

Disability and Abuse Newsfeed

Week of February 1 to February 7, 2020

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Articles are listed in alphabetical order by state within each category, so you can easily scan through the articles for those within your state or other states in which you have an interest. *International* articles are near the end. The categories are: *Abuse and Neglect, Guardianship, Laws & Legislation, Studies & Statistics, Improved Supports, International, and Miscellaneous.*

Check the categories below for a guide to types of abuse. These are indicated by type, and the number of the article.

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While on the homepage, we invite you to “like” us at the bottom of the page, making it easier to keep up with our activities! Prior weekly newsfeeds are archived at: <https://disabilityandabuse.org/newsfeed/contents.htm>

Please send comments or questions to: nora@disability-abuse.com or baladerian@gmail.com

DONATIONS: We welcome your donations to the Disability and Abuse Project of Spectrum Institute that support this work.

Abuse and Neglect:

Sexual Assault: 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 21, 22, 26, 27, 29, 63, 65, 66

Physical Abuse: 1, 2 3 6, 10, 11 (torture), 16, 17, 24, 28

Emotional abuse: 1, 17, 25, 28

Kidnapping: 32

Seclusion: 24

Restrained: 10, 24

Murder: 18, 20, 30

Neglected: 5, 30

Related to special education: 3 (bus aide), 10, 12 (bus driver), 24

WINNER of most egregious award: 2: Autistic boy with epilepsy *arrested* while having a seizure – arrest was videotaped; 4: Bus aide charged with multiple physical assaults on student got *probation*; 35: Judge finds against NC regarding access.

WHO DUN IT (listed by article number):

Family: 18

Renter/Boarder: 3, 25

Caregiver: 6, 7, 11, 13, 17, 21, 22, 65

Neighbor/Friend of Family:

Stranger: 27, 28, 63

Special education employee: 3, 10, 12, 24

Law Enforcement: 1, 2, 19

LOCATION:

Nursing Home: 7, 16

Hospice Care Teams: 5

Psychiatric Hospital:

Intermediate Care Program:

Group home: 20, 21, 30

Day Program: 8

Schools: TA (10); Bus staff: 3, 4, 12

In-Home Care: 11, 13

Director of Developmental Care: 26

Online Dating Program: 29

Adult Protective Services worker: 32

Surgeon: 9

Men: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28, 28, 29, 63, 65, 66

Women: 6, 17

Teams: 5, 6, 10, 13, 17, 18, 24, 30, 63, 66

Good News: 38: Celebrating Olmstead at 20 years: Institutionalization = discrimination in landmark legislation; 40: Enhanced regulations to strengthen APS response to financial abuse; 42: Study finds TBI is not recognized among homeless individuals; 44: Finding: 1 in 5 ER visits by nursing home patients are attributed to abuse (this is under “good,” as it is recognized.); 46: Texas ponies up \$1 Billion due to federal finding state in violation of IDEA; 50: Chicago Police Department will hire an ADA compliance officer following federal consent decree; 51: more than 50 programs will serve people with disabilities and mental health diagnoses; 58: school for the Deaf has two new Apps to increase safety.

Bad News: 7: Man with history of sexual assault (number of police reports) approved to work with vulnerable individuals; 8: Man who sexually assaulted adults with disabilities gets probation, no jail time; 15: MN has alarming rate of financial abuse of elders by family members; 19: Mother who pleaded for law enforcement help got none, her children are now dead due to physical & sexual abuse, and starvation; 23: Over reaction to 6 year old girl with Down syndrome who, using her fingers imitated shooting a gun at her teacher, who called the police; 35: judge declares NC falls short in access to public agencies; 43: seclusion secrecy unveiled, raised discrimination charge; 47: CO has an 8-year waiting list for individuals with IDD for services; 52: Woman with psychiatric & IDD diagnoses are 4-5 times more likely to be victims of sexual assault, per Policy Options study; 71: Mental health less accessible for individuals with physical disabilities due to lack of transportation and accessibility to offices.

ABUSE & NEGLECT

1. “ONLY ON KOLD: Investigation into Arrest of Teenage Quadruple Amputee Heads to County Attorney” - Deputy Manuel Van Santen investigated for incident at troubled group home in Tucson area KOLD News 13 has learned the Pima County Sheriff’s Department investigation into the incident is complete and the report is headed to the Pima County Attorney’s Office. We do not yet know what, if any, recommendations the report makes. We also don’t know what the county attorney plans to do with the report. Joel Feinman, the director of the Pima County Public Defender Office, says to his knowledge, the county attorney’s office has never returned a charge of excessive use of force against a deputy. The shocking incident [happened in September 2019](#), when a deputy was called to a group home in the Tucson area. – KOLD 13 – January 31, 2020 – (Arizona) - <https://is.gd/Ouy1A1>
2. Boy, 16, with autism had seizure, was handcuffed and arrested, California mom says - California mother is outraged after she says her son, who has autism, was placed in handcuffs instead of being taken to the hospital. A video she sent Action News shows a portion of the incident unfolding. The sounds of fear can be heard in that video, as police attempted to arrest the 16-year-old boy inside a Fresno restaurant on Thursday night. "He has autism, he has epilepsy, stop it!" she can be heard screaming. Lourdes Ponce said her son had just left the doctor after suffering from epileptic seizures. – ABC 7 – February 1, 2019 – (California) - <https://is.gd/YGAB52>
3. “Man convicted of elder abuse in Siskiyou County” - The Siskiyou County District Attorney’s Office said in July of 2019, police were asked to check on a 75-year-old man who had been letting transients stay at his home. When an officer arrived at the man’s home, he found the wheelchair-bound man beaten by Ryan Andrew Poling, prosecutors said. Poling, who was staying at the man’s home, reportedly hit the victim in the head with a telephone and broke a cane on one of the victim’s arms. Poling was arrested after the incident and lodged in the Siskiyou County Jail. On January 23,

2020, Poling was convicted of elder abuse and assault with a deadly weapon. – KOB5 – February 4, 2020 – (California) - <https://is.gd/p2sOkp>

