

## Keynote Speakers

Our keynote speakers from American Institutes for Research (AIR) in Washington, D.C., will deliver their presentation:

*The New Workforce: A Look at Policy and Employment for People with Disabilities:*

*A number of Federal policies have attempted to address employment issues for people with disabilities. However, the rates of employment for this population haven't improved. As the economy has recovered since the Great Recession, employment rates have not improved for people with disabilities. This presentation will discuss some of the data on employment and education challenges of people with disabilities, and suggests areas for policy focus.*



**Dahlia Shaewitz** leads the Disability and Rehabilitation practice area of AIR to improve competitive employment outcomes for qualified adults with disabilities. Ms. Shaewitz serves as co-Principal Investigator with Gallaudet University within a Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research. Ms. Shaewitz holds a Master's degree in writing from Johns Hopkins University, and a Master's in diplomacy from Norwich University. Ms. Shaewitz hails from a Deaf family and is fluent in American Sign Language.



**Dr. Michelle Yin, Ph.D** is an economist and senior researcher at AIR, where she focuses on labor economics. Dr. Yin has led a range of research studies using experimental and quasi experimental designs in the areas of disability and postsecondary education. Dr. Yin is currently leading an evaluation study of the State Exchange on Employment and Disability project coordinated through the Office of Disability and Employment Policy. She is also the lead author on two recently published AIR briefs that examine labor participation and employment rates by disability type and by State, and the income disparities between adults with and without disabilities by educational attainment.

## Speaker Profiles



### **Marylou Sudders, Secretary, Executive Office of Health & Human Services**

Secretary Sudders leads the largest executive agency in state government, a \$21 billion state budget with 22,000 public servants, and oversees critical services that touch almost one in four residents of the Commonwealth. She has dedicated her life to public service and to some of our most vulnerable citizens. She has been a public official, provider executive, advocate and college professor.



### **Elin Howe, Commissioner, MA Department of Developmental Services**

Commissioner Howe has over 40 years of experience in the field of intellectual disability. She has served as Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services since July, 2007. She previously served as Commissioner of the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities from 1989 to 1993. She also served as Vice President of Consulting Services for the Columbus Organization.



**Nicky Osborne, Commissioner, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

In March 2015, Commissioner Adelaide “Nicky” Osborne was appointed by Governor Charles Baker to head the MRC. She has nearly 40-years of experience developing and implementing services for individuals with disabilities. Previous to her appointment, Commissioner Osborne served as the director of the Brain Injury and Statewide Specialized Community Services in the Community Living division of the MRC.

**Employer Panel**



**Kathy Petkauskos, Director, Work Without Limits,  
University of Massachusetts Medical School**

Kathleen A. Petkauskos has over twenty years of experience delivering and managing vocational evaluation, supported employment, benefits planning, and job placement services for people with disabilities. As Senior Program Director of the Disability, Health and Employment Policy Unit at UMass Medical School, Ms. Petkauskos leads the development and implementation of various disability programs and services.



**Richard W. Curtis, Vice President of Workforce Development, State Street** is responsible for State Street’s strategy for community based employment programs in North America. Richard received the State Street Champion of Life Award in 2015 for his efforts in hiring individuals with disabilities.



**Laura Stout, Director of Contract Operations, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts** is President of Empowering Abilities, the company’s disability Employee Resource Group. Laura is also a member of Attorney General Maura Healey’s Disability Rights Advisory Committee.



**Rick Laferriere, Lead Manager, Workforce Initiatives, CVS Health** serves on the Board of Directors for the Commonwealth Corporation, several Workforce Investment Boards, the Working Partners Advisory Board for the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and on a number of local and national advisory councils focused on creating sustainable pipelines to employment for persons with disabilities.



**Colleen Moran, Director of Workforce & Volunteer Programs, Spaulding Rehabilitation Network** leads several initiatives from SRN, including Working Partners, a partnership with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission around the employment of people with disabilities in healthcare.



**Leo Vercollone, President, VERC Enterprises** joined the family business in 1980 when he partnered with his father Eugene and his brother Paul. One of Leo's greatest sources of pride in his business is the fact that 20% of VERC's workforce are employees with developmental disabilities. VERC has also become a leading employer for the Massachusetts Re-Entry program.



#### **Our Performers, John Ellis & Stephanie Schmidt**

During the late 80s and 90s, John had a promising career as a musician when he experienced a Traumatic Brain Injury. Following his recovery, John attained his Paralegal Certificate and Associate's degree in Paralegal Studies from Bunker Hill Community College through the MA Rehabilitation Commission. In 2015, he began an internship at the Massachusetts Office on Disability, which led to a part-time position at MOD. Stephanie is the Clinical Program Director at Vinfen's Gateway Arts, a studio arts center in Brookline, MA for individuals with developmental and other disabilities. Stephanie earned a Masters of Science in Human Services from UMass Boston in 2012.

#### **2016 Thomas P. Hopkins Disability Access Award Recipient**



**Mary Margaret Moore, Executive Director, Independent Living Center of the North Shore and Cape Anne (ILCNCSA)** Prior to her 18 years at ILCNCSA, Mary Margaret served at the Department of Mental Health in various positions. Throughout her distinguished career, Mary Margaret has made countless advocacy efforts for deinstitutionalization, consumer rights, emergency responses for persons with disabilities, inclusion of LGBT persons with disabilities, anti-bullying of seniors and individuals living with disabilities in subsidized housing, and physical accessibility among numerous other disability issues. Her latest statewide and national advocacy initiative involves changing the paradigm of Social Security to improve access by young adults to achieve their career goals, the MA CareerACCESS Youth Advisory Group. MOD is pleased to honor Mary Margaret with the Thomas P. Hopkins Disability Access Award this year.