State Assistive Technology (AT) Programs and Funding Options for AT

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Welcome to Maine!!!
Today’s Objectives

• Learn about the federal AT Act
• Define and Review AT
• Learn about AT State Program Services & Resources
• Review Funding options
• Q & A
Kathy’s Bio

• Occupational Therapist
• Certified AT Professional (RESNA.org)
• 35+ years of practice in Maine
• Serves on:
  • Maine OT License Board, Chair (just ended 2 terms)
  • Maine AgrAbility Project Advisory Council
  • Maine AT Consortia
  • Maine Medicaid Advisory Committee
  • KVCC OTA Program Advisory Council
  • Southern Maine Transition Committee
  • State IT Advisory Committee
**Important Maine Facts**

- Borders NH, Canada and the Ocean
- Population 1.3 million people
- 16 Counties
- 22 Cities
- 424 Towns
- York, America's First Chartered Town in 1641
- 3,500 Miles of Coastline
- 6000 Lakes & Ponds
- Mt. Katahdin is the End of the AT @ 5268 ft above sea level
- 17 Million Acres of Forest
- 65 Lighthouses
- Acadia National Park
- 120 Million Lbs - Annual Lobster catch
- 104 Million Lbs - Blueberries annually
Some Laws that Impact AT

- Rehab Act of 1973/Section 504
- IDEA, amended in 2004
- AT Act of 1989, amended in 2004
- Americans with Disabilities Act 1990
- WIOA: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Maine CITE .......

- Maine’s State AT Act Program
- Created by the Federal AT Act in 1989 (amended in 2004)
- There are AT Act Programs in every state
  - [www.ATAPorg.org](http://www.ATAPorg.org)
  - [www.at3center.net](http://www.at3center.net)
- Visit [www.mainecite.org](http://www.mainecite.org)
  - Webinars recorded on our site
  - “Apps as AT” page
  - Paying for AT & Funding Resources
  - AT Providers in Maine
The Mission of Maine CITE

To improve access to & the acquisition of AT by people of all ages, all disabilities in the areas of:

Education
Employment
Community Living
IT & Telecommunications
AT Act Program Services Include:

• Public Awareness, Outreach, Information and Assistance
• Device Demonstrations
• Device Loans --- *try before you buy ...save $$$*
• Device Reuse --- discount buying of used AT, DME
  • AT Exchange and AT Recycling
• AT Training --- workshops, conferences, webinars
• Technical Assistance on AT
• State Coordination and Collaboration --- State AT Consortia
• State Financing
  • Alternative Financing Cash Loans, $$ to buy AT
  • AT Buying Co-ops
Maine’s AT Partners

- State Collaboration is essential in Maine
- Maine CITE has supported the AT Consortia since 1990s
- Meets quarterly
- Meetings Showcase new AT, training events & providers
  - Spurwink- ALLTECH
  - Pine Tree Society
  - CARES
  - UM Farmington
  - AgrAbility Maine
  - mPower Financial Loan Program
  - IRIS Network
  - State BRS
  - Alpha One, CIL
Assistive Technology is.....

- An **AT Device** is any item, device, system, piece of equipment, or product -- acquired commercially or customized -- that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of a person with a disability.

- **AT Services** help people learn about AT options & decide if the AT will **benefit** them.
Technology is Universal in our Lives!!

The Benefits of AT......
Using AT can facilitate, maintain, increase, maximize learning, safety, function, success & self esteem, work productivity, mobility, independence, social & community connections......
AT Enhances Function....

• Learning new tasks
• Physical interaction with environment
• Communication
• Independence & safety
• Participation & social interaction
• Vocational potential & productivity @ work
• Simplification of work tasks
• Organization skill, Concentration & cognition
• Endurance & stamina
Maine CITE Resources - check then out!

- **www.mainecite.org**: Maine AT Info source
- **www.at4maine.org**: Maine AT Inventory for Demo and Loan services
- **www.getatstuff.com**: Regional AT Exchange
- **www.maine-aem.org**: Maine Info on Accessible Educational Materials
Maine CITE Training Events

www.mainecite.org/training

- Driver Assessments
- AT: Empowering People to Live at Home
- AT to Support Independent Living
- Adapted Telephone/telecommunications
- Smart Home –Remote Monitoring
- AT for Medication Management
- Apps for Blind and Low Visions Users
- AT for People with Brain Injury
- Keep Farming Using Technology Solutions
- UD on the Farm: Maine AgrAbility Program
AT Reuse & Recycling

Donate, Buy & Sell used AT

www.getATstuff.com
more recycling of AT...