4. “Bus Aide Accused of Injuring Autistic Boy Gets Suspended Sentence” - The man, who was charged with repeatedly assaulting a Fairfield boy with autism, may serve no jail time, according to court records. Joseph Jean-Felix was sentenced Wednesday to two suspended five-year jail terms and one suspended one-year term to be served concurrently, according to court records. He also received three years of probation. Jean-Felix, of Bridgeport, pleaded guilty to risk of injury to a child, unlawful restraint and assault, court records said. He was accused of assaulting the 15-year-old on several occasions, police said [when the charges were announced in January 2019](#). – Patch – February 6, 2020 – (Connecticut) - <https://is.gd/ZYPmWT>

5. “I-Team: Crisis of Care in Hospice Industry” - But, a CBS12 News I-Team investigation found widespread issues in the hospice industry including care failures that left patients untreated and in agony. They got his hospice bed and set it up in their living room, but they were left waiting for the most important supplies. "No medications, no morphine, no nothing," she remembered. "It's still hard for me to talk about." Bob started his in-home hospice care on a Thursday, didn't get his painkillers until Friday, and waited until Tuesday to see a nurse. – CBS 12 News – February 7, 2020 – (Florida) - <https://is.gd/iiUyX9>

6. “Disabled Florida Navy Veteran Tortured, Left to Die after Attack by Former Caretaker” - Maranda Martin enlisted her cousin to assault and help rob her former patient, disabled Navy veteran Paul Quandt Sr. Blues Creek in northwest Gainesville, Florida, seemed like a safe place for Paul Quandt Sr. to settle down. Quandt Sr. was left bruised and bloodied, but he managed to get to the home of his neighbor, Virginia Grisson, to beg for help. "There was one health care worker that he just didn't feel comfortable with," Quandt Sr.'s son, Paul Quandt Jr., told "Criminal Confessions." "After she'd worked there briefly with him, he noticed one of his house keys was missing. – Oxygen – February 1, 2020 – (Florida) - <https://is.gd/QPkJ8p>

7. “He Was Accused of Inappropriately Touching Patients at Nursing Homes, but he Continued to Work”- 10 Investigates found what a legal expert describes as a loophole in Florida law. And, that loophole may be putting your loved ones at risk. In September, news broke that CNA Falo Kane was arrested for sexually assaulting numerous patients in his care. One of those patients was Ashley’s mom, Deborah.

The other patients came from other facilities around Pinellas County. This was the first time we had heard about Kane. 10Investigates began looking into his background. The first thing we did was pull up his license on the Florida Department of Health website. It showed no discipline and no complaints. But when we combed through the police reports on him, we found this wasn’t the first time he had been arrested for having a sexual encounter with someone in his care. We asked ourselves, “How could he still have a license and be allowed to care for patients”? “How is his license clean when he’s been arrested before?” – WTSP – February 4, 2020 – (Florida) - <https://is.gd/4WKN6r>

8. “Man, Who Sexually Abused Disabled Adult, Gets Probation No Jail Time” - A Menan man who sexually abused a woman with the mental capacity of a 5-year-old was sentenced to probation Monday with no jail time. The probation sentence was jointly recommended by the defense and prosecution and accepted by District Judge Jon Shindurling. Terry Ricks, 58, admitted to the sexual abuse after a caretaker at the adult center noticed the victim had been behaving oddly. The victim told the caretaker Ricks had touched her sexually multiple times. – Post Register – February 3, 2020 – (Idaho) -

<https://is.gd/FhxmoB>

9. “Documents: Alleged Sexual Assault Victim was a Patient of Bloomington Surgeon” - In the incident involving a Bloomington surgeon currently facing criminal sexual assault charges, the disabled victim was a patient of his, according to an order of protection filed in McLean County. [Our news partner HOI ABC reports](#) in the order of protection against Shaun Kink, the woman, a patient, said he conducted the sexual assault in her home on December 6. On Friday, [Kink pleaded not guilty](#) to all four charges he is

facing. One of the charges against Kink is aggravated criminal sexual assault of a handicapped person, a Class X felony. He is also facing felony charges of criminal sexual assault, aggravated criminal sexual assault and criminal sexual abuse. – WJBC – January 31, 2020 – (Illinois) - <https://is.gd/x8Z5yQ>

10. “Family Files Lawsuit Accusing School District of Abusing, Tying Down Autistic Son” -The Rodin family is filing a lawsuit against Berwyn’s North School District 98 after they say Gianni Fata Rodin came home covered with permanent marker. "I'm disgusted," said Rodin. The black markings scribbled all over the child's back. Back in 2015, Lucia filed this police report with the Berwyn police after she says a teacher's aide tied her son to a chair with an exercise band. – Local 21 News – February 4, 2020 – (Illinois) - <https://is.gd/IKGKmF>

11. “Caregiver Accused of Abusing Elderly Disabled Evansville Man Pleads Guilty” - A Newburgh man reportedly [caught on video abusing an elderly disabled person in his care](#) has pleaded guilty to the charges he was facing. William Putty, 27, was facing 11 counts of battery to a disabled person causing bodily injury, level 5 felonies. Court records show he entered the plea at a hearing Monday without reaching an agreement with prosecutors. Putty was hired to care for the victim, who required around-the-clock care, five days a week. The elderly man's guardian told police he had autism, cerebral palsy, hydrocephalus and was seizure-prone. Cameras were installed throughout the man's residence. Those cameras allegedly caught Putty putting the man in a headlock and bending his fingers back to the point of pain. – Courier & Press – February 4, 2020 – (Indiana) - <https://is.gd/48Cbbh>

12. “Former Bus Driver Says He was Criminally Insane When He Sexually Assaulted Four Students with Special Needs” - Etienne K. Kabongo admits that he sexually assaulted four vulnerable students who were passengers on the school bus he drove in suburban Maryland. But he argues that he should be sent to a psychiatric hospital, not a prison. His defense: He was criminally insane at the time he abused his victims. Kabongo, 64, pleaded guilty to his

crimes in January and faces a trial in March that will weigh his mental-illness claims. – The Washington Post – February 1, 2020 – (Maryland) - <https://is.gd/7vawi0>

