

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Richard A. Cohen, Esq., Executive Director
Disabilities Rights Center, (603) 228-0432

Disabilities Rights Center receives grant from Children's Hospital Boston

The Disabilities Rights Center (DRC) has received a \$10,000 grant from Children's Hospital Boston to support DRC's advocacy on behalf of New Hampshire children with chronic health conditions. A major focus will be to advocate for children with emotional, behavioral, and/or other significant disabilities in cases where the child is not receiving appropriate services because schools or other agencies are refusing or disputing responsibility.

DRC recently represented one such child who had multiple medical and behavioral issues and was hospitalized at Children's Hospital for many months more than necessary due to a dispute between agencies about responsibility for services. After months of negotiations DRC was able to arrange a resolution with the provider agencies, and the child was finally able to leave the hospital.

According to Richard Cohen DRC Executive Director, "There are many New Hampshire children who go without needed services because schools or other agencies just refuse to provide mental health or other services or cannot agree which agency is responsible. This, despite the fact that a law was passed in 2008 to provide a dispute resolution mechanism for agencies and to require the school district to fund the needed services pending the resolution. That law has yet to be enforced."

With the support of this one year grant, DRC will engage in targeted individual and systemic advocacy on behalf of children with significant disabilities who are caught in this "Catch-22" situation. DRC is still seeking additional funding to supplement the Children's Hospital Boston grant to reach as many children as possible.

As New Hampshire's designated protection and advocacy agency, and the only disability advocacy agency in the state with legal services capacity, DRC is uniquely positioned to address these issues. More information about DRC can be found at <http://www.drcnh.org>.