

## Increasing Opportunities in Higher Education

by Emily McKee

**DID YOU KNOW THAT THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**, including those with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, who sought and completed postsecondary education tripled during the twenty-year span between 1978 and 1998?\*

CHADD has long been an advocate for children with AD/HD and other co-occurring disorders in elementary and secondary education classrooms, while also advocating for ADA accommodations for college students and adults. This year CHADD has extended its advocacy efforts into higher education issues. Through our involvement with the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD; [www.c-c-d.org](http://www.c-c-d.org)), a consortium of over a hundred national disability organizations, CHADD's public policy team has

abilities, including students with AD/HD. While many educators are familiar with providing accommodations and working within Individualized Education Plans at the elementary and secondary classroom levels, awareness of the needs and rights of individuals with AD/HD and other disorders often is not as prominent after a student transitions from high school into college. Educating college instructors and administrators on the rights of students with disabilities is important to ensuring successful college careers for those students.

CHADD supports federal legislation that will increase opportunities in higher education for students with AD/HD. The Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HR 4137 and S. 1642) is also known as the College Opportunity and Affordability Act. The Senate and House versions of this important bill contain numerous provisions intended to support access to higher education by students with disabilities and the preparation of college administrators and faculties teachers so they can effectively instruct students with disabilities.

Two provisions in the act are particularly important for students with AD/HD in higher education.

➤ **Demonstration Projects to ensure students with disabilities receive a higher quality education.** This grant program, authorized under Title VII, Part D of the Higher Education Act, funds innovative projects that improve the skills of higher education instructors teaching students with disabilities. These may include in-service training, professional development, technical assistance seminars, distance learning, summer institutes, and research regarding learning environments for students with disabilities at postsecondary levels. Institutions of higher education receiving these funds are required to disseminate findings and promising practices and to provide training to administrators and faculties at other colleges and universities. Visit [ed.gov/programs/disabilities/index.html](http://ed.gov/programs/disabilities/index.html) and search for program # 84.333A, for more details.



worked to ensure that the rights of students with AD/HD are protected, and accommodations made available to them, in both collegiate and employment settings.

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\* This advance was reported in "Project Success: Assuring College Students with Disabilities a Quality Higher Education" (Dolores Battle in The ASHA Leader, February 3, 2004, pp. 6-7, 14-15).

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Though the Demonstration Projects initiative is the sole program that exists in the Higher Education Act to support students with disabilities in postsecondary education, President George W. Bush earlier this year cut the program and its funding from the federal budget. CHADD, along with other CCD organizations, has advocated to save this critical support for students with disabilities in higher education and to secure \$10 million in funding from the U.S. Congress. Support from initiatives like the Demonstration Projects is crucial for students with AD/HD and other disabilities to successfully transition from high school into postsecondary education and then on to successful, sustainable careers.

➤ **Yarmuth Amendment to the Higher Education Act (HR 4137).** The Yarmuth amendment to the Higher Education Act, introduced by Representative John Yarmuth (D-KY), which CHADD supports, would create a new program to enhance the preparation and skills of educators to work with students with disabilities.

To ensure access to educational environments for postsecondary students with disabilities, it is critical that faculty members who work with them are skilled in strategies designed to meet their needs. Ensuring that college faculties are knowledgeable about students' rights, accommodations and effective educational strategies, will significantly increase their success with students with AD/HD and other disorders.

We await final passage of these important pieces of legislation this year. Stay tuned to CHADD's Public Policy Web page for updates on our efforts and to see how you can join us in our fight for students with AD/HD in higher education and in all other classrooms. For more information, or to access statements of CHADD's complete public policy agendas for children and adults, visit [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org); click on Influence Policy. **A**

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## September 18 is AD/HD Awareness Day

In recognition of AD/HD Awareness Day on September 18, CHADD, the Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA), and *ADDitude* magazine have joined forces to raise the public's understanding of the impact that AD/HD can have on personal relationships throughout an individual's lifetime.

Efforts surrounding AD/HD Awareness Day will begin September 14 and end on September 20. The theme—**From First Years to Golden Years: AD/HD and Life's Relationships**—focuses on the key times in a person's life when AD/HD poses relationship challenges.

Some local CHADD groups will hold AD/HD fun days that will allow communities across the country to focus on issues important to those affected by AD/HD.

CHADD is working with the U.S. Senate to pass a resolution recognizing a day as AD/HD Awareness Day.