



## ADVOCACY CENTER

SERVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND SENIOR CITIZENS

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Employment For People With Disabilities Is A Priority for Louisiana

Baton Rouge, LA, October 1, 2014

On Wednesday, October 1, 2014, individuals with disabilities, employers and advocates gathered on the Capitol steps to call attention to the importance of employment for people with disabilities and the beginning of Louisiana's observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) Secretary Kathy H. Kliebert outlined her agency's efforts to promote employment for people with disabilities. "The role of work in our lives has been talked about so much and from nearly every angle. Issues like work-life balance make easy headlines, but what is often left out of the discussion all too frequently is that for some individuals work hasn't always been an option," said DHH Secretary Kliebert. "We want to make sure that our family members, friends and neighbors with disabilities have the ability to work if they choose to do so. We are dedicated to using waiver services, supports and provider relationships to help make that possible. I want to thank our the Workforce Commission, the Advocacy Center and our other partners for continuing to work to ensure that work is an option for any Louisiana resident who wishes to join the labor force."

Curt Eysink, executive director of Louisiana Workforce Commission, spoke about his agency's commitment to this effort. "Our Louisiana Rehabilitation Services staff are trained to help people find good jobs with real career potential. We offer an array of programs and services designed to empower and support people with disabilities establish careers and maintain their independence."

"Thanks to our LRS staff and Louisiana's robust and growing economy, our clients are being trained and are connecting to more career opportunities than ever in Louisiana," Eysink said

According to Libby Murphy, Chair of the Louisiana Rehabilitation Council, "Louisiana Rehabilitation Services and the Louisiana Rehabilitation Council are part of a large coalition of non-profits across the state that are focused on ensuring people with disabilities of all types receive the services, training, and accommodations needed to become valuable, productive employees. Work is

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fundamental to identity. It offers purpose and the opportunity to lead an independent, self-directed life.”

Governor Jindal, the mayors of Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Shreveport & Bossier, Lafayette, Monroe, Lake Charles, Alexandria, Slidell, and Ruston, and the Terrebonne Parish Council have issued proclamations affirming their commitment to an inclusive community and acknowledging that workplaces that welcome all people, including people with disabilities, are a critical part of our efforts to build a strong economy.

“We are excited that Louisiana is demonstrating its strong commitment to employment for people with disabilities. People with disabilities are vital contributors to Louisiana’s economy. Everyone has a role to play in increasing the opportunities for people with disabilities to be fully integrated into the workforce,” said Stephanie Patrick, Director of Policy and Planning at the Advocacy Center.

For more information on Louisiana’s activities to support National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2014, to view the proclamations, and to see video of people with disabilities talking about what employment means to them, visit <http://www.work-pays.org/index.php/ndeam.html>.

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***About the Advocacy Center***

The Advocacy Center protects, empowers and advocates for the human and legal rights of people with disabilities and seniors living in LA, in order that they may live an integrated life in the community, free from abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Advocacy Center employs 50 people statewide who assist people to achieve employment, education, housing, and health care goals.