

Department of Workforce Development  
Secretary's Office  
201 East Washington Avenue  
P.O. Box 7946  
Madison, WI 53707-7946  
Telephone: (608) 266-3131  
Fax: (608) 266-1784  
Email: sec@dwd.wisconsin.gov



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CONTACT: DWD: Communications Office, 608-266-2722

On the Web: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/news.htm>

On Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/WIWorkforce>

On Twitter: @WIWorkforce

## **Secretary Newson Applauds Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Easter Seals for Project SEARCH, Helping Young Adults with Disabilities Gain Employment**

### ***Successful Partnership includes DWD Division of Vocational Rehabilitation***

MILWAUKEE – With October designated as Disability Employment Awareness Month, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today saluted Children's Hospital of Wisconsin and Easter Seals Southeast Wisconsin for their successful Project SEARCH initiative that provides on-the-job training and employment opportunities for young adults with disabilities.

"Children's Hospital of Wisconsin and Easter Seals Southeast Wisconsin are setting an excellent example in helping young adults gain the job skills, work experience and confidence they need to become employed and independent," Secretary Newson said. "Our Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is proud to be a partner in this initiative, and its success represents the assistance we and all of our partners are providing people with disabilities throughout the state. These individuals have much to offer. When they succeed in overcoming barriers to employment, we all have reason to celebrate."

In 2011, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin and Easter Seals Southeast Wisconsin launched Project SEARCH, based on a one-year transition program first established at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in 1996. At Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, six interns ages 18 to 25 began training in a variety of jobs at the hospital. All graduated in June. Five are employed; one has returned to school. This year, 12 interns are enrolled in the program. During a ceremony at Children's Hospital, Secretary Newson presented Children's Hospital and Easter Seals commendations on behalf of Governor Walker.

"Young adults are faced with tough odds in the job market right now. Getting hands-on experience is one of the key components to success. Children's Hospital of Wisconsin is pleased to provide intern opportunities for students through Project SEARCH", said Peggy Niemer, Human Resources Corporate Vice President, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. "The program allows these young adults to learn and build skills needed to land their dream job. Our ability to offer work experience opportunities is invaluable to these young men and woman to begin their career path journey."

"We are so proud of our partnership with Children's Hospital," said Bob Glowacki, Chief Executive Officer of Easter Seals Southeast Wisconsin. "Each young adult from our inaugural class has found meaningful work opportunities and a brighter future because of their involvement in Project SEARCH. "

In addition to DVR, other partners in Project SEARCH include IRIS, Community Care, and the following Milwaukee metro area school districts: Milwaukee, Wauwatosa and Whitefish Bay in Milwaukee County and Arrowhead and Menomonee Falls in Waukesha County.

The Project SEARCH program based at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin in Wauwatosa is one of four in Wisconsin. The others are at the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics in Madison, Ministry St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield, and the Wal-Mart Distribution Center in Eau Claire.

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On behalf of Governor Walker, Secretary Newson announced on Oct. 2 the Wisconsin proclamation declaring October as Wisconsin Disability Employment Awareness Month. Wisconsin's proclamation coincides with National Disability Employment Awareness Month. This year's theme is, "A Strong Workforce is an Inclusive Workforce: What Can You Do?"

Secretary Newson noted that DVR offers incentives to employers hiring people with disabilities. Employers who participate in its On-the-Job Training initiative are reimbursed for 50 percent of a trainee's salary and fringe benefits for up to 90 days. This year, more than 1,300 individuals have been placed in on-the-job training positions.

DVR provides employment services and counseling to people with disabilities who face substantial barriers to employment. Last year, DVR served 40,383 Wisconsin residents with disabilities and placed nearly 3,000 consumers in jobs. DVR's budget is 78.7 percent federally funded with a 21.3 percent state match for every federal dollar allocated. There are several indicators of the positive return on the state's investment:

- In the past 3 federal fiscal years, more than \$119 million in DVR purchase of employment plan services and products were invested in Wisconsin's economy, with an impact of over 1,500 jobs. Of these totals, nearly \$93 million were federal funds drawn down by state match with an economic impact of 1,240 jobs.
- Taxable earnings by DVR consumers who completed employment plans, when divided by the amount of federal and state funds invested in their DVR services, yielded a 211 percent return on investment in federal fiscal year 2012. When the state match is broken out, the ratio is \$8 in return for each \$1 in state revenue invested. One study suggested the return on investment for that \$1 grows to an \$18 yield in the third year.

For more information: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/>.

For more information about Children's Hospital of Wisconsin Project SEARCH:

[http://wi-se.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=WISE\\_Project\\_Search](http://wi-se.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=WISE_Project_Search)

Also:

<http://www.chw.org/display/PPF/DocID/45751/router.asp>