

# The Disability Research Institute



College of Applied Life Studies  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



February, 2002

## DISABILITY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

College of Applied Life Studies  
University of Illinois  
1207 S. Oak St., Room 158, MC-575  
Champaign, IL 61820  
217-265-0279; 217-265-0358 FAX  
217-244-6274 TTY  
dri@uiuc.edu  
www.als.uiuc.edu/dri

Chrisann Schiro-Geist, Ph.D.  
Managing Director  
and Co-Principal Investigator  
Professor, Dept. of Community Health

Tanya M. Gallagher, Ph.D.  
Scientific Director  
and Co-Principal Investigator  
Dean, College of Applied Life Studies

Emer D. Broadbent, J.D., Ph.D.  
Project Coordinator

Richard T. Roessler, Ph.D.  
Research Coordinator

Pat Manns  
Administrative Aide

## U.S. SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Office of Research, Evaluation &  
Statistics

## AFFILIATED PARTNERS

Northwestern University,  
Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago

Rutgers, The State University of  
New Jersey, School of Management  
and Labor Relations

University of Chicago, National  
Opinion Research Center

## COLLABORATING PARTNERS

University of Richmond (VA)  
Bureau of Disability Economics  
Research

University of Rhode Island  
Schmidt Labor Research Center

University of Wisconsin-Stout  
Stout Vocational Rehabilitation  
Institute

Southern University (LA)  
Rehabilitation Counseling Program

University of Illinois at Chicago  
Dept. of Disability and Human Devp.

# DRI NEWS

*The Disability Research Institute: Partnership in a New Paradigm*

## DRI Announces Small Grants Program Recipients

### *Program supports research in priority areas*

With the support of the Social Security Administration Office of Research and Statistics, DRI has established a "Small Grants Program." This Program provides up to \$25,000 to support research projects lasting no longer than twelve months. Of the 25 proposals received at the DRI in response to a call for Small Grant Proposals, selected for funding are the following:

- *Accessing the World of Work: Concerns of African Americans with Disabilities Actively Seeking Employment.* Fabricio E. Balcazar, Ph.D., Kimberly M. Hall, M.A., University of Illinois at Chicago
- *The Decline in Employment of People with Disabilities in the 1990's: Disentangling Composition Changes and Measurement Errors from the Effects of the Americans with Disabilities Act.* Thomas DeLeire, Ph.D., University of Chicago
- *Determinants of the Adult Achievements of Child SSI Beneficiaries: Evidence from Linked Public-Use Data and Social Security Administration Records.* Elizabeth Powers, Ph.D., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- *Employment Outcomes for Persons with Disabilities in a Mature Economic Environment: Longitudinal Analyses.* Edward Yelin, Ph.D. and Laura Turpin, M.P.H., University of California, San Francisco. ♦

## DRI Annual Symposium - June 6, 2002

*Symposium Title: SSA Disability Benefits: Apply, Qualify...Return to Work*

Mark your calendars now for the next DRI Symposium!

The symposium, "SSA Disability Benefits: Apply, Qualify...Return to Work," will be held June 6, 2002, at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. The symposium hotel is the J.W. Marriott adjacent to the Press Club.

Edward D. Berkowitz of George Washington University, an authority on the history of the Social Security program, will be keynote speaker. Jo Anne B. Barnhart, Commissioner of Social Security, and Paul Van der Water, Acting Deputy Commissioner of the SSA Office of Policy, have been invited to speak.