13. “Haverhill Man Pleads Guilty to Harassing Estranged Wife; Still Facing Rape Charges” - During a bench trial held on Feb. 5 in Haverhill District Court, Joseph Gagnon, 53, of 672 Main St. pleaded guilty to three instances of violating a restraining order and was sentenced by Judge Jean Curran to nine months’ probation. Curran also ordered him to stay away from his estranged wife, abide by a 209A abuse prevention order, and stay away from 177 Liberty St., his former address. In March of 2017, Gagnon was charged with raping a mentally disabled woman, police said. Police said Gagnon raped the woman, who was in her late 30s at the time, while she was in the care of him and his now-estranged wife at their 177 Liberty St. home. They received money from the state to care for her in their home, police said. – The Eagle Tribune – February 6, 2020 – (Massachusetts) - <https://is.gd/uM3rtA>

14. “Flint Community Schools Files Objection to Special Needs Funding Formula” - According to a news release from public relations firm Lambert & Co., Flint Community Schools announced that they filed a formal objection to special needs funding formula to the Genesee Intermediate School District’s Act 18 Formula. – NBC 25 News – February 7, 2020 – (Michigan) - <https://is.gd/fzSGcK>

15. “Exploiting Trust’: Minnesota's Senior Citizens are Financially Abused by Family Members at Alarming Rate” - According to national data gathered by the U.S. Department of Justice, roughly 50% of all elder exploitation cases in the United States involve family members. However, in Minnesota, that number is closer to 69%. The defendants included sons, daughters, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, as well as in-laws and other distant relatives. – KSTP News – February 6, 2020 – (Minnesota) - <https://is.gd/stjyQ8>

16. “Nursing Home Residents Hospitalized after Violent Assault” - Two nursing home residents are hospitalized following a violent assault. Police received the call just after midnight that two elderly men were injured at the Bernard Care Center in the Central West End. Investigators are working to determine what led up to the attack. Just last month, a 66-year-old resident at the same nursing home died after an altercation with a 70-year-old male resident. No additional details are available at this time. – Fox 2 Now – February 4, 2020 – (Missouri) - <https://is.gd/2XpvXI>
17. “Women Convicted of Abusing Boy Diagnosed with Down Syndrome” - Two women accused of abusing an Aztec boy diagnosed with Down syndrome were found guilty on multiple counts, including child abuse, on Friday. Lindsey Moss and Dallas Baron were convicted in separate jury trials in Aztec District Court, according to a news release from the New Mexico Office of the Attorney General. Court records show that Moss faced three felony charges of child abuse, a felony count of contributing to the delinquency of a minor and two petty misdemeanor counts of battery. Baron was charged with two felony counts of child abuse, according to court records. – Albuquerque Journal – February 1, 2020 – (New Mexico) - <https://is.gd/jFgsFk>
18. “ Accused of Killing Autistic Son Who Froze to Death: I’ve ‘Been Through More Stressful Things’”- The father of an [8-year-old autistic boy who died in a freezing New York garage](#) gave a heartless reaction to the [pronouncement of the boy's death](#), telling people he had “been through more stressful things than this,” a prosecutor revealed Thursday. During the Thursday arraignment of Michael Valva and his live-in girlfriend, Angela Pollina, Suffolk County prosecutor Kerriann Kelly also told the court that Valva called 8-year-old Thomas a “piece of shit” two days before his death. “I have zero clothing for him,” 40-year-old Valva allegedly wrote in a text. “Fuck a piece of shit Thomas. He’s not going anywhere.” -The Daily Beast – February 6, 2020 – (New York)- <https://is.gd/osfl9P>

19. "Thomas Valva's mom: No one believed my warnings about NYPD cop dad Michael Valva" - From cops and social workers to lawyers and judges, Long Island mom Justyna Zubko-Valva claims no one took her [warnings about her NYPD cop husband](https://is.gd/q4Vh4o), Michael Valva, seriously. Alleging sex abuse, starvation, brainwashing, beatings and possible child porn, the mom had insisted their three sons were suffering at Valva's hands. But instead of getting help, Zubko-Valva became lost in a legal labyrinth where she was the one on trial, painted as a scorned woman with a "vendetta," court papers show. – New York Post – February 1, 2020 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/q4Vh4o>
20. "Lockport Couple Settles Suit Over Son's Death in Group Home" - Peter and Karen D'Angelo, a Lockport couple whose disabled son died in 2015 in a People Inc. group home in North Tonawanda, have agreed to a settlement of [their lawsuit against the local human services agency](https://is.gd/jqho2l). Terms of the settlement are sealed, attorneys for both sides said, and People Inc. admitted to no wrongdoing. "We saw an opportunity to provide closure for the family," People Inc. attorney Michael E. Appelbaum said Friday. "That's really what went into deciding to resolve it when we did." "There is no admission of guilt since there has been no trial process," Peter D'Angelo said. – The Buffalo News – February 2, 2020 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/jqho2l>
21. "Former UCO Football Star Convicted of Raping Disabled Woman" - A former University of Central Oklahoma football star was convicted this past week of raping a woman with cognitive disabilities, and it appears that he's been removed from UCO's Hall of Fame. Elton Howland Rhoades Jr. was convicted on Wednesday, Jan. 29, of raping the woman in May of 2018. – KFOR 4 – February 1, 2020 – (Oklahoma) - <https://is.gd/MpUHhW>
22. "York County Caregiver Accused of Abusing Man with Down Syndrome has Conviction Thrown Out" - In the 2-1 decision, President Judge Emeritus Susan Peikes Gantman wrote that prosecutors failed to act with due diligence in bringing Albert Frascchetti, 65, of York, to trial. Albert

Fraschetti, 65, of York, was [found guilty of indecent assault of a person with a mental disability that renders the complainant incapable of consent](#). – York Daily Record – February 7, 2020 – (Pennsylvania) - <https://is.gd/KLIRRG>

23. “Mother Says School District Called Police After 6-Year-Old Daughter with Down Syndrome Pretended to Shoot Teacher with Finger” - The mother of a 6-year-old with Down syndrome says the Tredyffrin-Easttown School District mishandled an incident involving her daughter after she pretended to shoot her teacher with her finger. “My daughter got frustrated and pointed her finger at her teacher and said, ‘I shoot you,’” Gaines said. “At that point, they went to the principal’s office and it was quickly assessed that she didn’t even really know what she was saying.” Gaines said it was a severe overreaction by the school district and that they could’ve responded to the issue in a much different way. – CBS 3 Philly – February 4, 2020 – (Pennsylvania) - <https://is.gd/HILoew>

