

**Rep. Dan Miller's**

# Disability & Mental Health

## *Summit*

*12th Annual*



# **May 8 - 9, 2025**

Community College of Allegheny County  
Allegheny Campus, North Side



# A Message from **Rep. Dan Miller**

## **Welcome to our annual Disability & Mental Health Summit!**

Now in its 12th year, the Summit has touched thousands of lives, educating legislators from both sides of the aisle, while helping to inform families and working to increase opportunities for self-advocates across the board. The Summit is designed to bring resources and experts out of their offices and into an easy-to-access environment, where people can meet face-to-face to better solve problems.

This event would never be possible without the countless volunteers, community partners, and our fantastic hosts at Community College of Allegheny County.

The Summit has evolved over the years, in both form and content, and no two years are exactly alike! There are always free informative sessions, but topics and presenters are rotated so that novel sessions are always part of the program. Other activities include our general resource fair, targeted resource fairs for students preparing to move from high school to adult life, artwork from people in the disability community, and legislative panels that serve as policy hearings. One new feature at this year's Summit will be an Assistive Technology Fair, showcasing a range of assistive technology, low tech to high, that will continue to help open doors to greater opportunity for all.

This Summit stands on the shoulders of countless heroes, and we thank them all for their work. We also know that for every person who can attend, there is a parent who couldn't get off work, a self-advocate who couldn't get an accessible ride, and a child in school today who simply hopes that their peers will talk to them. We still have a way to go and promises to keep, but we will get there as long as we work together. Thank you for attending and I hope you enjoy your time here!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Miller". The signature is stylized with a large, looping "D" and "M".

Dan Miller  
State Representative  
42nd Legislative District

# Summit At-a-Glance

**Thurs., May 8**

**Resource Fair - 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Assistive Technology Fair - 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

8:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

**Summit Welcome & Kickoff - Auditorium**

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

**Keynote Presentation: The Importance of Medicaid - Auditorium**

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

**Breakout Sessions (Choose One)**

The Alliance for Access and Assets: Building Financial Power Together  
**Room 112**

Smart Home Technology: Improving Independence for People with Disabilities  
**Room 110**

Autism in Catatonia: Symptoms, Diagnostic, Challenges, and Treatment  
**Room 113**

Disability Rights PA: Focus on Mental Health Rights  
**Auditorium**

Early Intervention Transition: The Children are Small, but it's still a BIG Transition  
**Room 114**

What's Wrong with our Mental Health System?  
**Room 116**

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

**Breakout Sessions (Choose One)**

Empowering Black Youth: Navigating Mental Health and Community Support  
**Room 110**

Stuttering: Progress Made and Navigating the Future  
**Room 113**

Community and Employment Issues in Neurodiversity  
**Auditorium**

Disability Benefits 101  
**Room 116**

The Importance of Cultural Competence in Healthcare  
**Room 112**

Continuum of Interventions for Preventing Gun Suicide  
**Room 114**

12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**Breakout Sessions (Choose One)**

How to Stay Safe: Police Interactions at the Intersection of Race and Disability  
**Room 110**

Building Bridges to Inclusion: Empowering Collaboration through Cities of Inclusion  
**Auditorium**

Centering Student Vision: Collaborative Transition Planning for a Future of Possibilities  
**Room 112**

Politics and Governing with a Diagnosis  
**Room 116**

Critical Connection: What to Expect When Contacting 988  
**Room 114**

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**Legislative Panel - Auditorium**

Supporting Families with Children with Complex Medical Needs

Special Education for Students in Justice Settings

Transforming Mental Health Care Access through Prescribing Privileges for Psychologists

**Fri., May 9**

**Summit Futures Fair - 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

**Special Education Planning Resources**

# Thursday Schedule

## 8:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. - Summit Welcome & Kickoff

Foerster Student Service Center - Auditorium  
*State Rep. Dan Miller*

Join State Representative Dan Miller as he kicks off the 2025 Summit! He'll provide a brief update on some of the key disability and mental health legislation and budget currently being considered in Harrisburg, as well as highlight some of the Summit's sessions and special events that will take place this year.

## 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. - Keynote Presentation

Foerster Student Service Center - Auditorium  
**The Importance of Medicaid**  
*Keynote Speakers - State Rep. Dan Miller, Erin Gabriel and Dr. Josie Badger*

Medicaid provides essential medical coverage for millions of people and families in Pennsylvania, people who encompass all diagnoses and all backgrounds. Join us to learn about this shared public health initiative, what disability and mental health services are currently funded, what promises are still waiting to be kept, and what to expect should the federal government reduce its share of support.