Members of the DRI research faculty will present findings of their research projects in the areas of applying for benefits, qualifying for benefits, and returning to work. A panel of guest experts will discuss future directions for SSA disability benefits. ♦

*For more information about DRI research projects and about the DRI annual symposium, visit our web site at <http://www.als.uiuc.edu/dri>*

## New Year 2 Research Projects are Underway

*DRI has funded a range of research with disability policy implications for Social Security programs*

*What factors are the most useful indicators of the ability to meet job demands?*

### **Job Demands**

**University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Chrisann Schiro-Geist, Ph.D. Northwestern University, Allen Heinemann, Ph.D.**

*The project will recommend one or more approaches and attendant issues that SSA should consider in its investigation of occupational variables that would be the most useful indicators of the ability to work.*

### **Disabled Non-Beneficiaries Who Work**

**University of Chicago, National Opinion Research Center, Mary Grace Kovar, Ph.D.**

*The project will investigate the characteristics of working people with disabilities severe enough to qualify for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and the factors that enable them to work. The researchers will implement a three-pronged approach consisting of 1) an annotated review of existing studies, 2) an annotated review of existing data sets, and 3) an analysis of a soon-to-be-available linked data set.*

*What do existing studies and data sets reveal about persons with disabilities who work?*

*What may be done to increase CRP effectiveness in serving the SSDI/SSI population?*

### **Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs)**

**University of Wisconsin, Stout, Fred Menz, Ph.D.**

*The project will evaluate how CRPs currently serve SSDI/SSI beneficiaries as well as their effectiveness in enabling beneficiaries to return to work and to sustain work.*

### **Paths to the Disability Insurance Program**

**Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Monroe Berkowitz, Ph.D.**

*The project will investigate the extent to which SSDI applicants also receive other benefits. Knowing more about where applicants have been and their experiences with other benefit programs and return to work programs may help SSA in its efforts to assist applicants in returning to the world of work rather than becoming dependent on disability benefits. In addition, understanding how these other benefit programs operate may aid SSA in evaluating its own programs.*

*To what extent have applicants to the SSDI program experienced other benefit programs?*

*Are there unmet AT needs for which additional resources may be warranted to improve employment success?*

### **Human Factors and Employment Issues Related to the Use of Assistive Technologies**

**University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Brad Hedrick, Ph.D.**

*This project will examine the impact of assistive technology (AT) utilization upon employment outcomes of individuals with spinal cord injuries, across a range of professional and non-professional employment settings. ♦*

## Major DRI Research Efforts Report Progress

### **Designing an Early Intervention Experiment and Demonstration Approach**

**Monroe Berkowitz & John Burton - Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey**

The goal of this effort is to design a demonstration project for SSA, offering return to work services to applicants for Disability Insurance benefits. An applicant selection procedure has been prepared with the aid and advice of stakeholders and experts. Chosen applicants will also undergo a second screen to identify those with a reasonable chance of success in a return to work program, and the criteria for the second screen have been chosen. A maximum expenditure formula has also been devised to ensure that the project is cost beneficial. Finally, the basic scenarios to be followed in carrying out the project in three pilot states - Wisconsin, Vermont and Maryland - have been described. ♦

### **Research Approaches for Validation of SSA's Medical Listings**

**Allen Heinemann - Northwestern University & Mary Grace Kovar - University of Chicago, National Opinion Research Center (Phase I & II); Richard Roessler & Tanya Gallagher - University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (Phase III)**

The Medical Listings project has developed a research methodology to investigate the validity of SSA's Medical Listings. Major features of the methodology have been outlined, including design options, strengths and limitations of the options, and recommendations. Further study will incorporate a Project Team and an Expert Panel in implementing steps required to examine the concordance between judgments relating to medical status and capacity to engage in substantial gainful activity. ♦

# National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) Offers Insight and Information Analysis to DRI Researchers

*DRI researchers have access to innovative tools for information analysis*

The Social Security Administration's objective in funding the Disability Research Institute was to understand the reality and impact of its income programs - including Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) - on the lives of SSI and SSDI applicants and participants. To realize that goal, researchers are examining many types of disability policy data from many different sources. They seek not only to identify relationships in the datasets but also to understand the factors that influence the relationships.

*"The NCSA's strength is analyzing large sets of heterogeneous data. Our tools provide a mechanism for visualizing the complex problems relating to disability policy research."*

- Thomas I. Prudhomme, Ph.D.,  
Director of the External Programs  
Division, NCSA

performance computing and networking and in developing innovative software applications.

