



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day Goes Virtual

Tallahassee, Florida – Every year for more than a decade, hundreds of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families and advocates have gathered at the Florida Capitol on a designated day during the legislative session to shine a spotlight on issues that impact their wellbeing and survival.

Not so this year, thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the Capitol closed to visitors and the health risks from Coronavirus still a concern, organizers have transformed the annual Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day -- or DD Day -- from a large-scale, in-person gathering to a fully virtual event scheduled for March 30.

“While we may not be gathering at the State Capitol this year, our goals for DD Day remain the same,” said Valerie Breen, executive director of the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, coordinator and host of the annual commemoration. “By taking the event virtual, we are still able to connect with hundreds of individuals and family members seeking to advocate for Floridians with developmental disabilities. They will still have an opportunity to make their voices heard.”

DD Day is a staple among disability rights advocates, bringing together hundreds of individuals, family members, caregivers and support organizations looking to generate awareness and stimulate actual, tangible change in legislation. It takes place during Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, a nationwide commemoration designed to raise awareness about the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all areas of community life, as well as awareness to the barriers that people with disabilities still face in connecting to the communities in which they live.

The 2021 Virtual DD Day is scheduled for Tuesday, March 30. Starting at 8:30 a.m., attendees will have the opportunity to hear from special guest speakers such as disability advocate and empowerment speaker, Sara Gaver. The schedule also includes breakout sessions with nearly 20 exhibitors, information on various legislative priorities and special messages from key legislators.

In addition to general information and awareness, FDDC will tailor its message on the importance of [“Preserving the iBudget Waiver”](#) and securing the necessary funding to keep nearly 35,000 Floridians on the state’s only public health insurance program available to people with disabilities.

DD Day is free and open to anyone interested in attending. Online registration is required by March 22 in order to access the event. For additional information and to complete the registration form, go to ddd2021.com.

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The mission of the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) is to advocate and promote meaningful participation in all aspects of life for Floridians with developmental disabilities. www.fddc.org