## 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. - Breakout Sessions

Milton Hall Room 112

**The Alliance for Access and Assets:  
Building Financial Power Together**  
*Alena Anderson*

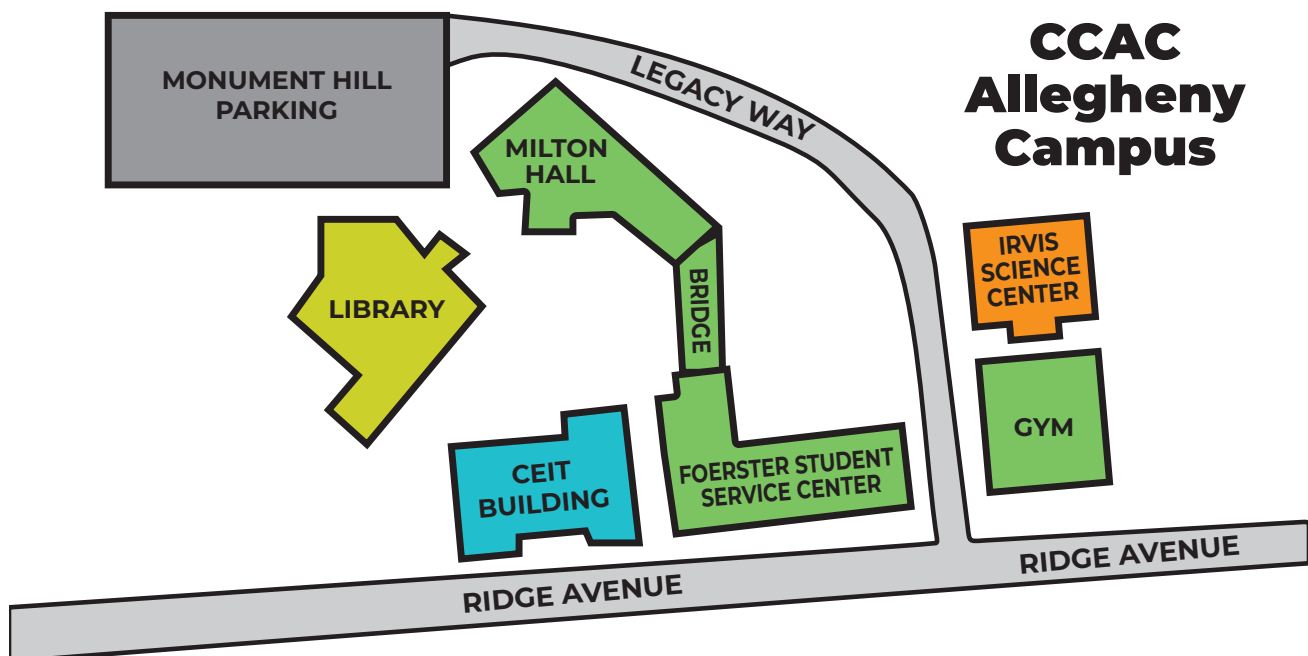
The Alliance is a vibrant and collaborative network of diverse organizations and individuals committed to increasing the financial security of people of color with disabilities. We host quarterly convenings to provide members with the opportunity to establish partnerships, share resources and develop strategies that foster economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities. Please join us to learn more about the Alliance and how you can support our mission.

Milton Hall Room 110

**Smart Home Technology - Improving  
Independence for People with Mental,  
Intellectual or Physical Disabilities**  
*Christina Kraemer and Christina Lawley*

This session will describe various Smart Home technologies and how technology can be an essential component in the lives of people with physical, intellectual and behavioral disabilities. Examples of technology that may be included are passive sensors, weight sensors for sofas, beds and chairs, flashing lights, voice-activated assistive technology, technology targeted to kitchen safety, elopement, and safety in the community and more.

## Venue Map





Attendees will also learn about Remote Support services, and there will be a discussion of possible funding options for the technology.

### **Milton Hall Room 113**

#### **Autism in Catatonia: Symptoms, Diagnostic Challenges, and Treatment**

*Lezley Pisone, Dr. Rachel Sieke, and Robin Stein*

This session will explore the often-overlooked connection between autism and catatonia. Participants will gain valuable insights from real-life caregiver experiences to identify critical signs and symptoms and understand how to address common misdiagnoses to support individuals in a variety of settings.

