



Keeping You “In the Know...” 12/14/18

White Canes to be Covered by Medicaid!

- Victory!! White canes will be covered by Medicaid!

A rule proposed by the Ohio Department of Medicaid to provide coverage of white canes as durable medical equipment was finalized earlier this week, making Ohio the first state in the country to provide coverage for white canes!

The Medicaid rule 5160-10-30 includes coverage for ambulation aids under durable medical equipment, which previously covered canes, crutches or walkers but excluded coverage of white canes. The rule will take effect January 1, 2019, and individuals should check with local providers on availability of Medicaid eligible white canes.

Cleveland Sight Center and other Ohio Sight Centers had previously advocated for coverage of white canes in House Bill 587, sponsored by Representatives Marlene Anielski (R – Walton Hills) and Darrell Kick (R – Loudonville). The bill received a number of hearings in the Ohio House while Medicaid contemplated making the change administratively. We thank Representatives Anielski and Kick for their leadership on this initiative as we take a step toward closing the gap in insurance coverage that exists for individuals with visual impairments.

Cleveland Sight Center has been the leader throughout this process, providing key information and proponent testimony to legislators and administrators through meetings, hearings and visits to the Ohio Statehouse in Columbus over the last two years.

We are extremely proud of CSC's work here and hopeful as we continue to work towards having the voice of our clients heard.

For more information, [click here](#).

Wishing You Happy Holidays and a Wonderful New Year!

- Happy Holidays to all CSC staff, Board Trustees, volunteers, clients and friends! As we reflect on the past year, we are thankful to all who have worked side by side or served our agency in any capacity. Thank you for your support and dedication; best wishes for a joyous holiday season and a Happy New Year!
- The weekly “In The Know” will not publish the next few weeks and will resume on Friday, January 11th, 2019.

Strengthening Partnerships and Educating the Community:

- Current Secretary of State and Lieutenant Governor-elect Jon Husted continues to speak highly of Cleveland Sight Center’s work with recent mentions in a recent press release and article in the Freemont News Messenger stating that the Call Center “has improved customer experience by reducing the average wait time for callers into the Business Services Call Center from five minutes and 19 seconds to just 43 seconds with a 95.7 percent customer satisfaction rate.” Keep up the great work, team!
- The Outreach team partnered with members of the Registration team to meet with over 60 Care Coordinators at the MetroHealth facility in Brooklyn Heights this week to talk about CSC’s programs, services and the process to register a client. The group was very interested in CSC’s presentation and the feedback received was extremely positive. The Outreach team also conducted the third of three “Blindness Basics” trainings along with an overview of Audio Description to 40 staff members at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and hosted the second of two classes of students from Hawken School for a presentation and discussion on blindness, disabilities and CSC’s programs and services. In addition, a reporter from the Cleveland Plain

Dealer visited with participants in the USABA National Fitness Challenge to write a feature that is expected later this month. Finally, a filmmaker from Kent State University stopped by for an interview with some CSC associates regarding the agency, programs and deaf-blind services.

- Jennifer Dean and Erin St. Denis traveled to Washington, DC this week for assessment and training on assistive technology for a senior-level advisor at one of the United States government agencies. CSC was recommended and approached to consider applying for this opportunity and was chosen after a highly-selective interview process.
- Volunteer Manager Melissa Mauk attended a workshop through the Forum for Volunteer Administrators (FVA), a professional networking group dedicated to cultivating the culture of volunteers in non-profit organizations. The FVA Workshop, which took place in Westlake, focused on designing work for today's volunteers.



Group photo of volunteer administrators smiling with hands in the air

What's Happening at CSC:

- CSC's Call Center recently began a call campaign to support the Annual Appeal, making outgoing calls to current and past donors to

make sure the fundraising piece has been received. They will also engage donors to this year's Appeal with thank you calls in the near future as an additional touch point and grateful recognition of these gifts to support the agency's programs and services.

- The Children & Young Adult Services (CYAS) department hosted the annual "Cookies & Milk with Santa" children's party at CSC on Saturday, December 8th. Close to 250 of CSC's youngest clients and their families enjoyed arts and crafts, holiday activities, goodies, photos and gifts from Santa at this festive event.



A smiling Santa Claus gears up for the event



A youngster makes a craft with the assistance of a volunteer



Event attendee touches the paper snowman on the wall

- Many volunteers helped prepare for and assist with the CYAS “Cookies & Milk with Santa” event. Three volunteer groups came on two separate occasions to help prepare for the day, assisting with wrapping presents and decorating and a fourth group came to help with the party itself. Thank you to all of the staff and volunteers who helped make the day a success!
- The Book Discussion group met at CSC on Tuesday, December 11th from 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. to enjoy their annual holiday luncheon and reviewed the book Red Notice.
- Students in Bright Futures Preschool received a visit this week from friend of CSC Donald Taylor, who made his annual visit to CSC with his mother, Mrs. Cheryl Taylor. They read a few stories to the children and brought snacks and gifts for each. It was wonderful to see Donald again! Also, friend of CSC and Bright Futures Preschool Rick Pavlish stopped by to drop off his annual donation to support the students and activities in preschool. “Mr. Rick” has been donating to Bright Futures Preschool for many years. Thank you Donald and Rick!



