



**The Massachusetts Initiative to Maximize Assistive Technology
in Consumers' Hands:**

Federal Fiscal Year 2011 Annual Report

**Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
Charles Carr, Commissioner
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Executive Summary

MassMATCH Statistics

- 965 assistive technology (AT) devices were loaned by MassMATCH partners to state residents. AT device loans allowed people to test drive devices or fill a short-term equipment need.
- 312 people learned about AT at device demonstration events.
- 71 people with disabilities borrowed equipment from the new Long-Term Device Loan Program (for devices valued under \$500). The program is run in partnership with Easter Seals and saved consumers a total of \$25,075.
- 23 durable medical devices were refurbished through the Wheelchair Reuse program.
- Get AT Stuff, the New England “Craig’s List” for AT, completed 33 exchanges, saving Massachusetts residents an estimated \$74,969 over retail.
- The Massachusetts AT Loan Program provided \$1,226,252 in financial loans to 67 borrowers. Most loans were made to purchase vehicle modifications.
- 560 people were trained on AT topics.
- 975 people received information and referral services.
- 59,869 people were reached through public awareness activities including Web sites.

MassMATCH Highlights

- MassMATCH continued funding to two AT Regional Centers in partnership with Easter Seals in Boston and United Cerebral Palsy-Berkshire in Pittsfield. The Centers provide a variety of AT services to people with disabilities of all ages.
- MassMATCH helped organize the Products and Technologies that Change People’s Lives event held at the Hynes Convention Center in September of 2011. Change People’s Lives was the first statewide AT/UD (universal design) expo/conference in Massachusetts. MassMATCH funded the registration of 100 conference attendees with disabilities.
- MassMATCH began organizing the creation of a Mobility Clinic pilot to better serve residents with seating issues who rely on wheeled mobility but are not clients of the Dept. of Developmental Services (DDS). This is a collaboration among DDS, Stavros CIL, and MassMATCH to provide urgently needed services to historically underserved consumers. It is expected to launch in 2012.
- MassMATCH continued to develop the AT School Share (ATSS) initiative, bringing on board an additional 4 school entities. The ATSS is a network of schools and school systems created for the sharing of AT devices and AT knowledge and expertise.

Introduction: Meeting the Requirements of the AT Act of 2004

MassMATCH is one of 56 state initiatives federally funded through the AT Act of 1998 as amended in 2004 (hereafter “the AT Act of 2004”). It stands for the Commonwealth's initiative to “Maximize Assistive Technology (AT) in Consumer's Hands,” and its goals are to improve awareness of and access to assistive technology for people with all kinds of disabilities, of all ages, and for all environments. The 2004 AT Act amendments specifically call for improving access to AT in the areas of education, employment, community living, and IT and telecommunications.

The AT Act of 2004 does not directly pay for AT devices. Instead the emphasis is on funding initiatives that create better access to affordable and appropriate equipment. Each state is required to carry out the following:

State-level Activities

- State finance systems (for individuals to affordably purchase AT)
- Device reutilization programs (to exchange, repair or recycle used equipment)
- Device loan programs (for short-term trials of equipment)
- Device demonstration programs (to see and try out equipment)

State Leadership Activities

- Training (with a portion focused on transition assistance)
- Technical Assistance (with a portion focused on transition assistance)
- Public awareness, information and assistance
- Coordination and collaboration (among entities responsible for AT policies, procedures and/or funding of AT devices/services)

In addition, states must have an advisory council to provide consumer-responsive, consumer-driven advice on the design, implementation, and evaluation of all state-level and leadership activities funded by the AT Act grant.

In FFY11, MassMATCH continued its work to improve the experience of residents who use wheeled mobility. This was an area of need that drew significant attention at the AT Summit attended by state agencies in 2009. Building on the FFY10 wheelchair recycling partnership with Stavros and Boston CILs (see Reutilization below), in FFY11, MassMATCH began dialogue with Stavros, and the Dept. of Developmental Services (DDS) to create a Mobility Clinic Pilot. The pilot will address the unmet seating customization and fabrication needs of residents who use wheeled mobility (read about it below in [Coordination and Collaboration](#)). Also new in 2011 was the first ever statewide AT/UD (universal design) event: Products and Technologies that Change People’s Lives. Although sponsored by the Executive Office of Health and Human

Services (EOHHS), MassMATCH helped organize the combination expo/conference/summit and funded the registrations of 100 state residents with disabilities. (Read about plans in the works for a MassMATCH sponsored follow-up AT/UD conference in [Forward Thinking](#) below.)

State-level Accomplishments

1. State Financing: The Mass. Assistive Technology Loan Program

The Massachusetts Assistive Technology Loan Program is an Alternative Financing Program (AFP) established with funds from the federal government, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and private funds. It is an interest buy down and loan guarantee program enabling individuals with disabilities and families to access affordable credit to purchase AT. The program is administered by Easter Seals of Massachusetts, and Sovereign Bank is the program's lending partner.

To be eligible for a loan, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- They must have a disability or represent someone with a disability. For example, a parent might submit the application for a child with a disability.
- The devices being sought must be used primarily to increase the independence of someone with a disability.
- Applicants must have been Massachusetts residents for the past six months.

The program allows eligible individuals to borrow between \$500 and \$25,000 for program-guaranteed loans. In addition, there is no upper loan amount for loans provided directly by Sovereign Bank without a program guarantee. The rate is negotiated every twelve months (during FFY11 it was 4.5% and 4.0%). Loan terms are based on the expected life of the needed item, from three years for computers to seven years for adapted vans. Guaranteed loan terms may be customized to meet an individual's repayment needs.

Loan Applications

For FFY11 the AT Loan Program loaned \$1,226,252.95 to 67 borrowers, another 17 applicants were approved but chose not to take out a loan. The AT Loan Program loan approval rate was 68%.

Table A: AT Loan Program Approval Rate

FFY11 Loan Applications	Number	Percentage
Approved	84	68%
Denied	40	32%
Total Processed	124	100%

Approximately half of the approved loans were made to applicants with incomes below \$30,000 per year.

Table B: Number of Loans and Approval Rate by Applicant Income

	Applicant Annual Income						Total
	\$15,000 or Less	\$15,001 to \$30,000	\$30,001 to \$45,000	\$45,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$75,000	\$75,00 or More	
Number of loans	12	21	10	7	8	9	67
% of loans made	18%	31%	15%	10%	12%	13%	100%

To ensure that assistive technology loans are accessible to the Massachusetts disabilities community, Easter Seals contracts with more than 20 access sites across the state to provide outreach, marketing and individual assistance with completing AT Loan Program loan applications (when necessary). These access sites include independent living centers, elder organizations, disability-specific organizations, AT providers and rehabilitation facilities. Additionally, AT Loan Program brochures and informational materials have been translated into six languages to reach people with disabilities from under-served and unserved communities.