24. “Family Sues Pittsburgh Public School for Handcuffing 7-Year-Old” -In a lawsuit, the boy’s family said he was repeatedly suspended, secluded, and violently restrained before he was ever given a special education evaluation. The boy’s family also alleges that in the Pittsburgh school system, Black boys receive the harshest punishments without getting access to the supports and protections that a special education designation would provide. – The Appeal – February 4, 2020 – (Pennsylvania) - <https://is.gd/duh4bB>

25. “Texas Man, 38, 'Strangled Disabled Veteran's Black Labrador Named Midnight with an Electrical Cord Because he was Annoyed at her Barking” - A [Texas](#) man allegedly strangled a disabled veteran's emotional support dog with an electrical cord because he was annoyed by her barking. Robert Leroy Edwards, 38, was arrested on animal abuse and child abuse charges after he killed Richard Hunt's black Labrador retriever, Midnight, early Wednesday morning. Edwards had been boarding at the home of Hunt's teenage son Ian when he reportedly got enraged over Midnight's barking and hanged the dog in a chicken coop. – Daily Mail – February 2, 2020 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/e870CF>

26. “Former Director of Development at Brown Co. Adult Care Facility Charged with Sexual Abuse of Mentally-Disabled Women” - Two mentally-disabled women reported they had engaged in sexual activity with the Aldersgate Enrichment Center's director of development. The parent told the department her daughter told her she had engaged in sexual intercourse with Marshall Thornhill, the Aldersgate director of development, on multiple occasions. Through the course of an investigation conducted by BCSO investigators, it was learned that a second mentally-disabled female resident had also reportedly been sexually assaulted by Thornhill. – My Fox Zone – February 4, 2020 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/KizDI9>
27. “Trial Begins for Man Accused of Posing as Maintenance Man in Alleged Sexual Assault” - Lopez-Parker has been held at the Lubbock County Detention Center since May 4, 2018, when he was arrested in connection with a Lubbock police investigation into a woman’s report two days before that she was sexually assaulted at her home in the Stonebridge at Ironton Apartments in the 7000 block of Ironton Avenue. The woman suffers from epilepsy and requires a caretaker. She told police a man knocked on her apartment door claiming to be a maintenance man there to make repairs, the warrant states. However, when the man entered her apartment, he began removing the woman’s clothes and began speaking to her in a friendly manner, according to an arrest warrant. – Lubbock Avalanche Journal – February 3, 2020 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/jyNOcf>
28. “Man arrested for assault after chasing amputee in wheelchair” - Ronald Kendrick has been charged with injury to a disabled person. Police said on Monday night they went to the Deluxe Inn on Broad about a man assaulting an amputee in a wheelchair. When officers arrived and they said they saw Kendrick screaming at a woman in a wheelchair in the parking lot and handcuffed him. – Texomas – February 5, 2020 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/XLRloG>

29. “Utah man rapes wheelchair-bound woman he met on dating app, police say” - A woman in a wheelchair was raped by a man she met on a dating app, according to the Salt Lake City Police Department. The victim told police that on May 18, 2019, she met 32-year-old Shafi Warsame Awale for a date. Police say Awale drove the woman to an unknown apartment complex somewhere in Salt Lake County. – KJZZ – January 31, 2020 – (Utah) - <https://is.gd/HC0I1L>
30. “A Puyallup Group Home Left a 95-Year-Old Where she Fell. Ten Days Later, She was Dead” - A 95-year-old woman was left where she had fallen on the floor of a Puyallup adult care facility for over two hours before caregivers called for help in November, [Puyallup police](#) said Thursday. The woman broke her femur and died 10 days later in a hospital. On Thursday, the home was shut down, two people were arrested for criminal mistreatment and five elderly residents of the home were relocated, according to Puyallup police spokesman Capt. Dan Pashon. – The News Tribune – February 7, 2020 – (Washington) - <https://is.gd/yWo0I7>
31. “Doctor Sentenced for Distributing Drugs to Those Seeking Help for Substance Abuse” - “When you illegally distribute drugs, you must be held accountable. Dr. Naum chose to prey on those most vulnerable, seeking treatment for substance abuse. He chose to further their addiction instead of help, as he was sworn to do. Thank you to the prosecution team, including investigators, who worked hard to bring this case to justice,” said Powell. After a six-day trial in April 2019, a jury found Naum, guilty of one count of “Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Substances Outside the Bounds of Professional Medical Practice,” and four counts of “Aiding and Abetting the Distribution of Controlled Substances Outside the Bounds of Professional Medical Practice.” He was found not guilty of one count of “Aiding and Abetting the Distribution of Controlled Substances Outside the Bounds of Professional Medical Practice.” Naum, age 60, conspired with others to illegally distribute controlled substances from a drug treatment center, Advance Healthcare, Inc., in Weirton, West Virginia from 2008 to 2016. – DOJ Northern District of West Virginia – January 31, 2020 – (West Virginia) - <https://is.gd/O2pKk4>

GUARDIANSHIP

32. “I Want My Sister Home.’ Family Claims Local Adult Protective Services Worker Hid Their Relative” - 7 Investigator Heather Catallo first exposed this APS worker last year during a [guardianship case that involved a Detroit grandmother](#). Now that worker is under fire again. Family members are accusing Tresna Tupper of taking their loved one and hiding her away from them. They are also questioning whether Tupper should be in a position of power with vulnerable seniors in our community. [Local family says guardianship cost elderly woman \\$123K for 3 months of care](#) - “Upon further inquiry, it does appear that the guardian has added her name to the title to the home owned by the ward. It appears there is an apparent conflict of interest,” said Renita Forrest, the court-appointed attorney (known as a Guardian ad Litem) assigned to advise the ward (Paula Tupper) of her rights. – WXYZ – February 3, 2020 – (Michigan) - <https://is.gd/XG5s8q>
33. “Darlington Solicitor Calls for Stricter Safeguarding for the Affairs of Vulnerable People” - Latimer Hinks Solicitors in Darlington is calling for stricter safeguarding rules to be considered when creating a lasting power of attorney (LPA), as investigations into the actions of appointed attorneys reach a record high, suggesting that financial abuse of vulnerable people by those acting on their behalf is on the rise. In 2018/19, the Court of Protection received 721 applications to censure or remove attorneys, up from 465 applications in the previous year, with legal action taken against individuals with power of attorney doubling in the last two years. – Bdaily – February 3, 2020 – (United Kingdom) - <https://is.gd/qKM8YK>
34. “Mason Pushes Bill Inspired by RTD's 'Unguarded' Investigation” - The Senate Judiciary Committee is considering a bill introduced by Sen. Monty Mason, D-Williamsburg, aimed at preventing ethical conflicts from arising in guardianship cases. Mason was prompted by “Unguarded,” a three-part Richmond Times-Dispatch investigative series published in November, which revealed that VCU Health System and other health care providers in the Richmond region had taken hundreds of low-income patients to court

