



News for Immediate Release

Oct. 5, 2012

Governor Corbett Highlights Job Placement Strategies for People with Disabilities at First Annual Disability Employment Summit

Harrisburg – Governor Tom Corbett met with business leaders and advocates today during a Pennsylvania Disability Employment Summit to discuss the importance of hiring people with disabilities who want to move into private employment.

“Pennsylvania has the potential to provide real employment opportunities to people with disabilities, giving them a greater sense of personal achievement and financial independence,” Corbett said. “Businesses of all sizes are launching programs to help diversify the workforce, and we want to continue to encourage and support these initiatives.”

The summit, hosted by the Department of Public Welfare and The Arc of Luzerne County, brought together business leaders, government agencies and the disabled community to discuss programs that help people with disabilities gain employment in the private sector. Summit attendees also discussed successful strategies to overcome barriers to employment and advance diversity efforts.

“By gathering all the right stakeholders together, we hope to share successful models and create an atmosphere that makes it easier for other businesses in Pennsylvania to hire people with disabilities,” said Department of Public Welfare Secretary Gary D. Alexander. “As a result, businesses will get hard-working, skilled employees, and in turn, individuals with a disability can achieve the financial independence they need to support themselves and their families.”

Alexander cited a U.S. Department of Labor 2011 report, *Ready and Able: Addressing Labor Market Needs and Building Productive Careers for People with Disabilities through Collaborative Approaches*, which showed that people with disabilities have strong attendance records and often exceed job expectations. He pointed to successful hiring models at businesses in the commonwealth like Lowe’s, Sears and Martin Guitar.

In addition to the summit, taking place during Disability Employment Awareness Month in Pennsylvania, the Department of Public Welfare is working closely with Corbett’s Cabinet for People with Disabilities to find better solutions to help the disabled community transition into employment.

The department is also in the process of reforming its employment-and-training system, helping Pennsylvanians transition off of public assistance and into employment. Welfare recipients, with or without disabilities, now benefit from a system that more effectively helps them find and keep jobs.

For more information, visit www.pa.gov.

Media contact: Kelli Roberts, Governor's Press Office, 717-783-1116
Carey Miller, DPW, 717-425-7606

Editor's Note:

The full text of the Governor's proclamation for Disability Employment Awareness Month is included below.

PENNSYLVANIA DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS, all Pennsylvanians should have the opportunity to live and work with dignity, freedom and economic self-sufficiency; and

WHEREAS, the vast majority of individuals with disabilities want to and can be employed in competitive, integrated employment; and

WHEREAS, in July of 2012, the percentage of people with disabilities in the national labor force was 20.7 percent, compared to 70.0 percent for people without disabilities; and

WHEREAS, in July of 2012, the national unemployment rate for people with disabilities was 13.6 percent, compared to 8.4 percent for people without disabilities; and

WHEREAS, growing Jobs in Pennsylvania for all Pennsylvanians is a top priority of this administration; and

WHEREAS, we recognize the skills, abilities, and dedication of Pennsylvanians with disabilities, including Pennsylvania's disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy recognizes October 2012 as National Disability Employment Awareness Month with a theme of "A Strong Workforce is an Inclusive Workforce: What Can YOU Do?";

THEREFORE, I, Tom Corbett, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, recognize October 2012 as PENNSYLVANIA DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH in the Commonwealth. I encourage all citizens to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities.

GIVEN under my hand and the Seal of the Governor, at the City of Harrisburg, this first day of October in the year of our Lord two thousand and twelve, and of the Commonwealth the two hundred and thirty-seventh.

TOM CORBETT, GOVERNOR

###