Table C: Point of Origin of Applications

FFY11 Applications	Number
Access Sites	11
AT Loan Program Directly	113
Total	124

Loan Type and Purpose

46% of the loans approved were loan guarantee only (extending credit to applicants who would not otherwise have been approved by the lender). 31% were interest buy-down with a loan guarantee. The highest loan amount made in FY11 was for \$58,180. The lowest loan amount was \$500.

Table D: Loans Made by Loan Type

Loan Type Approved	Number	Percentage of Total Loans Made
Interest Buy-Down only	46	69%
Interest Buy-Down + Loan Guarantee	21	31%

Broad ranges of AT and AT services are allowable under the AT Loan Program. The loans are commonly used to help purchase modified vehicles, adapted computers, computer software,

durable medical devices and portable ramps. In addition, the AT Loan Program offers funding for assistive technology services to help people determine which device may be right for them. These services help people locate and purchase items, train them on their use, and provide maintenance and repair.

As the following table demonstrates, in FFY11 87% of the total amount financed went to vehicle modifications and transportation needs. 9% was loaned for the purpose of environmental adaptations. 3% went to hearing devices and services.

Table E: Number and Value of Loans Made by AT Device/Service Type

Type of AT Device/Service	Number of Devices Financed	Total Value of Loans	% of Amount Loaned
Vision	0	0	0
Hearing	7	37,620	3%
Speech communication	0	0	0
Learning, cognition, and developmental	0	0	0
Mobility, seating and positioning	2	7,890	<1%
Daily living	0	0	0
Environmental adaptations	7	105,854	9%
Vehicle modification and transportation	50	1,071,488	87%
Computers and related	1	3,398	<1%
Recreation, sports, and leisure	0	0	0
Total		1,226,252	100%

FFY11 Loan Defaults and Net Losses

The default rate for the AT Loan Program is just 1.37%. In FFY11 there were 2 loans in default, a percentage of less than 1%. The net dollar loss to the program was \$6,623. Overall, there were 227 active loans with a net value of \$476,576.

AT Loan Program Customer Satisfaction

20 of 67 loan recipients provided feedback on their satisfaction with the loan program. As the table below demonstrates, all responders were highly satisfied or satisfied with the program.

Table F: Customer Satisfaction

Customer Rating of Services	Number of Customers	Percentage of Responders
Highly satisfied	19	95%
Satisfied	1	5%
Satisfied somewhat	0	
Not at all satisfied	0	
Sub total (responders)	20	
Non-respondent	47	
Total	67	
Response Rate	30%	

AT Loan Program Success Story:



Roger Cicchese was literally born to overcome adversity. His mother had advanced ovarian cancer while pregnant, a condition neither were expected to survive. When Roger came into the world he was two months premature and it was 1951, a time when preemies were promptly incubated with high concentrations of oxygen. Nowadays it is well understood that such treatment causes permanent blindness in newborns.

Despite growing up blind in the 50s and 60s, Roger defied the era's expectations, earning a BA and MA in human services, and nurturing a love of audio editing. (His parents owned a movie theater while he was growing up, which he says sparked this interest.) As result, his work history is long and varied, from early work in the movie house, to social services to, at one time, owning and operating his own sound studio. It's a history with ups and downs, from high-paid high-tech positions to hard times that have included losing his business, overcoming his own

aggressive cancer, and most recently experiencing a sudden and permanent hearing impairment.

It's this most recent challenge which eventually brought him to the AT Loan Program operated by Easter Seals. Initially, Roger says, the hearing impairment was not something he wanted to confront. But profound isolation landed him with an audiologist, who, in turn, directed him to hearing aids that could be covered by MassHealth. These helped him get around, but in hindsight, he says, the audiologist never asked him how he used his hearing or educated him about a range of device options. The cheaper hearing aids meant he could listen to the radio, but the sound engineering work he loved was looking like a distant memory.

Then one day an old colleague and a flyer for a high-tech hearing center changed Roger's outlook. The colleague wanted to set up a new sound studio in New Hampshire with the hope to eventually employ Roger full-time. The flyer was for free high-tech hearing screenings. The colleague urged him to go.

That's how Roger learned about the ReSound Alera digital hearing aid, technology that allowed him to hear frequencies he hadn't perceived in years, and recover himself and the work he has always loved.

The trick was affording it.

The AT Loan Program proved to be the only way Roger could acquire the device. Vocational Rehabilitation at the Mass Commission for the Blind turned him down; his impairment wasn't severe enough for Mass Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and all the private charities he approached required matching funds. Eventually, however, he found his own way to Easter Seals where he learned that if approved, the entire purchase amount could be financed for payments he could manage.

Today the sound studio is fully operational. They've produced their first album and revenue is beginning to come in. Roger is making loan payments of \$119/mo. over 5 years for his high-tech hearing aids. Initially, he says, he was turned down for the loan, "But Easter Seals didn't give up on me. Leo called and encouraged me to appeal and he even had ideas about the kind of additional information I should gather that would help." The payments, he admits, are tight on just his SSDI for now. "But the people at Easter Seals really treated me like a human being and I'm not going to let them down, not after the way they went to bat for me."

It's been a long road with many twists and turns, but once again Roger is doing the work he loves. New technology made a critical difference, but equally important were Roger's own determination, that of his colleague, and the commitment of the AT Loan Program staff. Reflecting on the journey, Roger muses, "Sometimes in life, you have to be willing to start over. But, as I like to say, winners never quit and quitters never win."

2. Device Reutilization: GetATStuff, Long-Term Device Loan Program, Wheelchair Reuse Program

GetATStuff.org

www.GetATStuff.org is the website of the Assistive Technology Exchange in New England. GetATStuff's goal is to put AT that is currently not being used into the hands of someone who can benefit from it. The exchange offers a free "classified ad" so people can buy, sell, give away, or post their need for equipment (on the website we call it a "virtual AT porch sale").

MassMATCH joined with the AT Act programs of Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont to create GetATStuff. The site is designed to serve New Englanders, but residents in neighboring states may post as well. Users may sort postings by geography and/or device category or keyword.

In FFY11 there were 33 completed exchanges, saving consumers an estimated \$74,969 over retail. Additionally there were 270 new users registered, 4,982 hits to the website, and 352 requests for contact information (contacts between posters and respondents).