and asked to have their lawyer appointed the patients' guardian, putting him in charge of the person's medical decision-making and finances. "I understand there's a shortage of guardians," Mason said in his testimony before the committee Monday morning. "What I'm trying to get at is ... if you come to the court on behalf of the hospital, you cannot then become the guardian to the person you're trying to get out of the hospital." – Richmond Times Dispatch – February 3, 2020 – (Virginia) - <https://is.gd/IDKZT0>

LAWS & LEGISLATION

35. "Judge: N. Carolina Falls Short in Service Access for Disabled" - A ruling issued this week by Superior Court Judge Allen Baddour said the state and the Department of Health and Human Services violated a portion of the North Carolina Persons With Disabilities Protection Act. The ruling stems from a 2017 lawsuit alleging that the obstacles people with intellectual and developmental disabilities encounter when trying to get services put them at a higher risk of being institutionalized. – San Francisco Chronicle – February 7, 2020 – (North Carolina) - <https://is.gd/THeFOw>

36. "Editorial: Sensible Proposal at Legislature to Help Prevent Scams Against the Elderly" - Nebraska officials have taken action before to help protect financially vulnerable senior citizens, and this year lawmakers are considering a new, worthwhile proposal. Legislative Bill 853 would allow Nebraska financial institutions to notify a caretaker or other third party about suspected financial exploitation of vulnerable seniors. The bill sponsor is State Sen. Matt Williams, a Gothenburg banker and leader in banking circles at the state and national levels. – Omaha World Herald – February 1, 2020 – (Nebraska) - <https://is.gd/kJB5Vn>

37. Cuomo Announces Legislation Intended to Protect Elderly Against Financial Exploitation - Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced legislation intended to protect older residents from financial exploitation. On Friday he announced legislation in the 2021 executive budget to strengthen banks' ability to place

a hold on a vulnerable adult's bank account if there is sufficient reason to believe the adult is a victim of attempted financial exploitation. That includes creating parameters for the holds and requiring reporting of the hold to the Office of Children and Family Services. – WHEC – January 31, 2020 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/uFHMOY>

38. “Disability Rights and Healthcare: Olmstead at 20” - Olmstead [has been called](#) the [Brown v. Board of Education](#) for people with disabilities. Brown established that “separate but equal” was anything but and ended racial segregation in public schools. Similarly, the Court in Olmstead recognized that isolating individuals with disabilities in institutionalized care without justification constituted discrimination. In other words, Olmstead is an integration mandate. By contrast, Olmstead provided a “qualified yes” and states [have responded](#) with varying Olmstead plans, ranging from merely decreasing the number of beds in long-term hospitalization settings to active development of new community resources. – Baylor College of Medicine – February 7, 2020 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/jbHHeY>

39. “Texas laws in 2020: Senate Bill 212” - “If you work in a nursing home and you fail to report abuse, you could very easily lose your license and also be held to a fine and criminal charges as well, so this is just a continuing or expansion,” said Professor Margaret Dejong-Shier from the Department of Psychology, Sociology and Social Work. – ABC 7 – February 1, 2020 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/W9gypS>

40. “Rowan Opens Discussion on Grandparents, Children” - Marks described the ongoing fight against elder abuse, especially financial exploitation. AARP called for new legislative and regulatory protections to strengthen Adult Protective Services (APS) and enhancing civil and criminal penalties to protect our most vulnerable citizens. Marks said AARP joined with the West Virginia State Auditor's Office to enhance protections for vulnerable adults against financial exploitation through House Bill 4377 – The Protection of Vulnerable Adults from Financial Exploitation Act. The

Committee later voted unanimously in support of this bill. – News Tribune – January 31, 2020 – (Virginia) - <https://is.gd/v7uhbH>

41. “Homeschool Advocates Urge WV Lawmakers to Pass Raylee’s Law” - The Coalition for Responsible Home Education (CRHE), a national nonprofit organization that advocates for homeschooled children, is urging lawmakers to support “Raylee’s Law,” also known as [House Bill 4440](#). “Raylee’s Law creates critical protections for vulnerable children,” said Dr. Rachel Coleman, executive director of CRHE, which was founded by homeschool alumni in 2013. “Abusive parents should not be able to exploit the homeschooling law by using it to conceal child abuse.” – WOAY – February 4, 2020 – (West Virginia) - <https://is.gd/bzsOQq>

STUDIES & STATISTICS

42. “Traumatic Brain Injury in Homeless People is Underrecognized” - In a prospective review of studies, researchers found the lifetime prevalence of any severity of traumatic brain injury (TBI) in homeless and marginally housed individuals was 53.1 percent, and the lifetime prevalence of either moderate or severe TBI was 22.5 percent. More than half of homeless persons and others living in unstable housing situations suffer traumatic brain injury (TBI) at some point in their life, a rate that far exceeds the general population, according to a meta-analysis of studies from six countries including the US and Canada. – Neurology Today – February 6, 2020 – (Global) - <https://is.gd/Kq5dUh>

43. “Iowa City's Seclusion Secrecy Raises Serious Questions”- Children — especially children with disabilities and children of color — have been harmed by the improper use of seclusion in our schools. (The [ACLU](#) reported in 2019 that “while students with disabilities made up 12 percent of enrolled students, they made up 66 percent of students subject to seclusion and 71 percent of students restrained. Additionally, while black students make up 15 percent of all students, they made up 23 percent of

students secluded and 27 percent of students restrained.”) The details surrounding the improper use of seclusion were only revealed through the effort of local journalists and advocates. This is a reality that we must reckon with. So, the question is, on what basis should this community assume that seclusion is being used in only emergent situations, by trained staff, who have done everything they can to avoid this emergency procedure, if the District is going to refuse to disclose information to journalists that it has, in fact, disclosed in the past? – The Gazette – February 2, 2020 – (Iowa) - <https://is.gd/cZTbPC>

