Disability Law Center Client Honored Prior to Real Salt Lake Game

Prior to the Real Salt Lake game tonight against Orlando, a former client of the Disability Law Center (DLC), Charlie Nalley, will be honored as part of the “Heroes Among Us” program. The “Heroes Among Us” program, a partnership between RSL and American Express, honors everyday people that have made a positive impact on their community.

Mr. Nalley is one of around 35,000 Utahns with disabilities receiving Medicaid services. These services are integral to providing affordable care to individuals with disabilities. “Medicaid is a very efficient program, even if sometimes people have to fight for necessary services,” said Charlie’s attorney at the DLC, Nate Crippes. Charlie came to the DLC because he was having problems getting a power wheelchair through Medicaid. After going through an internal appeals process with his managed care organization, a private insurer that administers Medicaid, he had taken his appeal to the Department of Health.

“Charlie had done plenty to advocate for himself, but he realized that he needed help to ensure he received the wheelchair he needed,” said Mr. Crippes. The reason for the denial, even though his doctor clearly stated the need, was because Mr. Nalley lived a travel trailer, and he could not use the wheelchair in his home. However, Mr. Nalley needed the wheelchair to go into the community, to go about normal daily living.

The DLC got involved with the appeal late in the appeal process, where they passed along federal regulations that do not permit requiring wheelchairs, among other services, to be used in one’s home for approval. Rather, the wheelchair must be needed for daily living, including being out in the community. Utah Medicaid agreed with the DLC that Mr. Nalley’s managed care organization should provide the wheelchair. “Charlie’s case goes beyond just him, as the DLC can use this case to illustrate that services needn’t force individuals with disabilities to be confined to their home,” Crippes said. “Rather, Medicaid services must be provided in a way that ensures people with disabilities are integrated in the community.”

The Disability Law Center (DLC) is the federally mandated system of protection and advocacy for people with disabilities in Utah. The DLC’s mission is to enforce and strengthen laws that protect the opportunities, choices and legal rights of Utahns with disabilities. Our services are available statewide and free of charge, regardless of income, legal status, language, or place of residence.

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