Table G: Community Participation Between FFY07 and FFY11

Activity	FFY07 (02/07-09/07)	FFY08	FFY09	FFY10	FFY11
New Users to Register	183	283	290	264	270
Hits to Listings	687	3,580	4,229	4,735	4982
Items Posted for Sale/Free	65	75	106	137	143
Items Posted as Needed	18	23	39	38	21
Completed Exchanges	1	23	27	15	33

The equipment category with the highest number of postings "for sale" or "as needed" was mobility, seating and positioning.

Table H: Items Posted for Sale/Donation

Category	Number
Vision	7
Hearing	0
Speech Communication	1
Mobility, Seating & Positioning	72
Daily Living	36
Environmental Adaptations	15
Transportation and Vehicle Modifications	9
Computers and Computer-related	2
Recreation, Sports, and Leisure	1
Total	143

Table I: Items Posted As Needed

Category	Number
Vision	1
Hearing	0
Mobility, Seating and Positioning	4
Daily Living	2
Environmental Adaptations	4
Transportation and Vehicle Modifications	2
Computers and Computer-related	7
Recreation, Sports, and Leisure	1
Total	21

Table J: Cost Savings As Reported By Sellers

Type of AT Device	Number of Completed Exchanges	Total Estimated Current Purchase Price	Total Amount for which Devices Were Sold	Savings to Consumers
Vision	4	\$663	\$60	\$603
Speech Communication	2	\$8324	\$2500	\$5824
Mobility, Seating and Positioning	12	\$62169	\$1600	\$60569
Daily Living	13	\$4778	\$585	\$4193
Environmental Adaptations	1	\$1200	\$0	\$1200
Transportation and Vehicle Modification	1	\$3080	\$500	\$2580
Total	33	\$80214	\$5245	\$74969

GetATStuff Performance Measures

As the table below shows, 7 GetATStuff recipients provided feedback for how the exchange program served them. 3 reported they could only afford AT through the exchange program. 1 reported the AT was only available to them through the program. 1 reported it was easier to buy the AT this way than to pursue the other program available to him or her.

Table K: Primary Purpose for the Need for AT: GetATStuff

Response	Education	Employment	Community Living	Prefer Not to Answer	Total
I could only afford the AT through this program	1	1	1	0	3
The AT was only available to me through this program	0	0	1	0	1
The AT was available to me through other programs, but the system was too complex or the wait time was too long	0	0	1	0	1
None of the above	0	0	2	0	2
Prefer not to answer					
Sub total	1	1	5	0	7
Non respondent	0	0	0	0	26
Total	1	1	5	0	33

GetATStuff User Satisfaction

Most sellers were highly satisfied with the service.

Table L: Feedback from Sellers

Seller Rating of Services	Number
Highly Satisfied	27
Satisfied	3
Satisfied somewhat	3
Non respondent	0
Total	33

Table M: Feedback from Recipients

Recipient Rating of Services	Number
Highly satisfied	6
Satisfied	1
Non respondent	26
Total	33

GetATStuff Success Story



“Betty Jones” is a 22-year-old woman with multiple disabilities. She is unable to walk on her own and she also has a speech impairment. According to Betty’s mom, Betty’s age and size made it difficult to go out with her. To ease the burden of carrying Betty, the family started looking around for an adapted adult stroller.

A neighbor introduced the Jones family to the Assistive Technology Exchange in New England (AKA GetATStuff.com) website. Mrs. Jones visited the website right away and found “the perfect” adult stroller listed for sale on the site. She quickly got in touch with the stroller’s lister to negotiate a purchase. Three days later, Mr. and Mrs. Jones drove to the lister’s town to pay for and pick-up the stroller.

“Now that we have the stroller, we are able to take Betty out on family outings. It’s no longer such a difficult choice for us to make,” says Mrs. Jones. She says everybody in the family is so happy. “Sometimes when we are out, people approach us and inquire where they can obtain a similar adult stroller for their family members with disabilities.” She says using the GetATStuff website was very easy and has saved them a lot of money. She is so impressed with the program that she can’t stop telling others about it.

Long-Term Device Loan Program

The Long-Term Device Loan Program for Low Cost Devices (a.k.a. “the mini loan program”) is operated by Easter Seals-MA through a partnership with MassMATCH. The program loans AT devices valued at under \$500 to applicants who demonstrate financial need. The loans are

“open-ended” which means that borrowers may use the devices for as long as they need them to live more independently. The program is available to residents of Massachusetts with a disability and family members who are applying on behalf of their relative with a disability.

Easter Seals purchases new devices based on applicant needs. When these items are no longer needed, they are returned and made available to future borrowers. In general, Easter Seals-MA supports the administration of the Long-Term Device Loan Program, and MassMATCH funds the devices.

In FFY11, funding priorities were established for the Long-Term Device Loan Program. These are as follows:

PRIORITY ONE

- Applicants (or parents of children) who require assistive technology for health and or safety reasons.
- Applicants who have recently been discharged from a skilled nursing facility or other institution that require assistive technology for independent daily living.
- Applicants (or parents of children) who require assistive technology as their primary means of communication.

Examples include but are not limited to: portable ramps for primary access to residence, alert notification systems for the hearing impaired, speaking devices, assistive listening devices, grab bars for bathroom access, and lift chairs.

PRIORITY TWO

- Applicants (or parents of children) in which the assistive technology device will have a significant positive impact on daily living.
- Applicants who request assistive technology device to access on-line support groups.
- Parents of children in need of assistive technology device to support the goals of primary or secondary education in the home.

Examples include but are not limited to: devices with internet capabilities (iPod, iPad), computers with internet capabilities, alternative keyboards, magnifiers, reading pens, and vibrating alarm clocks.

PRIORITY THREE

- Applicants who request assistive technology device to gain access to on-line social networking or post-secondary education.
- Applicants who request assistive technology device to gain access to on-line employment listings.

Examples include but are not limited to: devices with internet capabilities (iPod, iPad), and computers with internet capabilities.

In FFY11, the program saved 71 borrowers a total of \$24,727. The program provided computers, vision aids, environmental adaptations, mobility aids, and communication devices.

