



FROM the President of the P&A Board of Trustees, Sheila Davis

P&A began a new fiscal year on October 1, 2017, and we remain thankful, despite some of the uncertainty surrounding rights and services of many of the clients P&A serves. We also are thankful for our clients; past, present and future!

In the past year, P&A was actively involved in providing input to the proposed uses of Department of Health facilities (the Wyoming State Hospital and Wyoming Life Resource Center) to advocate against unnecessary institutionalization. We also provided substantial comments to proposed rules by the Department of Health related to the comprehensive and support waiver services for Medicaid eligible persons, resulting in positive changes. P&A continues to have strong roles in attempting to obtain needed changes to involuntary commitment statutes and practices, as well as those related to involuntary guardianships, which sometimes have adverse consequences to persons with disabilities. While these activities may seem key, P&A investigated numerous reports of abuse or neglect of persons with disabilities in various settings, including Wyoming's institutions. In addition, P&A provided referral services to scores of inquiries. Altogether, P&A processed 586 matters.

The work P&A does is continuing and FY 2018 already is putting our staff to task. We remain committed to the mandates of the many programs we implement in this State. We are constantly working on improvement of service delivery and attempting to achieve the best possible results for our clients. As 2018 will be another election year, P&A is focusing on education of the voting rights of persons with disabilities and improving voter accessibility.

We are confident in the tireless efforts of our staff who have a passion for the work P&A has been tasked with by Federal laws intended to provide protection of the rights recognized for our clients.

It all echoes the spirit of the very first Thanksgiving and the flourishing of new relationships and opportunities.

We at P&A wish all a Happy Thanksgiving for the opportunities this great country stands for!

Blind and Deaf Patron Denied a Tactile Interpreter posts win in lawsuit against movie theater chain

Must a movie theater provide special interpretation services to a patron who is deaf and blind, even if the cost will far exceed the price of a ticket to the film?



Maybe, a Pennsylvania federal appeals court has ruled. The Third Circuit Court of Appeals is giving Paul McGann, a deaf and blind person, a chance to argue he was entitled to a tactile interpreter at a Cinemark theater.

McGann, who is represented by Disability Rights Pennsylvania (a protection and advocacy organization), claimed Cinemark violated his rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act when it refused to provide him with a tactile interpreter so he could experience the movie "Gone Girl" in late 2014. He wanted to see the film in a Cinemark theater in the western part of the state because it had already left the theater he normally attended. His regular theater provided him with a tactile interpreter, who translated movies for him by American Sign Language using touch. His wife did that for McGann until her death in 2001.

A federal district court judge had ruled that a tactile interpreter is a special auxiliary aid or service that is not required by the ADA. The Third Circuit reversed in its opinion, holding that tactile interpreters are covered. The Third Circuit also remanded the case to the district court for a determination whether the accommodation would pose an undue burden for Cinemark, the third-largest movie chain in the country. This means that Cinemark still can argue that providing the requested interpreters would present an "undue burden," an exception to the disability law that takes into account the cost of the accommodation and the business's ability to pay for it.

MORE INFO

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