44. “Nursing Home Abuse Caught on Camera” - According to a report from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, one in five emergency room visits for residents from nursing homes are from abuse. Most of the time, the nursing home doesn’t report the abuse to law enforcement or the proper government agency. A second report was generated that included reviews of more than 34,000 Medicare claims. After reviewing those claims, it was found that almost 90 percent could be linked to possible abuse or neglect. – Med News – February 4, 2020 – (North Carolina) - <https://is.gd/odFCf7>

45. “Cyberbullying Linked to History of Emotional Abuse in Adolescents” - Among adolescents receiving treatment in an acute inpatient psychiatric unit, those who experienced cyberbullying had elevated hyper response and higher rates of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depersonalization, and depression, according to a study published in the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry. A history of emotional abuse and recent cyberbullying were also correlated, suggesting that adolescents with a history of childhood trauma may be more vulnerable to continued abuse. – Psychiatry Advisor – February 6, 2020 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/yTX0Li>

46. “Texas Poured Nearly \$1B into new Special Ed Funding Following IDEA Violations” - A new [report](#) released this week by the Texas Education Agency shows the state increased its special education funding by nearly \$1 billion over a four-year period, with the latest expenditure at \$4.02 billion for the 2019-20 school year. The state has drastically increased its special ed

funding after a federal investigation and media reports showed Texas in violation of IDEA, or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, when it arbitrarily capped the number of students with disabilities it served at 8.5%. – Education Drive – January 31, 2020 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/17LWfu>

IMPROVED SUPPORTS

47. “Colorado Vowed to End the Waitlist for an Adult Disability Program by 2020. Nearly 3,000 People are Still Waiting” - The Medicaid program provides 24/7 care for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. The average wait is currently eight years. Six years ago, Colorado lawmakers set 2020 as the year the state would clear the waitlists for all Medicaid waiver programs for people with disabilities. That didn’t happen. Today, there are still 4,213 people waiting for a waiver — 2,895 of them for the DD Medicaid waiver, the most intensive program for adults. The average wait time is now eight years for that waiver — down from 15 in 2014, when the law was passed. The number of people waiting for the waiver almost doubled in the same period, to 2,895 people from 1,454. But in good news, as the waitlist has grown, so has the number of adults enrolled in the program. Today, 6,029 individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities receive the DD waiver, up from 4,848 six years ago. – The Colorado Sun – February 5, 2020 – (Colorado) - <https://is.gd/c92q3f>

48. “Virtual Reality Helps Autistic Children ‘Travel’ to New Places” - A school in England for children with autism is finding a new use for virtual reality, or VR headsets. Prior’s Court is a school in Berkshire, southern England. The workers at the school are also using high technology to learn more about individual students. People with autism may find it hard to deal with places and situations they have not experienced before. VR headsets make the wearer feel like they are in a different place. For example, someone wearing a VR headset can have a 360-degree view of a place as they turn around.

With video, they can even hear the sounds of the place. Voice of America News – February 2, 2020 – (England) - <https://is.gd/MNLVRx>

49. “Ahead of census, advocates warn of difficulties in counting people with disabilities” - The National Disability Rights Network estimates more than 2.6 million people live with disabilities in Florida. Now, the question is whether or not the census, which helps guide billions in federal funds, will provide an accurate count. Olivia Babis is a Public Policy Analyst for Disability Rights Florida. She spends her days at the Florida Capitol speaking with lawmakers. "We have to advocate for our rights because no one else is doing it on our behalf," she said. Right now, Babis has her eyes on the Census. Every ten years some in the disability community fall through the cracks, she said. "A lot of times this is an overlooked population," Babis said. – WCTV – February 3, 2020 – (Florida) - <https://is.gd/DRyVMA>

50. “More Trainings Are Not the Answer to Police Violence Against Disabled People” - The Chicago Police Department (CPD) [recently announced](#) it would be hiring an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance officer. The ADA compliance officer will be brought on to monitor CPD’s accordance with federally mandated ADA regulations, implement new policies for CPD and provide disability-related training. While the compliance officer may not have “police power,” they would be [closely working](#) with law enforcement officers. The new position is part of [a federal consent decree](#) filed by the attorney general’s office and the city of Chicago in September 2018. – Truthout – February 4, 2020 – (Illinois) - <https://is.gd/r4xvg2>

51. “More Than 50 Programs to Receive \$934,000 in Funding from Hanover Township’s Mental Health Board” - Hanover Township’s Mental Health Board is distributing \$935,000 to 33 agencies helping township residents with mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse intervention/prevention services. New this year is the Challenge Funding, a one-time payment to pilot new programs or create new positions, said Tom

Kuttenberg, director of community and government relations for the township. – Chicago Tribune – February 4, 2020 – (Illinois) - <https://is.gd/SJDcie>

52. “Sexual Assault Prosecutions Often Fail Women with Mental Disabilities” - Testimony of the most vulnerable women is undermined by a process that infantilizes and hypersexualizes them. The trial system must be reformed. Women who have a psychiatric or intellectual disability are [four to five times more likely](#) than other women to be sexually assaulted. Yet discussions of “rape culture” do not typically address why these women are targeted for sexual violence with such frequency, and the MeToo movement has been largely silent on sexual abuse of women with mental disabilities. When these cases do get to court, the criminal justice system does not serve these women well. Their credibility can be undermined by expert evidence, they are simultaneously hypersexualized and infantilized, and they are subjected to cross-examination, the dominant purpose of which is to confuse. – Policy Options – February 7, 2020 – (National) - <https://is.gd/CQ3b8m>

53. “Disability Etiquette Lessons from a Campaign Encounter Gone Wrong” - “I felt like he talked down to me. And I was mad that he touched my face. Because I have a disability and use a Tobii communication device, he was perceiving me differently than another 20-year-old. As not being smart.” While the policy, political, and electoral implications of this encounter and video may not be clear, the incident does offer valuable real-life lessons for politicians and other professionals on how to behave when meeting people with disabilities. While in some ways the encounter and responses to it demonstrate the progress disabled people are making in the world of politics, it also reminds us how not to behave with disabled people if our intent is to show true appreciation and respect. – Forbes – February 4, 2020 – (New Hampshire) - <https://is.gd/rGfUrc>