Table N: Cost Savings to Borrowers

Type of AT Device	Number of Devices Provided for Long-Term Loan (FFY11 only)	Total Estimated Current Purchase Price (i.e. savings to consumers)
Vision	0	0
Hearing	33	\$10,794
Speech communication	0	0
Learning, cognition and development	0	0
Mobility, Seating & Positioning	5	\$2,176
Daily Living	0	0
Environmental Adaptations	3	\$1,171
Transportation and Vehicle Modifications	0	0
Computers and related	30	\$10,586
Recreation, sports and leisure	0	0
Total	71	\$24,727

Long-Term Device Loan Program Performance Measures

Table O: Primary Purpose for the Need for AT

Response	Education	Employment	Community Living	Total
I could only afford the AT through this program	24	2	20	46
The AT was only available to me through this program			3	3
The AT was available to me through other programs, but the system was too complex or the wait time was too long			13	13
None of the above	2	3	1	6
Non respondent		2	1	3
Total	26	7	38	71

Long-Term DLP User Satisfaction

Table P: Feedback from Borrowers

Recipient Rating of Services	Number
Highly satisfied	22
Satisfied	1
Satisfied somewhat	0
Not at all satisfied	0
Non respondent	48
Total	71

Long-Term DLP Success Story



At 53 years old, "Henry" had a stroke that caused paralysis on his left side. He returned home from a rehabilitation center to live with his mother, an elderly woman residing in southern Massachusetts. Since the stroke, a motorized scooter helped him get around, but getting in and out of the house was arduous for everyone. A home modification was a possibility, but a less expensive and faster option was recommended by a peer counselor from the local Independent Living Center: a portable EZ Access Ramp with handrails.

Because the ramp cost under \$500, the equipment was eligible for the Long-Term Device Loan program operated by Easter Seals (ES). Indeed, since establishing priorities for applications, ES reports that portable ramps are becoming a common item for long-term loan. Often a relatively low-cost item like a portable ramp is what is needed for an individual to safely move home from a skilled rehabilitation facility.

Easter Seals approved Henry's ramp application for \$482. And since receiving and installing it, Henry can now leave the house unassisted. He can get to appointments and community events. And he can get out to the backyard to tend the garden and care for his chickens and dogs. His mother calls the ramp and the Long-Term Device Loan Program "a blessing."

Wheelchair Reuse Program

In FFY10 MassMATCH began supporting the work of two independent living centers to refurbish donated wheelchairs and other durable medical equipment for distribution to individuals with disabilities. The ILCs are Stavros CIL in western Massachusetts, and the Boston Center for Independent Living in eastern Massachusetts. Donated equipment is refurbished by the ILCs and posted as available for free or at low cost on the GetATStuff website.

MassMATCH’s support for wheelchair reuse began in response to feedback gathered during the Statewide AT Summit held in 2009. Reuse is another way to provide wheelchairs and scooters to persons requiring this equipment who do not have an affordable way to obtain it. It is also a way to capture and prevent the waste of durable medical equipment that would otherwise go unused.

During FFY11, 23 devices were refurbished with MassMATCH support. As result, a minimum of 6 individuals received a device through MassMATCH’s Wheelchair Reuse, saving consumers at least \$18,300.

Table Q: Savings to Consumers

Type of Device	Number Redistributed (through GetATStuff.com)	Savings to Consumers
Mobility/seating/positioning	5	18,300
Daily Living	0	
Total	5	18,300

3. Device Loan: AT Regional Centers Short-Term Device Loan Program

MassMATCH funds two AT Regional Centers to provide a variety of AT services to people who need them. United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) in Pittsfield operates the AT Regional Center serving western Massachusetts, and Easter Seals (ES) in Boston operates the AT Regional Center serving eastern Massachusetts. One of the MassMATCH services they provide is the short-term device loan program.

Short-term device loans offer people with disabilities the opportunity to use equipment up to four weeks free of charge. Short-term device loans serve several functions:

- Consumers use them to “test drive” and learn about equipment before purchasing.
- Employers use them to find appropriate “reasonable accommodations” for employees with disabilities (as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act) and to avoid wasting resources on uninformed decisions.
- Educators use them to integrate their students with disabilities into school activities at the start of the school year as they assess what equipment works best and while equipment is being procured.
- People with disabilities use them to help justify the purchase of durable medical equipment (DME). (Insurance providers often require proof of a short-term trial of the equipment before providing reimbursement for DME expenses, and equipment vendors do not always provide trials or they may have prohibitive fees).

In FFY11, a total of 965 devices were loaned by the AT Regional Centers. As the table below illustrates, the most utilized device loan categories were Speech Communication and

Computers and Computer-related. 23% of devices loaned were in speech communication, and another 23% were in computer or computer-related technology.

Table R: Devices Loaned by Device Category

Device Category	Devices Loaned			
	UCP	ES	Combined	% Total
Speech Communication	50	177	227	23%
Vision	18	154	172	17%
Hearing	17	43	60	6%
Computers and Computer-related	8	219	227	23%
Daily Living	7	74	81	8%
Learning, Cognition, and Developmental	8	117	125	13%
Environmental Adapt.	10	52	62	6%
Mobility, Seating	0	6	6	<1%
Vehicle Modifications and Transportation	0	0	0	0
Recreation, Sports and Leisure	5	0	5	<1%
Total	123	842	965	100%

Equipment loans are used by a broad range of professionals, as well as individuals with disabilities and their families. In FFY11, the AT Regional Centers were particularly effective at reaching individuals with disabilities and their family members (46%), education representatives (23%), and representatives of technology (13%).

Table S: Device Loan Participants by Category

Category of Participants	Device Loans			
	UCP	ES	Combined	% Total
Individuals with disabilities	21	138	159	26%
Family members	28	94	122	20%
Reps of Education	27	109	136	23%
Reps of Employment	0	18	18	3%
Reps of Health, Allied Health, Rehab.	11	43	54	9%
Reps of Community Living	17	15	32	5%
Reps of Technology	0	81	81	13%
Others	0	0	0	0
Total	104	498	602	100%

The vast majority of FFY11 device loan participants used the program to help make a purchasing decision (77%).

Table T: Loans by Purpose

Loan Purpose	Device Loans			
	UCP	ES	Combined	% Total
Purchase Decision	89	376	465	77%
Loaner	4	48	52	9%
Accommodation	11	38	49	8%
Other	0	36	36	6%
Total	104	498	602	100%

Device Loan Customer Satisfaction and Performance Measures

95% of borrowers who provided feedback were satisfied with their device loan experience. Most were highly satisfied.