### **Foerster Student Service Center - Auditorium** **Disability Rights PA:**

#### **Focus on Mental Health Rights**

*Monica Albert Still and Brynne Madway*

Mental health issues still carry stigma, which can lead to a lack of meaningful conversation and education. Exercising your rights while navigating school or work can be difficult, and it's important to have as much information as you can. This session is for advocates and self-advocates to understand the legal framework regarding mental health rights. Your rights as a patient if you are receiving mental health services will be presented and discussed, and there will be a brief discussion of how the changes in guardianship laws affect people receiving mental health services.

### **Milton Hall Room 114**

#### **Early Intervention Transition: The Children are Small, but it's still a BIG Transition**

*Ashley Harland*

Transition means change. In the Early Intervention (EI) system, transition occurs up to two times in a family's first 5 years of receiving services. Transition occurs between Infant/Toddler EI (0-3, Part C) and Preschool EI (3-5, Part B) and again between Preschool EI and School Age (K-12) special education. While there are multiple system regulations and timelines to support seamless EI transitions, parents' lived experiences range from excitement and joy to confusion and fear. In this session, a blend of traditional presentation and personal storytelling by parents will be used to help participants more fully understand the complexities and lived experiences of Early Intervention transition.

### **Milton Hall Room 116**

#### **What's Wrong with our Mental Health System?**

*Dr. Doug Henry*

The chaperoneless economics of medical care in the United States have sculpted our current medical system – one that is disparate, expensive, fragmented, and yields only average, or slightly below average (for developed nations), population health results. Our approach to mental health care and intervention is perhaps the best example of this phenomenon which has badly injured, and restrained progress in psychiatry and mental health care. The purpose of this talk is to evangelize the need for incentivizing health. In mental health, that means demanding exclusively evidence-based, measurement-based services, and no longer tolerating anything else.

### **11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Breakout Sessions**

### **Milton Hall Room 110**

#### **Empowering Black Youth: Navigating Mental Health and Community Support**

*Aleta Barnett and Ikeya Craig-Swatson*

This session will highlight the importance of community support, creating safe spaces, fostering resilience, and accessing resources that promote mental wellness in black youth. There will be a presentation and then an opportunity to hear directly from a young person about the unique challenges black youth face, including societal pressures, cultural stigmas, and the impact of systemic barriers.

### **Milton Hall Room 113**

#### **Stuttering: Progress Made and Navigating the Future**

*State Rep. Brandon Markosek, and Dr. Seth Tichenor*

Join Rep. Brandon Markosek and speech-language pathologist Dr. Seth Tichenor as they detail what it's like to stutter, the challenges, misunderstanding, and stigma that are commonly encountered, and how Act 104 of 2023-34 (Rep. Markosek's House Bill 2268) will help to improve access to care. They will also discuss other speech disabilities and disorders and will consider how the future can be improved in relation to social development, employment, and education.

**Foerster Student Service Center - Auditorium**  
**Community and Employment Issues**  
**in Neurodiversity**  
*Johanna Murphy*

This session will cover a variety of issues and inequities embedded in the experience of neurodiverse (primarily autistic and ADHD) individuals as they navigate education, employment and society and, in so doing, will deliver a working understanding of neurodiversity in today's society and workplace. We'll cover the many barriers that neurodiverse people experience obtaining and keeping employment, as well as other community issues that impact the neurodiverse disproportionately. We'll walk through the outsized benefits of employing neurodiverse workers and contrast those against cultural assumptions, as well as history of the misconception of neurodiversity as a "deficit."

**Milton Hall Room 116**  
**Disability Benefits 101: Understanding and**  
**Navigating Social Security Disability and**  
**VA Disability Compensation**  
*Michael Quatrini, Esq.*

Understanding the Social Security Disability and VA Disability compensation systems can be a daunting task. Join attorney Michael Quatrini to learn about the basics of how to navigate these complex systems. He will review eligibility requirements, what the application and approval process involve, what a typical timeline looks like, how to overcome challenges encountered along the way, and much more.

**Milton Hall Room 112**  
**The Importance of**  
**Cultural Competence in Healthcare**  
*Monica Ruiz*

An essential element of providing high-quality healthcare services is providing care that is culturally competent. During this discussion, we will identify best practices on providing services to immigrant and refugee communities. There will be a focus on cultural and linguistically appropriate services that should be provided.

**Milton Hall Room 114**  
**Continuum of Interventions for**  
**Preventing Gun Suicide**  
*Gwen Anderson, Mallory Beatty,*  
*Mary Kenah, and Anthony Swofford*

When someone is experiencing a suicidal crisis, their family members and friends are often the first to see signs. In such high-stakes emotional situations, it can often feel like there is nothing they can do, but working with a loved one to reduce access to guns can be lifesaving. Panelists will discuss Everytown for Gun Safety's Continuum of Gun Access Interventions for Preventing Gun Suicide, the current legal context, and the accompanying life-saving legislation that is needed in Pennsylvania.

