoming to be eligible for receiving an absentee ballot. For information about registering to vote and the requirements for registering click here. If you arrived on this page from your county clerk's website, simply close this tab in your web browser to return to their site, or select your county from the dropdown options below.

Source: <https://sos.wyo.gov/Elections/State/AbsenteeVoting.aspx>

**RTC:Rural**

**Research & Training Center  
on Disability in Rural Communities**

### Research Brief: Social Isolation and Loneliness During the First Wave of COVID-19

The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center for Place-Based Solutions for Rural Community Participation, Health, and Employment (RTC: Rural) published a research brief outlining findings of a survey related to health, social connectedness, and loneliness for people with disabilities before and after the first wave of stay-at-home orders.

Social isolation and loneliness are a public health concern because they are associated with poor mental and physical health outcomes and mortality. Social isolation is defined as have few, or no, social connections, and not participating in activities with others. Loneliness is defined as feeling unsatisfied about the amount of social engagement in one's life.

Before the current pandemic, people with disabilities reported significantly higher rates of social isolation and loneliness than those without disabilities. Inaccessible events and buildings, limited accessible public transportation, social stigma, and lower rates of employment all contribute to these high rates. When restrictions are put in place to help protect people from COVID-19, what happens to these rates?

To learn more about how COVID-19 and public health responses such as stay-at-home orders may contribute to feelings of social isolation and loneliness among people with disabilities, RTC:Rural researchers compared data from two cross-sectional samples collected before and after the first wave of "stay-at-home" orders.

#### Summary findings:

- Social isolation and feelings of loneliness are associated with poor mental and physical health.
- Opportunities for in-person social engagement have become more limited during the COVID-19 pandemic due to social distancing and stay-at-home mandates.
- We compared two groups who provided data at different points of time – one pre-COVID and another post-COVID. Post-COVID rural and urban samples reported significantly more interactions with family and close friends.
- st-COVID urban respondents reported significantly lower rates of feeling left out, while the post-COVID rural respondents reported similar rates.

Source: <http://rtc.ruralinstitute.umn.edu/new-research-brief-social-isolation-and-loneliness-during-covid-19/> (also providing a link to download the research brief)

FOR MORE  
INFO

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## MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK

first full week of October



In 1990, Congress established the first full week of October as Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) in recognition of NAMI's efforts to raise mental illness awareness. Since then, mental health advocates across the country have joined NAMI in the effort to educate the public about mental illness.

Each year, millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental health condition. However, mental illness affects everyone directly or indirectly through family, friends or coworkers. Despite mental illnesses' reach and prevalence, stigma and misunderstanding are also, unfortunately, widespread. That is why each year, during the first week of October, NAMI and participants across the country raise awareness of mental illness. Each year, we educate the public, fight stigma and provide support. And each year, our movement grows stronger.

NAMI believes that mental health conditions are important to discuss year-round, but highlighting them during Mental Illness Awareness Week provides a dedicated time for mental health advocates across the country to come together as one unified voice. Since 1990, when Congress officially established the first full week of October as MIAW, advocates have worked together to sponsor activities, large or small, to educate the public about mental illness.

### MIAW 2020

The theme of this year's Mental Illness Awareness Week is, "What People with Mental Illness Want You to Know." Throughout the week, NAMI will be raising the voices of those with lived experience to talk about some of the conditions and symptoms that are most misunderstood.

### You Are Not Alone

NAMI continues its year-long awareness campaign, You Are Not Alone, to feature the stories of people affected by mental illness to fight stigma, inspire others and educate the broader public. Now more than ever, the mental health community must come together and show that no one is ever really alone. No one should be without the information, support, connection and help they need.

### Resources

Additional information, resources and graphics to support Mental Illness Awareness Week will be added leading up to MIAW 2020. Additional stats, infographics and resources can also be found at Mental Health by the Numbers (link: <https://www.nami.org/mhstats>).

Source: <https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Mental-Illness-Awareness-Week>.

You are NOT

# ALONE



1 in 5 U.S. adults  
experience  
mental illness

Millions of people are affected by mental illness each year. Across the country, many people just like you work, perform, create, compete, laugh, love and inspire every day.

## 1 in 25

1 in 25 U.S. adults  
experience serious  
mental illness

## 17%

of youth (6-17 years)  
experience a mental  
health disorder



### Remembering U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was a strong force and ally for equality, accessibility, and inclusion for people with disabilities. In one of the most important disability rights cases considered by the U.S. Supreme Court—*Olmstead v. L.C.*—Justice Ginsburg authored the majority opinion and wrote that the institutionalization of people with disabilities wrongly perpetuates a stereotype that they were "incapable or unworthy of participating in community life." In the *Olmstead* decision, the Supreme Court found that people with disabilities could not be forced into institutions and shut away from society, declaring people with disabilities have a right to be integrated in our communities.

Justice Ginsburg wrote in another opinion that Congress's passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act finally included "individuals with disabilities among people who count in composing 'We the People.'"

We cannot list all of the important impacts she made by word and example, however, we can honor her memory. She stood for fighting for the things that should be valued, at the forefront, equality in fact and action, not just words. Her death, while sad and possibly tragic, is a call to continue the fight. I believe it is how she would wish to see her legacy fulfilled. Not unlike other icons in the battle for civil rights, she forged paths knowing that others would follow and accomplish what might be dreams to become everyday reality for all people. The attainment of equality and inclusion that she should envisioned should be our baton to carry. Let us remember her by taking on her spirit to never give up.



Robert Walters, P&A Staff Attorney