Table U: Device Loan Customer Satisfaction

Customer Rating of Services	Consumers			Percentage of Responders		
	UCP	ES	Both	UCP	ES	Both
Highly satisfied	58	141	199	64%	82%	76%
Satisfied	28	23	51	31%	13%	19%
Satisfied somewhat	5	7	12	5%	4%	5%
Not at all satisfied	0	1	1	0	<1%	<1%
Sub total (responders)	91	172	263			
Non respondent	6	326	339			
Total	97	498	602			
Response rate %	94%	35%	44%			

Most device loan users who provided feedback, and who were borrowing AT in order to make a purchase decision, went on to decide the AT met their needs. As the table below demonstrates, these were 112 of 210 responders (53%). 30 of 210 borrowers (14%) reported the AT would not meet their needs. And 68 (32%) were undecided.

Table V: Device Loan Access Performance Measures

Performance Measure	Education		Employ.		Comm. Living		IT/ Telecom.		Totals		
	UCP	ES	UCP	ES	UCP	ES	UCP	ES	UCP	ES	Both
AT meets needs	23	46	3	7	38	31	0	2	64	86	150
AT won't meet needs	5	13	0	2	5	8	0	0	10	23	33
No decision	8	34	0	5	4	22	0	1	12	62	74
Sub total (responders)	36	93	3	14	47	61	0	3	86	171	257
Non respondent	2	112	0	16	1	75	0	2	3	205	126
Total	38	205	3	30	48	136	0	5	89	376	383
Response rate	95%	45%	100%	47%	98%	45%	0	60%	97%	45%	67%

Device Loan Success Story: UCP-Berkshire



At the ATRC in Pittsfield this past summer, Center Coordinator Dawn Matthews had a visit from Marian, a community living provider. Marian came in with concerns for a resident who was living in his own apartment independently. Recently "Bob" had failed to respond to fire safety drills because he'd slept too heavily to hear the smoke alarm system. Marian wondered if there might not be an affordable device solution for Bob. Elders who cannot respond to drills are often placed in assistive living facilities. Sometimes other alerting systems work, but they can require expensive installations. Did Dawn know of anything else?

Dawn suggested a device loan of the KidSmart Vocal Smoke Alarm Detector. She explained that studies have shown people are much more likely to wake up to the sound of a loved-ones voice than to a conventional smoke alarm. For children the issue can be too deep a sleep or confusion about what to do upon waking. For elders, the issue may be the same, or not being able to hear the frequency of the alarm signal. In either case, the Vocal Smoke Alarm is a solution to trial.

Marian borrowed the KidSmart for 4 weeks. During this time she had a relative of Bob's record a message on the device to alert him to get out of bed and what to do to be safe. She was also

able to test the device on numerous occasions to insure it worked well for Bob and found that, indeed, it did.

Both Bob and Marian were pleased with the device loan experience. After the loan period, Marian purchased a vocal smoke alarm at a cost of about \$50. It proved to be an effective and affordable solution and one that would allow Bob to remain in his own apartment.

Device Loan Success Story: Easter Seals-Boston



Julia is a 50 year old woman living with cerebral palsy. She has limited use of her hands and arms and uses a power wheelchair. She also travels to and from her own apartment using public transportation, holds a bachelor's degree, and would like to earn her master's (in history).

To meet her education and employment goals, Julia is working with counselors at the Mass. Rehabilitation Commission and Easter Seals. Recently she has become aware, however, that her speech is less intelligible than it used to be--a new challenge to overcome.

On August 30, 2011 the Boston Assistive Technology Regional Center (run by Easter Seals) hosted an Open House. Julia attended, excited to see the iPad. She has always used speech to communicate, but had heard the iPad offered options for text-to-speech. She was hopeful it would work well for her.

The open house was designed so visitors could see a range of assistive technology, and learn about different solutions for different challenges. Julia tried the iPad and found that with her limited range of motion and dexterity, the large touch screen didn't work for her at all. She couldn't make a clean selection with her finger. She was visibly let down.

Seeing her disappointment, ATRC Coordinator Kristi Peak-Oliveira interjected, "Julia, there are so many options for you!"

Indeed, Julia was unaware of the broad range of dedicated AAC devices designed for individuals of all abilities. Together they made an appointment for Julia to return for a private demonstration of a variety of solutions.

The outcome of the demonstration (as well as an AAC evaluation by Easter Seals) was a 4 week loan of a communication device that is radically different from the iPad. Instead of an icon-based touch screen, the Lightwriter SL40 Connect has a small keyboard and displays type on two screens. One faces the typist to aid with input, and one faces out for easy reading by others.

Julia is comfortable with a QWERTY keyboard (the same layout as her laptop computer)*, and found the Lightwriter's smaller keyboard worked well for her range of motion (plus built-in word prediction enhanced her speed). Other features Julia liked were the option to communicate using type with or without voice output, as well as the ability to record and store phrases she uses often to play at the touch of a button.

During the 4 week device loan period, Julia got a sense of how powerful the Lightwriter could be for her. For the first time in a long while she was able to make phone calls (which meant connecting with friends and scheduling her own doctor's appointments). Best of all, she was better able to manage her personal care attendants.

Today, Julia is waiting for her own Lightwriter SL40 which will be funded through MRC's Vocational Rehabilitation department. Kristi has been researching the best mount for Julia's wheelchair so the Lightwriter can swing out of the way during transfers. Julia is looking forward to mounting the Lightwriter, Kristi says, for communicating when she uses public transportation. She is also looking forward to transferring her cell phone's SIM card, and using the device for calls and sending text messages.

"Working with Julia is such a pleasure," Kristi muses. "She can tell quickly what works for her and what doesn't. She just needed the opportunity to learn about and try what is available. Which is what the ATRC is all about."

*Note: the keyboard of the Lightwriter SL40 can adjust between a QWERTY and ABC layout.

4. Device Demo: AT Regional Centers Device Demonstration Program

Device demonstration is the opportunity for an individual or group to see AT in action. It is an essential part of the MassMATCH AT Regional Centers' holistic approach to AT services. Individuals with disabilities, their family members, teachers, human service providers and others come to the centers to learn about new AT products, see how they work, and find AT solutions appropriate to their or their clients' needs, desires, and functional capabilities. Device demonstrations can be for a particular device or multiple device options. Device demonstrations may lead to a short-term device loan, and, perhaps, help with a Mass. AT Loan Program application.

In FFY11, the AT Regional Centers provided a total of 198 demonstrations. As the table below shows, these were primarily for Speech Communication, Vision, and Computers/Computer-related devices.

