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The Current State of Health and Health Care for Americans with Disabilities Research Project

October 2007 – September 2008

Evidence shows that Americans with disabilities experience significant disparities in health and in access to healthcare services as compared with people who do not have disabilities. The National Council on Disability (NCD) is an independent federal agency making recommendations to the President and Congress to enhance the quality of life for all Americans with disabilities and their families, has selected the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) (www.dredf.org) and the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago (RIC) (<http://www.ric.org>) to undertake research that will advance the state of health care for people with disabilities. Research will promote the following specific goals:

- Advance the state of health care for women with disabilities by identifying barriers to care, successful models of comprehensive care, including wellness and prevention services, and developing recommendations for implementation across health care settings
- Advance the state of health care for people who have communication disabilities by identifying and analyzing successful approaches to providing effective communication with patients, and making recommendations for practical solutions that can be applied in all health care settings.

The project will emphasize the unique health and health care issues experienced by women with disabilities and individuals with communication disabilities, such as people who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing, people who are blind, people who have speech impairments, or people with intellectual disabilities.

The project will:

- 1) Conduct a comprehensive literature survey
- 2) Identify and interview key stakeholders associated with insurance associations, healthcare providers and professional organizations, health policy research organizations, state and federal government

DISABILITY RIGHTS EDUCATION & DEFENSE FUND

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officials involved in health and health care disparities and health policy, funding, service delivery, quality of care, accreditation, and professional training, attorneys, advocates and people with disabilities

3) Write two issue reports that describe health and health care disparities, examples of promising and best practices, and recommendations for improving health and health care for women with disabilities, and individuals with communication disabilities

4) Convene a healthcare summit of experts, people with disabilities, policy makers, and others to discuss and further develop recommendations for meeting the health and health care needs of people with disabilities, and produce a meeting report

5) Produce a final Project report.