NCSA's tools for large-scale datamining and high performance computerization offer an innovative approach to disability policy research. The Center's information technology infrastructure and tools are designed to attack complex problems regardless of their size and number of variables. Given the multiple domains one must consider in disability policy research, these methods and models may provide insight into the priority research areas defined by the SSA. NCSA staff are available to consult with dis-

ability policy researchers to help them make the best use of these computing innovations and to augment their research approach with NCSA's cutting-edge information analysis tools. ♦

One of the advantages of establishing the DRI at the University of Illinois is its proximity to the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA), an institution with an international reputation in high-

## Meet the DRI Staff and New Research Coordinator, Richard T. Roessler

**Rick Roessler** assumed the role of Research Coordinator in January, 2002.

He was most recently Principal Investigator, Project A-WIN (5-year grant from the Social Security Administration) and Co-Director of National Multiple Sclerosis Society Employment Project (In collaboration with Kent State University, 2-year grant from the National Multiple Sclerosis Society). He also served as University Professor Emeritus of Rehabilitation Education and Research, Department of Rehabilitation, College of Education and Health Professions, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas. He has worked at the University of Arkansas in positions of increasing responsibility for thirty years.

At the DRI, Dr. Roessler will pursue his long-term interest in the development and evaluation of return-to-work programs for people with severe disabilities. His specific interests include: rehabilitation counseling and service delivery, coping with disability and chronic illness, career development, school-to-work transition, employability assessment and training, return-to-work interventions, and postemployment services.

**Emer Broadbent** works at the DRI as Staff Project Coordinator; he brings practice experience to the DRI from institutional settings for the elderly and mentally ill, as well as legal aid. He holds a Master's degree in Social Service Administration and a Law Degree, as well as a Ph.D. He is also a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor. Emer served for five years as the Executive Director of the Council on Rehabilitation Education and has experience teaching at the bachelor's and master's level.

**Pat Manns** moved from Pittsburgh, PA and joined the staff of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in August, 1973. She has worked in the University's Continuing Education Department and Department of Kinesiology. In August, 2000, she became the DRI Administrative Aide and helped coordinate the logistics of setting up the newly established Institute. She enjoys the everyday challenge of working with individuals from within various DRI affiliated and collaborating institutions as well as the project officers and staff from the Social Security Administration. ♦

## New Researchers Affiliate with DRI

### *Fred Menz and Brad Hedrick Direct New Year 2 Research Projects*



*Dr. Brad Hedrick*

Dr. Brad Hedrick is the Director of the Division of Rehabilitation-Education Services (DRES) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Hedrick has more than 23 years of professional experience in the field of rehabilitation, and has extensive experience and expertise in the administration of adapted sports and recreation for persons with disabilities. He has coached athletes with disabilities at the local, national and international levels, and authored a wide array of applied research and professional books, chapters, monographs and articles on this subject. He currently serves as the Treasurer of the Association on Higher Education and Disability, and is the Chairperson of the National Wheelchair Basketball Association Division II Committee.



*Dr. Fred Menz*

Dr. Fred Menz is Director of the Research and Training Center and the Continuing Education Center on Community-Based Rehabilitation Programs at the University of Wisconsin-Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute. Dr. Menz has published widely and has received national recognition for his research on the role, effectiveness and issues of vocational rehabilitation provided through public and non-profit programs. His recent research and educational goals are to help increase the capability and quality of community and public rehabilitation programs to affect employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. ♦



**DISABILITY RESEARCH INSTITUTE**  
College of Applied Life Studies  
University of Illinois  
1207 South Oak Street Rm 158 MC575  
Champaign IL 61820  
[www.als.uiuc.edu/dri](http://www.als.uiuc.edu/dri)

*Address service is requested*

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
CHAMPAIGN, IL  
PERMIT NO. 75