Table W: Demonstration by Device Category

Device Category	Demonstrations			
	UCP	ES	Combined	% Total
Speech Communication	26	32	58	29%
Vision	18	26	44	22%
Hearing	11	10	21	11%
Computers and Computer-related	3	37	40	20%
Daily Living	4	2	6	3%
Learning, Cognition, and Developmental	12	10	22	11%
Environmental Adapt.	0	1	1	1%
Mobility, Seating	0	0	0	0%
Vehicle Modifications and Transportation	0	0	0	0%
Recreation, Sports and Leisure	6	0	6	3%
Total	80	118	198	100%

Device Demonstration Customer Satisfaction and Performance Measures

312 individuals participated in device demonstrations in FFY11. Most were people with disabilities and their family members (a total of 201 individuals or 647%). Representatives of education were the next largest category, followed by health representatives, and representatives of community living.

Table X: Demonstration Participants by Category

Category of Participants	Demonstrations			
	UCP	ES	Combined	% Total
Individuals with disabilities	48	66	114	37%
Family members	37	50	87	28%
Reps of Education	23	25	48	15%
Reps of Employment	0	3	3	1%
Reps of Health, Allied Health, Rehab.	13	20	33	11%
Reps of Community Living	19	3	22	7%
Reps of Technology	2	3	5	2%
Others	0	0	0	0%
Total	142	170	312	100%

Of the 144 participants who provided feedback, 76 found AT that met their needs (53%).

Table Y: Device Demonstration Performance Measures

Performance Measure	Education		Employ.		Comm. Living		IT/ Telecom.		Totals		
	UCP	ES	UCP	ES	UCP	ES	UCP	ES	UCP	ES	Both
AT meets needs	17	29	2	7	32	13	0	4	51	53	104
AT won't meet needs	2	4	0	1	3	3	2	0	7	8	15
No decision	9	23	4	6	2	10	0	3	11	42	53
Sub total (responders)	28	56	6	14	37	26	2	7	69	103	172
Non respondent	3	8	0	2	4	4	0	1	6	15	21
Total	31	64	6	16	41	30	2	8	75	118	193
Response rate	91%	88%	100%	88%	90%	87%	100%	88%	92%	87%	89%

98% of device demonstration customers who provided feedback were satisfied; 71% of these were highly satisfied.

Table Z: Device Demonstration Customer Satisfaction

Customer Rating of Services	Consumers			Percentage of Responders		
	UCP	ES	Both	UCP	ES	Both
Highly satisfied	79	88	167	60%	85%	71%
Satisfied	51	12	63	39%	12%	27%
Satisfied somewhat	2	3	5	2%	3%	2%
Not at all satisfied	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Sub total (responders)	132	103	235			
Non respondent	10	67	77			
Total	142	170	312			
Response rate %	93%	61%	75%			

Device Demonstration Success Story: UCP Berkshire



This past year a group from the local Council on Aging came in to the AT Regional Center in Pittsfield to learn about the range of AT available to them for daily living. As they were shown them various magnifiers and TV amplifiers, Center Coordinator Dawn Matthews noticed that there was one elderly woman in the group, "Helen," who didn't appear to hear her very well. In response, Dawn selected two personal amplifiers to be a part of the mix.

Personal hearing amplifiers are mobile devices that allow wearers more control over the volume and clarity of the sound in a room. Because they are usually not worn all the time, but selected for certain situations, they are often more readily adopted than a conventional hearing aid (and they are vastly more affordable). Helen, she soon learned, did not wear her hearing aid because it gave her too much trouble with feedback and sound quality.

The group watched and listened as Dawn demonstrated how to use each device. Helen was shy and uncertain about trying another hearing device, but her peers encouraged her and she relented. Within moments she displayed a strong preference for the PockeTalker and grew excited. She was comfortable with its controls and appeared at ease while wearing it. With the PockeTalker, she told the group, she wouldn't have to sit in the very front row at church to hear what was being said! With the PockeTalker she could enjoy more of the conversation when she and her friends played cards together!

Dawn explained that if she wanted to, she could borrow the device from the AT Regional Center for a period of 4 weeks. Helen readily agreed. The loan period would allow her to test it in all environments while her family considered purchasing it for her.

Device Demonstration Success Story: Easter Seals-Boston



“Meg” did clerical work for the same company for over 20 years. Then last year she suffered an injury at the office which damaged a bicep tendon and her right hand. Her company accommodated her injury and reassigned her to different work, but Meg found she missed her clerical job and wanted to find a way to get back to the activities she enjoyed—specifically typing.

Meg’s company contracted with Francine, a vocational counselor, to work with Meg and Francine brought Meg into the AT Regional Center in Boston. There Center Coordinator Cathy Bly showed Meg a range of options for typing with only her left hand as well as options for ergonomic mice.

The first device Cathy showed Meg was the Maltron One-Handed keyboard. This keyboard allows access to all keyboard operations with just one hand. Meg tried the keyboard, but decided its unique shape was too awkward for her.

Next Cathy demonstrated Five Finger Typist from SoftDawn Software. This is a method for typing on a regular keyboard using just one hand (the software trains users to learn how). Meg liked the idea of working on a regular keyboard, but she also found reaching all the keys with just one hand challenging. To address that issue, Cathy then showed her the Half-QWERTY keyboard—a smaller version of a traditional keyboard that assigns each key two letters. But Meg didn’t like that she would have to get used to using the space bar to switch between the letters.

For mice options, Cathy showed Meg a vertical mouse, the Marble mouse, an Expert mouse, and a mouse pad. Each operates using different thumb positions. Unfortunately none of the options worked well for Meg's injured right hand.

Meg went home with a lot to think about. In the end she decided it was worth learning how to type again on a traditional keyboard using the Five Finger Typist software, and has since purchased the software. She was glad she had the chance to visit the ATRC and was able to rule out devices without having to purchasing them.

State Leadership Accomplishments

1. Training

The National Information System for Assistive Technology (NISAT) defines training activities as “instructional events, usually planned in advance for a specific purpose or audience, which are designed to increase participants’ knowledge, skills, and competencies regarding AT.”

An example of a training activity conducted during FFY11 is the presentation provided by the MassMATCH Coordinator in collaboration with AT staff from the Mass. Commission for the Blind, the Mass. Rehabilitation Commission, and the Mass. Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. "AT Funding: Where and How" was held at the 2011 Consumer Conference and attended by 62 participants. Consumers were trained on what constitutes AT, the variety of public and private funding resources for purchasing AT, and laws mandating the provision of AT.

Training Topics

In FFY11, MassMATCH provided training to a total of 560 individuals statewide. Trainings funded by MassMATCH covered a blend of topics to best suit their intended audience.