54. “For the Deaf, Technology can Make Health Care Access Worse” - Hospitals nationwide have begun using video remote interpreting, or VRI

technology, to fulfill the “reasonable accommodation” portion of the American with Disabilities Act. But with small screens, unreliable Wi-Fi connections and devices that are hard to move around beds, many deaf individuals say that technology has made trying to seek and communicate about medical help worse, not better. Smith said VRI can be confusing for a deaf patient. The interpreter on the screen can’t see everything that’s happening in a room and can keep their signing flat even when a doctor appears friendly and cheerful. Interpreters can also be hesitant to vocalize pain, meaning that a doctor doesn’t know the full extent to what a patient is feeling. – The Charlotte Observer – February 2, 2020 – (North Carolina) - <https://is.gd/KbqWHI>

55. “Equal Cost for Equal Education: Local Districts Lobby for Change in Charter School Payments” - Area school officials are lobbying Pennsylvania legislators to support a proposal from Gov. Tom Wolf that would level the checkbook for traditional public schools when it comes to their charter school payments. When a child attends a charter school, the school district redirects taxpayer dollars to the new school according to a formula based on enrollment and budget numbers. That means the tuition payment can vary wildly from district to district. – The Times – February 2, 2020 – (Pennsylvania) - <https://is.gd/1PiLiz>

56. “SJU, Jefferson Joint Program Trains Health Care Workers to be More 'Autism Aware'” - “There's a lot of research showing that medical doctors are not that autism-aware and they're not aware of the greater needs of the individuals or their families, and also the medical environments where they're served are not necessarily sensitive to their social needs, their communication needs, their sensory needs.” Saint Joseph’s is [teaming up](#) with Thomas Jefferson University to fill that need. Students at Saint Joseph’s who are studying autism behavioral studies will get preferential treatment for a program at Jefferson’s Sidney Kimmel Medical College. The program is for students in their junior year who plan to enter medical school after graduation. – KYW News Radio – February 3, 2020 – (Pennsylvania) - <https://is.gd/w2fPwz>

57. High funding of charter schools causing debate amid current Metro budget restraints - Pinkston says the nearly \$150 million price tag is too much of your money to fund a private school. FOX 17 News' Harriet Wallace asked Pinkston if charter schools were a drain or detriment to the traditional schools, especially considering the current budget restraints. "Charter schools on a limited basis can add value but when they start growing at an unabated rate, which is what we've seen in Nashville over the decade, it is having a destabilizing effect on the school system, on the budget," Pinkston responded. "Charter schools should not and cannot be seen as a replacement for our traditional public schools." – Fox 17 – February 3, 2020 – (Tennessee) - <https://is.gd/avEswx>

58. "Texas School for the Deaf Launches School Safety Apps for Students, Employees" - The Texas School for the Deaf is rolling out two new mobile apps to promote school safety. That state law, Senate Bill 11, was [passed by the Texas legislature last year](#), after the 2018 mass shooting at Santa Fe High School in the Houston area. One app, called the Smart Button Instant Panic Button, is exclusively for School for the Deaf employees. "It's an instant panic button in the school employees' pocket, where they can press the button for three seconds and instantly notify triage teams, principal groups, and/or the Superintendent as well as first responders, quickly and instantly within three seconds about a specific type of incident," said Gregory Bender, the app's founder and CEO. "Sixty percent of our faculty and staff are deaf," she said. "So, we have a lot of deaf people, and, of course, they will use the e-mail and the texting button to communicate, or the two-way chat because that can go through text and e-mail as well." – Houston Public Media – February 4, 2020 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/IVldfp>

59. "Six Flags Earns Certified Autism Center Designation at all 26 Parks" - [Six Flags](#) Entertainment Corporation across the country has earned the Certified Autism Center designation at all 26 of its North American park locations. The [International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards](#) partnered with the theme park company to equip team members "with the tools and training needed to better serve guests with special

needs,” said Jason Freeman, Six Flags vice president of safety. – Houston Chronicle – February 6, 2020 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/a0boy4>

60. “Superior Schools Advocate for Social Worker Licensing Changes” - The district finds it hard to attract school social workers from Wisconsin, but extra licensing requirements make it difficult to recruit graduates from Minnesota. “We have a problem when the licensing requirements make it so difficult that we can’t meet the needs of the people and provide the services that they need,” Larson said. Superior’s location is part of the issue for a few reasons. First, school district officials said it's tough to attract graduates from Wisconsin’s school social worker programs when the closest licensing school is more than 300 miles away. The second issue is the extra licensing requirement in Wisconsin. Both the University of Minnesota-Duluth and the College of St. Scholastica offer a master’s degree in social work, but those graduates would have to take additional classes to work in Wisconsin schools. “We’re not asking that the bar is lowered, we’re just asking that that licensure requirement from Minnesota transfer over to Wisconsin. Because we are a border community ... it’s hitting us the hardest,” Starzecki said. – Superior Telegram – February 3, 2020 – (Wisconsin) - <https://is.gd/hG3T9G>

INTERNATIONAL

61. “Canada’s Bishops Call Assisted Suicide Plan ‘Deeply Troubling’” - “Suffering and death are indeed terrifying and the instinct to flinch from pain is universal. But euthanasia and assisted suicide are not the answer,” wrote Archbishop Richard Gagnon, president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in a letter dated January 31. “We strongly urge the Government of Canada, before proceeding further, to undertake a more extensive, thorough, impartial, and prolonged consultation on the question, in order to ensure all pertinent factors – social, medical, and moral – are carefully and thoroughly considered,” he continued. “The government’s attempt to expand euthanasia to include advance directives, as well as extending it to situations in which death is not reasonably foreseeable, is deeply troubling,” he wrote. “Further attempts to make it available to mature

minors, the mentally ill, and the cognitively impaired are evidence that the current safeguards are inadequate and can be legally challenged and overturned.” – The Tablet – February 3, 2020 – (Canada) -