Donald and Cheryl Taylor with preschool students



Donald Taylor and Cheryl Taylor reading to preschoolers



Sylvia Snyder and Rick Pavlish in the CSC lobby

- Volunteer Bailey celebrated her last day in the preschool this week with a whole lot of fun. Thank you for all of your kindness, time and work this year Bailey!



A preschooler and volunteer Bailey with big smiles

- Employment Services and Volunteer Services welcome Westfield Insurance Human Resources staff members to CSC's December Job Club event today. Attendees will hear from Human Resources professionals about the range of job opportunities available in the insurance industry, how your resume should feature your talents and experiences, how to address reasonable accommodations requests and personalized feedback about individual interview techniques.
- Have you heard of Vision Therapy, including how and why it works and who could benefit from it? Would you like to know more? Grant Vision Care is a private optometric practice in Cuyahoga Falls that specializes in behavioral optometric therapies for children and adults of all ages. Along with Dr. Drusilla Grant, Dr. Samantha Zaczek has focused her training on vision development and vision rehabilitation. Their practice includes a variety of types of vision therapy, neuro-rehabilitation after brain injuries, syntonics (phototherapy) and vestibular vision therapy. They evaluate and address the core issues related to convergence insufficiency, ADHD, autism, learning disabilities, binocular vision disorders, traumatic brain injuries, strokes, concussions, Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis and other neurological conditions. Dr. Zaczek will give a presentation open to all interested CSC staff members on Tuesday, January 8th, from 8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. in the Clyde E. Williams, Jr. Auditorium to explain vision therapy and the services offered. and will be available to answer questions. Afterwards, Dr. Zaczek will spend time with various CSC departments to learn about services and how to better collaborate and support each other's work. Please check with your supervisor about attending.
- Mark your calendars! The date for this year's Volunteer Appreciation Dinner has been set for Thursday, April 25th 2019 at CSC and the theme for this year's dinner is "Under the Sea"! Want to help make this year's volunteer dinner a success? If so, please note you can help support this year's volunteer appreciation event by:
-Donating gifts or gift cards (perhaps holiday gifts you might like to re-gift) to become a part of the raffle baskets for this year's event.

- Assisting with the planning of this year's event (please seek permission from your manager first, then contact Melissa Mauk x4581).
- Signing up to help as a volunteer/server for this year's event (please stay tuned to ITK for details).

Clinic Corner: Meet the CSC Doctors!

- Dr. Lidija Balciunas graduated from the Ohio State University's College of Optometry in 1987 and has spent the last 25 years of her professional career working with Cleveland Sight Center. She enjoys having the opportunity to work in an agency that provides and makes available comprehensive rehabilitation services to people who are blind or have low vision all under one roof. She feels fortunate that at CSC, there's access to grant programs and funds allowing us to appropriate the recommended aids, adaptations and services necessary for optimal restoration of function and quality of life. Dr. Balciunas appreciates being involved in the process of partnering with patients to find solutions for increased independence, improved function and general restoration of a sense of well-being to those who are facing sight loss is very satisfying and humbling. "Our patients are remarkable people and they inspire me daily," she says.



Lidija Balciunas, OD

- Dr. Annalisa Katz-Schloss graduated from the SUNY College of Optometry and has been working at CSC since 2007. She appreciates working at Cleveland Sight Center as it affords the opportunity to work as a team with other professionals who are passionate, talented and interested in taking care of patients who are blind or have low vision. She feels grateful to be able to both share ideas as well as learn from her CSC colleagues as "together, we are able to provide

comprehensive rehabilitative care to our patients." Dr. Schloss enjoys meeting the patients with their family members and educating all members about the specific eye condition they are struggling with. "Frequently, both patients and their family have questions that I am happy to answer," she says. Another bonus of working in the realm of low vision is always being exposed to and learning new information about eye diseases and current treatments.



Annalisa Katz-Schloss, OD

Eyedea Shop's Product of the Week: Cover Blubber

- It's weird, it's fun and colorful, it's squishy like a kid would like and it's practical. The newest item in the Eyedea Shop is called "Cover Blubber"! It's a set of four container covers for your leftovers in the fridge and made of a rubbery stretchable material that feels like slime. It molds and clings to containers to keep food covered in the fridge or freezer...only no more cutting your fingers or hands on that plastic wrap or aluminum foil box blade. Safe, nontoxic and reusable. Wash by hand only. Set of four different colored covers in extra small, small, medium and large. The price is \$20.00.



Children's low vision watch

Items of Note:

- A reminder to all online shoppers that when you place orders on Amazon, make sure you place them through AmazonSmile and chose CSC, so CSC can benefit from the purchases at no extra cost to you! AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice.
- Caltech is using mixed reality to improve the lives of people who are blind. New research combines augmented reality with computer vision algorithms that will allow developers to build software that will enable objects to “talk.” The headset, CARA (Cognitive Augmented Reality Assistant), is designed to translate the visual world into English audio. The researchers believe that the device can be used in banks, stores, museums and other locations to make those spaces more accessible for people who are blind. To read more, [click here](#).