Table AA: Number of Training Participants by Topic

Primary Topics of Trainings	Participants			
	UCP	ES	MRC	Combined
AT Products/Services	0	261	21	282
AT Funding/Policy/Practice	0	0	0	0
IT/Telecommunication Access	0	27	0	27
Combination of any/all of the above	150	0	52	202
Transition	0	40	9	49
Other Topic (specify)	0	0	0	0
Total	150	328	82	560

Transition

The AT Act of 2004 calls for a portion of each state’s training activities to be related to transition. “Transition related” means the trainings provided information to support individuals navigating the transition from school to work or post-secondary education, or from institutions

into community living. In addition, trainings may provide AT information to help people remain in their communities.

Each summer the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission sponsors a Youth Leadership Forum, bringing together high school age youth with disabilities, along with college age Peer Leaders. In July of 2011, as part of the Forum, staff from the Boston AT Regional Center (operated by Easter Seals) trained youth participants about AT. The training covered types of AT available and demonstrated various high tech and low tech devices that can be of assistance for independent living and college education. Participants were taught how to access services and funding, and reviewed adult funding agencies and the process for identifying needs and requesting accommodations. Following the training, a number of youth borrowed items from the ATRC and made requests for AT assessments.

Training Participants

Representatives of Health, Allied Health and Rehabilitation were the most common participants of AT trainings in FFY11 and represent 33% of total attendees. They were followed by educators (29%), and individuals with disabilities (26%).

Table BB: Number and Type of Training Participants

Category of Participants	Trainings				
	UCP	ES	MRC	Combined	% Total
Individuals with disabilities	17	85	43	145	26%
Family members	18	10	0	28	5%
Reps of Education	51	105	0	165	29%
Reps of Employment	0	0	1	1	0%
Reps of Health, Allied Health, Rehab.	37	128	17	182	33%
Reps of Community Living	27	0	11	38	7%
Reps of Technology	0	0	1	1	0%
Others	0	0	0	0	0%
Unable to Categorize	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	150	328	82	560	100%

2. Technical Assistance

Technical assistance is a direct problem-solving service provided by the statewide AT program staff to public or private agencies, groups, or programs. TA helps improve services, management, policies and/or outcomes and may be a single meeting or involve multiple contacts over an extended duration.

An example of TA provided in FFY11:

The Director of the AT program and a member of the AT Advisory Council with many years of experience using and advising on AT, provided technical assistance to the Executive Office of Elder Affairs to help develop a series of accessible on-line training videos. These will be used to help train Options Counselors—staff members who provide information and guidance to people with disabilities and elders as they seek long-term care options other than nursing facilities. Each of the videos covers services and supports available through state and private agencies, and is captioned. Use of the videos will allow Options Counselors to review this material at their own pace, and to refresh their knowledge as needed.

An example of transition-related TA provided in FFY11:

The Director of the AT Act program consulted with staff of the Office of Long Term Care and the Office of Medicaid for developing the scope of AT services to be provided under new Money Follows the Person waivers in Massachusetts. Service definitions, range of services covered, and requirements for provider qualifications were being established. The TA provided by MassMATCH is contributing to the application for two new Medicaid waivers to provide home and community based services. Once granted, the waivers can help over 2,000 adults move from facilities into the community.

Table CC, below, shows a breakdown of the 40.5 TA service hours provided by MassMATCH over the course of FFY11. Most of the TA provided (31.5 hrs.) went to activities related to community living and transition.

Table CC: Technical Assistance Services Provided

Agency/Program Type	Product/Service areas expertise provided	Policy Expertise area addressed	Duration of TA provided in months	Hours TA provided
1. Community Living	Transition		<3	4
2. Community Living	Transition		6-8	20.5
3. Community Living	Transition		3-5	3
4. Community Living	Transition		3-5	4
5. Employment	Web accessibility	Sections 508 & 255	<3	3
6. Employment	Web accessibility	Sections 508 & 255	3-5	3
7. Health, Allied Health, Rehab.	AT service delivery options, transition	AT Provider qualifications & scope of services	3-5	3
8. Technology/IT				
Total Hours of TA Provided				40.5

3. Information & Assistance

MassMATCH provides information and assistance (I & A) through its AT Regional Centers and directly from MassMATCH program staff at the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. Generally I & A activities are responses to individual requests for AT information and assistance. This may be referral assistance to other agencies or entities that can provide the services, products or AT information needed. It may also be assistance with other related disability topics.

In FFY11 MassMATCH provided I & A to 975 recipients. 53% were individuals with disabilities and family member (513 recipients), 11% were representatives of education (177 recipients), 20% were representatives of health, allied health, and rehabilitation (169 recipients), and 10% were representatives of community living (99). Most requests for information were for an AT device or service (668).

Table CC: Combined I & A Recipients by Category and Types of Assistance Received

Information & Assistance Recipient Category	Recipients by Assistance Type		
	AT Device/ Service	AT Funding	Total
Individuals with disabilities	158	85	243
Family members	202	68	270
Reps of Education	89	18	107
Reps of Employment	6	8	14
Reps of Health, Allied Health, Rehab.	113	56	169
Reps of Community Living	51	48	99
Reps of Technology	17	14	31
Others	32	10	42
Total	668	307	975

The following charts break down the I & A provided in FFY11 by each point of service (MRC, UCP, and ES).

Table DD: MRC I & A Recipients by Category and Types of Assistance Received

Information & Assistance Recipient Category	MRC Recipients by Assistance Type			
	AT Device/ Service	AT Funding	Related Disability Topics	Total
Individuals with disabilities	33	6	3	42
Family members	51	0	3	54
Reps of Education	9	2	5	16
Reps of Employment	1	3	3	8
Reps of Health, Allied Health, Rehab.	29	2	4	35
Reps of Community Living	4	2	2	8
Reps of Technology	4	0	3	7
Others	24	2	7	33
Total	155	17	31	203

Table EE: ES I & A Recipients by Category and Types of Assistance Received

Information & Assistance Recipient Category	ES Recipients by Assistance Type			
	AT Device/ Service	AT Funding	Related Disability Topics	Total
Individuals with disabilities	61	6	9	76
Family members	89	3	6	98
Reps of Education	29	3	5	37
Reps of Employment	5	0	1	6
Reps of Health, Allied Health, Rehab.	42	4	4	50
Reps of Community Living	4	0	1	5
Reps of Technology	13	1	2	16
Others	8	0	1	9
Total	251	17	29	297

Table FF: UCP I & A Recipients by Category and Types of Assistance Received

Information & Assistance Recipient Category	UCP Recipients by Assistance Type		
	AT Device/Service	AT Funding	Combined
Individuals with disabilities	64	61	125
Family members	62	56	118
Reps of Education	51	3	54
Reps of Employment	0	0	0
Reps of Health, Allied Health, Rehab.	42	42	84
Reps of Community Living	43	43	86
Reps of Technology	0	8	8
Others	0	0	0
Total	262	213	475

4. Public Awareness

Public awareness activities are designed to reach large numbers of people. These can include public service announcements, radio talk shows and news reports, newspaper stories and columns, newsletters, brochures, and public forums. MassMATCH.org is also a public awareness initiative.