<https://is.gd/20roSr>

62. “Leading international disability activists gather in Bengaluru to share strategies and advocate for change” - The Commonwealth Foundation convenes human rights advocates and legal experts from India and six other countries to challenge the inequalities faced by persons with disabilities. Yesterday marked the end of a 3-day workshop convened by the Commonwealth Foundation to help human rights advocates and disabled people’s organizations share strategies on how to advance rights for persons with disabilities in India and their own countries. Amba Salelkar, a lawyer and international legal advisor specializing in disability law, is one of the experts from India leading one of the workshop sessions. She has spent her career across Asia advocating for policy reform in the areas of gender, disability, and mental health. – The Policy Times – February 6, 2020 – (India) - <https://is.gd/kwv7du>

63. “TN Disabled Minor's Rape Case: Court to Pronounce Quantum of Punishment for 15 Convicts on Monday” - A special court here is expected to pronounce on Monday the quantum of punishment for 15 men convicted of sexually assaulting a minor disabled girl at an apartment complex here. On Saturday, the Special Court under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offenders (POSCO) Act had convicted 15 accused, acquitted one while one person died while the trial was on. The 12-year-old hearing impaired girl was sexually assaulted by the convicts working in the apartment complex as lift operators, plumbers, housekeepers, security guard and others for about seven months. – Times Now News – February 2, 2020 – (India) - <https://is.gd/dcmenz>

64. “Sick and Tired of Pain, Kenyans Fly out to Procure Aided Suicide” - The epitaph on her grave reads, “To Live is Christ and to Die is Gain.” It is somewhat a representation of how she lived – and died. Diana Elga Akinyi

drafted the epitaph just days before she chose to die to free herself from excruciating pain and the numbing effects of medicines. She wanted death so much. One day when my elder brother was alone with her, she asked that we take her to a country where euthanasia is legal. She said she had done research online and was ready to die. She was persistent,” her sister said. The family agreed to fly her to a European country that they prefer not to name and on October 16, 2017, she bid farewell to her brother, mother and sister. – Daily Nation – February 1, 2020 – (Kenya) - <https://is.gd/Fm4IGN>

65. “Woman Rescued Four Years Ago Still at Embu Referral Hospital” - A mentally retarded woman who was rescued by a chief after she strayed from her parents’ home has been at the Embu Referral Hospital for almost four years now. The hospital’s management is now appealing to relatives of the woman to go for her. The administrator sympathized with the woman who was pregnant and took her to the referral hospital where she delivered a few weeks later but the child died. Since then, the 40-year-old woman, who cannot express herself coherently, has been in the ward as doctors are unable to trace her relatives. – Daily Nation – February 3, 2020 – (Kenya) - <https://is.gd/fFmI48>

66. “Support Service did not Keep Client Safe from Inappropriate Behavior” - A report released on Monday by Deputy Health and Disability Commissioner Rose Wall claims IDEA Services - which says it "supports adults of all ages with intellectual disabilities to live in their own homes and enjoy life as part of their communities" - and two of its staff took little or no action, even though they knew of several events involving another man's aggressive or sexual behavior towards the victim known as Mr. C. The alleged behavior took place when both men were at a vocational service run by IDEA Services, which has an office in Middleton. Wall said IDEA Services had a "widespread failure to escalate serious incidents" and the failures were systemic, involving staff from all levels. – Otago Daily Times – February 3, 2020 – (New Zealand) - <https://is.gd/AlbIPo>

MISCELLANEOUS

67. “Access v. Abuse: Disabled community still struggles for access” - “The people who are ‘violating the law’ don’t really know in most cases when they’re innocent, and they don’t have a ready ability to defend themselves, but being innocent isn’t an excuse,” said federal defense attorney Richard M. Hunt, who has specialized against ADA lawsuits for 15 years. “For small businesses, even if they think they could win the lawsuit they can’t afford it and that’s really how the law is getting exploited.” – San Jose Spotlight – February 2, 2020 – (California) - <https://is.gd/A5nWMP>
68. “How Algorithmic Bias Hurts People with Disabilities” - Though a huge portion of the population lives with a disability, it comes in many different forms, making bias hard to detect, prove, and design around. In hiring, for example, new algorithm-driven tools will identify characteristics shared by a company’s “successful” existing employees, then look for those traits when they evaluate new hires. But as the model treats underrepresented traits as undesired traits to receive less weighting, people with disabilities—like other marginalized groups—risk being excluded as a matter of course. – Slate – February 6, 2020 – (National) - <https://is.gd/VzvOj4>
69. “Will I Die Before My Special Needs Child or Will He Die Before Me? Both Scenarios Equally Terrify Me” - The possibility of losing my son is unbearable to even think about. Equally unbearable is thinking about leaving him behind in a world without his mama. Does he understand death? Would he think I simply left one day and never came back? Who would love him like me? Who could? Our lives as parents are different in many ways, including never having the comfort of knowing that our children have grown into independent adults who will be able to navigate the world without us. Instead, we know that our children will need us for as long as we live, and possibly even longer. – Mombie Needs Coffee – February 2020 – (National) - <https://is.gd/y1t4ax>
70. A Surprising Emotion People With Childhood Emotional Neglect Often Feel
- But there is one other feeling that also manages to break through CEN

folks' protective "wall" often. Most CEN people are not aware of this feeling, have never named it for themselves, and are frequently driven to act by it in ways that are not good for them. I am talking about the feeling of being responsible. Yes, "responsible" is a feeling! I have noticed that the feeling of responsibility runs rampant in CEN adults. Some CEN folks feel so concerned that their friends are having fun at an outing that they are unaware of whether they themselves are having fun. Many CEN people become the "go-to" person at work because they are quick to take on more responsibilities with little thought about themselves. CEN people are automatic caretakers who others find it easy to rely upon. – Psych Central – February 2, 2020 – (National) - <https://is.gd/2JZX7L>

71. "When a Physical Disability Keeps You from Getting Mental Health Help" - Depression and suicidal ideation are more likely among people with disabilities due to factors like abuse, isolation, and stressors related to poverty, among others. Transportation options are often limited and there can be problems with older buildings only having stairs or doors that aren't wide enough. One study even found suicidality was seen as significantly more acceptable for people with disabilities. – Healthline – February 6, 2020 – (National) - <https://is.gd/2WA1rx>