**12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. Breakout Sessions**

**Milton Hall Room 110**  
**How to Stay Safe: Police Interactions at the**  
**Intersection of Race and Disability**  
*Luciana Randall, Joseph V. Smith,*  
*and Cristyn Zett*

This session will explore the unique facets of police interactions that occur at the crossroads of race and disability. Join a self-advocate, an autism advocate whose work involves in educating police about aspects of hidden disabilities, and a police chief whose teenage son has disabilities for an engaging conversation about how to help keep yourself stay safe no matter who you are, where you are, or who you encounter along the way.

**Foerster Student Service Center - Auditorium**  
**Building Bridges to Inclusion: Empowering**  
**Collaboration through Cities of Inclusion**  
*Matt Aaron, Andrew Fee, and Nate Garland*

Join us to explore the Special Olympics' Cities of Inclusion Initiative, an effort to make communities fully inclusive for people with disabilities. This session will highlight how cities can unite organizations, businesses, and citizens across health, education, employment, and housing sectors to create environments where everyone thrives. Through real-world examples and innovative strategies, discover how Philadelphia is leading the way to become the first City of Inclusion, leveraging cross-sector collaboration, accessible programming, and groundbreaking initiatives like Unified Sports and reverse job fairs. Attendees will leave with actionable insights to bring these transformative to jumpstart our efforts in Pittsburgh.

**Milton Hall Room 112**  
**Centering Student Vision:**  
**Collaborative Transition Planning**  
**for a Future of Possibilities**

*Christie Cyktor, Stephen (Rick) Lipa,  
Maggie McMahon, and Jackie White*

This session focuses on building a cohesive and collaborative transition plan for success. Effective transitions are driven by collaboration. When schools, students, families, and agencies work together, they lay the groundwork for a smooth and successful transition process. In this session, we'll explore the essential elements of a collaborative transition plan and how it can be leveraged to benefit students with disabilities. Attendees will receive a comprehensive transition checklist, demonstrating how different team members can utilize it to ensure student success. The presenters will share their personal experiences, reflecting on how collaborative approaches and tools could have enhanced their own transition efforts and outcomes.

**Milton Hall Room 116**  
**Politics and Governing with a Diagnosis**  
*State Reps. Jessica Benham, Emily Kinkead,  
Brandon Markosek, and Abigail Salisbury*

Join us for an intimate discussion about what it's like to enter the public arena as a person with a diagnosis. We will hear from successful self-advocates who have run for office, won their races, and undertaken the task of governing. They will be sharing how their diagnosis has impacted their political experience, both positively and negatively, as well as discussing the hurdles and stigma they needed to overcome. Finally, they will explore what challenges still need to be addressed in order to build a more inclusive landscape.

**Milton Hall Room 114**  
**Critical Connection: What to Expect**  
**When Contacting 988**  
*Christine Michaels*

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline launched in July 2022. Since then, it has received more than 10 million calls, texts, and chats. While awareness is growing, many people are still confused about 988. How is it different than 911? What happens when you call, text, or chat? When should you reach out? Join Christine Michaels, CEO of NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania, who will answer

these questions as she walks participants through the 988 process and explain what – and who – is involved.

**2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Legislative Panel**

**Foerster Student Service Center - Auditorium**  
**Supporting Families with Children**  
**with Complex Medical Needs**

*Mary Hartley, Erin Johnson, Rachel Mann,  
and Emma Schmidt*

Families with children who have very complex medical needs that require skilled nursing care deserve to live with their families. This panel will explore the unique challenges these families face and describe how two proposed pieces of legislation in Pennsylvania seek to help families meet their children's needs at home.

**Transforming Mental Health Care Access**  
**through Prescribing Privileges for Psychologists**  
*Rep. Dan Frankel, Dr. William Hasek  
and Dr. Krista Boyer*

This panel will explore the critical role prescribing psychologists can play in alleviating the mental health service shortage in Pennsylvania. The discussion will describe the benefits of legislation which has been proposed in the Pennsylvania Legislature, which provides for granting prescriptive authority to psychologists with advanced training in clinical psychopharmacology, and how this can improve access to mental health care across the state.

**Special Education for Students**  
**in Justice Settings**

*Tracy Carr, Anthony Esoldo,  
Jennifer Solak and Laura McWilliams*

A student's right to special education services doesn't end if they become involved in the system, but the challenges of providing a free and appropriate public education are magnified in such circumstances. Join us as we learn more about the legal framework underpinning the delivery of special education services to all kids, including those in the delinquency and dependency systems, identify barriers to the delivery of special education services to these students, and talk about what needs to happen to ensure that all kids get the education to which they are entitled.