As Table HH demonstrates, in FFY11 MassMATCH reached 59,869 individuals through its public awareness activities. Public awareness was accomplished through a blend of outlets and activities.

Table GG: Individuals Reached by Public Awareness Activities in FFY11

Public Awareness Activity	Number of Individuals Reached			
	UCP	ES	MRC	Combined
Newsletters	1,100	6,456	559	8,115
Other Print Materials	4,500	0	3,100	7,600
Listserv	0	0	559	559
PSA/radio/TV	21,300	0	0	21,300
Presentations/expos/conferences	362	1,953	2,926	5,241
Other	0	0	0	0
Sub Total	27,262	8,409	7,144	42,815
Internet Information	3,875	3,836	9,343	17,054
Total	31,137	12,245	16,487	59,869

Table HH: FFY11 MassMATCH.org Usage

Total Unique Visitors	Average Pages Per Visit	Average Mins. On Web Site
9073	3.63	2.43

Table II: FFY11 MassMATCH.org Monthly History

Unique Visitors Monthly	Visits	Page Views
756	1,072	3,893

5. Coordination & Collaboration

Coordination and collaboration involves working with other entities to improve access to AT devices and services. During FFY11, MassMATCH staff worked to improve access to AT services through the following collaborative efforts:

Products and Technologies that Change People’s Lives

This year MassMATCH collaborated with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, UMASS Medical School, and the Mass. Rehabilitation Commission—as well as key leaders within secondary education and the business sector—to design an AT/UD (Universal Design) event for September, 2011. The combined expo/conference/summit showcased cutting-edge assistive technology, Universal Design principals, and inclusive information and communication technology through displays, workshops and hands-on opportunities. The venue also hosted an AT Summit, convening state leaders from multiple sectors (DME vendors, policy experts, business and education leaders, and state-agency personnel) to brainstorm a statewide strategy and business model for promoting effective access to, as well as development and use of, AT. MassMATCH funded interpreter services for the event as well as the registration of 100 conference attendees who would not have otherwise been able to participate. Learn more about Products and Technologies that Change People’s Lives at changepeopleslives.org.

DDS Mobility Clinic Pilot

Some users of wheeled mobility have difficulty getting comfortable and functional seating in their wheelchairs. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) will customize seating and controls for their clients, but other people with disabilities have little access to this kind of individualized support. To address this service gap, in FFY11 MassMATCH began organizing the creation of a pilot adaptive seating and mobility clinic in collaboration with staff at DDS and the Stavros Center for Independent Living. The project is now moving forward, and as of this writing the target launch date is February, 2012.

The mobility clinic will be held at the Stavros Center for Independent Living in Amherst to address the needs of individuals Stavros identifies as having significant seating issues. Seating customization and fabrication services will be provided by expert (OT/PT) fabricators and designers from DDS's Northampton AT Center. If successful, this collaboration may serve as a model not only for expanding mobility services elsewhere within the state, but also for resource sharing among state agencies to better serve more residents with significant disabilities.

AT School Share

In FFY11 MassMATCH continued its effort to encourage AT resource sharing among Massachusetts schools and school systems. The AT School Share (ATSS, formerly the AT School "Swap") has now registered 12 participating school entities. The goal of the AT School Share is to create and coordinate a community of schools, districts, and collaboratives to share their unused AT devices and device "know-how"; in this way students will acquire what they need more quickly and districts will be better able to identify and afford the technology that can make a real difference for learners with special needs. In FFY10, MassMATCH received a \$45,000 grant from the Shapiro Family Foundation to pilot the ATSS within the Greater Boston area. As of this writing, 8 of the 12 registered entities are within that geographic area, 4 of which were added during FFY11. In the coming fiscal year, MassMATCH will also be convening registered ATSS school personnel to discuss barriers for sharing and to brainstorm systemic solutions.

Forward Thinking

MassMATCH works on multiple fronts to promote awareness of and access to AT throughout the state human services delivery system, among public and private employers, within school systems, among advocacy groups, and directly to people with disabilities.

In the coming year, MassMATCH anticipates several new projects. One is a follow-up statewide AT event to build on the momentum and enthusiasm sparked by the Change People's Lives expo/conference in 2011. Change People's Lives was sponsored by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and supported by one-time American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding. For 2012, MassMATCH (under the auspices of the Mass. Rehabilitation Commission) will sponsor another AT event, probably in conjunction with a large employment event for people with disabilities and employers. At present, MassMATCH is working with EOHHS to capitalize on lessons learned with Change People's Lives for the benefit of an effective 2012 conference.

Also for 2012, MassMATCH is continuing its efforts to improve access to wheeled mobility services. In addition to launching the mobility clinic pilot (described above), MassMATCH is exploring creating a Wheeled Mobility Handbook. The handbook is needed to help orient new and veteran users of wheelchairs, scooters, and related durable medical equipment (DME) to key services including the process for acquiring DME for the first time (i.e. "prior

authorization”), what services are covered by MassHealth, who provides these services, and how best to select equipment. The Handbook would be a collaboration among MassMATCH, EOHHS, and the Office of Medicaid, with input from the Dept. of Developmental Services (DDS) and the Mass. Department of Public Health (MDPH).

In a related effort, MassMATCH is also pursuing an information and referral collaboration with DME vendors. DME vendor technicians currently travel all over the state to the homes of wheeled mobility consumers; they also operate showrooms of available equipment. MassMATCH is looking into how to encourage the cross-sharing of program information for joint outreach to residents who need equipment. There is strong potential for a public/private outreach partnership, as vendors are well-served by consumers who know about programs that help them better afford or make use of equipment (i.e. the Home Modification Loan Program and AT Loan Program). Joint outreach may also be a first step toward future public/private collaborations in the interest of state residents with disabilities.

Stay up to date year-round with MassMATCH programs and resources at www.massmatch.org.

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