## Resource Fair

**Thursday, May 8 - 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Physical Education Building (Gym)

Providing access to our free Resource Fair is at the heart of our Summit.

We are excited to offer opportunities for you to connect with services and organizations that matter to you.

The Resource Fair will be open on Thursday, May 8 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and will feature organizations that offer disability, and mental health supports and services.

## Friday Schedule

**9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

### **Cities of Inclusion Pittsburgh Summit: Special Event Hosted by Special Olympics**

Various Locations, CCAC Allegheny Campus

This special event hosted by Special Olympics features a keynote address, breakout sessions, and opportunities as we seek to build a more inclusive community.



**11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

### **Summit Futures Fair**

Physical Education Building (Gym)

Don't miss a great opportunity to network with providers and organizations that provide services, programs, and supports for students who are moving from school to adult life. Join us to learn about all kinds of opportunities for education, employment, social/recreational activities, community supports, and more.



# Special Events



## Assistive Technology Fair



### Assistive Technology Fair

**Thursday, May 8 - 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Foerster Student Service Center

Assistive Technology (AT) can open doorways of opportunity, access, and independence for people with disabilities and mental health concerns, and the options for AT have expanded greatly over what was available just a few years ago. Join us on Thursday, May 8, and explore AT options that range from low-tech to high-tech!

Join us for an **Art Exhibit**

**Creative Citizen Studios**



### Art Exhibit from Creative Citizen Studios

**Thursday, May 8 - 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Foerster Student Service Center

Stop by to see unique works of art created by artists with intellectual or developmental disabilities!

# Continuing Education

Forms available in the Registration Area – look for the Continuing Education sign.

## Act 48 Credits for Educators

All sessions are approved for Act 48 credit for educators in Pennsylvania through the AIU. A maximum of 6 credits can be earned at this Summit. To ensure that your Act 48 hours are correctly reported to PDE, provide your seven-digit Professional Personnel Identification (PPID) number when completing your form. There is no cost to obtain these credits.

## CEU Credits for Social Workers

All sessions are approved for credit for Social Workers at a cost of \$15 for NASW members and \$25 for non-members. NASW has been designated as a pre-approved provider of professional continuing education for social workers (Section 47.36), Marriage and Family Therapist (Section 48.36) and Professional Counselors (Section 49.36) by the PA State Board of Social Workers, Marriage & Family Therapists and Professional Counselors.

## CEU Credits for Rehabilitation Counselors

All sessions are approved for credit through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and will satisfy CRC requirements of continuing education for rehabilitation counselors. A maximum of 6 credits can be earned at this Summit. There is no cost to obtain these credits.

## CLE Credits for Attorneys

Select sessions are approved for up to 6 credit hours. Individuals will be responsible for completing and mailing all forms, along with the appropriate fee (payable to PACLE), to the Pennsylvania Continuing Legal Education Board. The certification fee is \$1.50/credit hour or partial credit hour.

### Legal sessions approved for continuing education:

- 9 a.m. - Keynote Presentation: The Importance of Medicaid
- 10 a.m. - Disability Rights PA: Focus on Mental Health Rights
- 11 a.m. - Continuum of Interventions for Preventing Gun Suicide
- 11 a.m. - Disability Benefits 101: Understanding and Navigating Social Security Disability and VA Disability Compensation
- 12 p.m. - Politics and Governing with a Diagnosis
- 2 p.m. - Legislative Panel (2 credits)

## Rep. Dan Miller's



# Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who played a role in helping to plan the Disability & Mental Health Summit this year! Thanks to all the members of our Planning Committee, who spent months helping us shape this program to make it as impactful as possible. Also, we could not have made this event happen without the efforts of the many volunteers who offered to help; the many testifiers and speakers who shared their expertise with us, and our friends at Community College of Allegheny County for being so accommodating. Also, we are grateful to Joe Polk from Thirteen Ball, who volunteered his time to update and manage our website. There can be no doubt that all of these people and organizations helped my office to help others, and I am truly grateful for everyone's efforts.

## Lead Sponsor



## Event Sponsors



## Logistic Sponsors



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*Empowering Families. Strengthening Futures.*

## Host



**COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF  
ALLEGHENY COUNTY**

## **Disclaimer:**

*The views and opinions expressed during the Summit sessions are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of any entities we represent. All content is for informational purposes only and no material presented is intended to be a substitute for professional advice, diagnosis, or treatment.*



State Representative

# Dan Miller

42nd Legislative District

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