Refurbishing/Reusing/selling AT
ALLTECH, 892 Riverside St, Portland
Phone 207-535-2017

• www.alphaonenow.org
• Uncle Henrys…”senior solutions”
• towns, churches, civic groups
• www.passitoncenter.org  (national list)
AT can be Low Tech >>> to High Tech

No cost - no mechanics

Low Tech

Cost more - complex features computerized

High Tech

Mid Tech

Low cost - less complex, may involve some mechanics or electronics.
There are endless AT Devices!!

• Smart Devices: phones, tablets
• Computer hardware & software
  • adapted switches/access aids
• Alerting devices
• Braille & Low Vision devices
• Prosthetics & orthotics
• Standing & walking aids
• Manual and power wheelchairs (power rim device)
• Communication devices, SGD devices
• Adapted sports/recreation equipment
More AT ..... 

• Adapted cars - vans with lifts
• Home access/mods
  • ramps, lifts, stair glides, elevators, walk in shower, flooring
• Smart home automation
• Wearable tech
  • Hearing aides & glasses
  • Fitness devices
  • Smart watches
  • Tracker devices
What AT do you or your clients use?

What Apps are you using as AT?
AT for Managing Medications

- Pill box / med cassette
- Organizers with Alarms
- Alternative medication container caps
- Magnifiers for reading labels .... Large print
- Dispensers with remote monitoring
- Smartphone & smart watch reminders
Funding.....”it’s all about the money”

- Funding is the **key issue** for the consumer!!
- Professionals need to work with consumers to help find purchasing/funding options for AT
- Funding is **the** challenge!
...more on Funding!

- **Beware!...** AT Funding is always changing
- Funding decisions are based on each individual’s *need* & eligibility
  - Health insurances, state Medicaid = medical necessity
  - Veterans
  - Special Ed
  - Vocational Rehab
- Learn about the documentation requirements for each funder— *do your homework!*
Paying for AT

• Social Security Administration Programs
  • PASS Plans
  • 1619B Program
  • Ticket to Work

• State Vocational Rehab Services

• Special Education.…ages 0 thru 20
  • *Must Consider AT*….*Document AT in the IEP*
  • *Must have a Transition plan for students leaving HS*

• Health Insurances….Medicaid (Maine Care)
  • *must document medical necessity*
  • OT Policy (Maine Medicaid Section 68)
Maine has Medicaid Waivers

- All states can create Waivers- work with federal CMS
- Enables people with disabilities to live in the community (avoid more costly nursing homes) $$$
- Funding for AT used at home for safety & independence
- Funding for home based AT & remote monitoring
- Maine CITE is working to develop more providers of AT services
Homeward Bound Program
Federal “Money Follows the Person” Program


• Maine program that funds services for people to plan & move out of a nursing home >>> back into the community
• Pays for AT, AT training & home monitoring
• In the last 4 yrs, more that 115 people have moved home
• > 90% of these people use some type of AT
• Financial Cash Loans/personal financing
  • Maine’s *mPower* Loan Program  www.mpowerloans.org
  • The Digital Credit Union  www.dcu.org
  • Financial Loan Programs in the States: 43 of them!
    • www.at3center.net/stateprograms

• Muscular Dystrophy Association
• MS Society
• IL Grants thru Alpha One CIL
• Robbie Foundation (ME)
• Travis Roy Foundation (SCI)
• DiDanato Foundation (ME)
AT Resources....

- [www.extension.umaine.edu/agrability](http://www.extension.umaine.edu/agrability)
- [www.agrability.org](http://www.agrability.org)
- [www.at3center.net](http://www.at3center.net)
- [www.fctd.org](http://www.fctd.org) family center for technology and disability
- [www.wheelchairnet.org](http://www.wheelchairnet.org)
- [www.abledata.org](http://www.abledata.org)
- [www.assistivetech.net](http://www.assistivetech.net)
- [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org)
- [www.atia.org](http://www.atia.org)
**AT Resources**

- [www.jan.wvu.edu](http://www.jan.wvu.edu) Job Accommodation Network
- [www.usbln.org](http://www.usbln.org) Business Leadership Network
- [www.RESNA.org](http://www.RESNA.org) Rehab Engineering Society N. America
- [www.abledata.org](http://www.abledata.org) lists thousands of AT devices
- [www.passonline.org](http://www.passonline.org) details on PASS program
- [www.workrerc.org](http://www.workrerc.org) Rehab Engineering Research Center on Workplace Accommodation
Take Aways......

• AT is universal is our lives, why not the lives of our clients?
• AT can impact safety, independence & productivity
• The AT market is always changing
• AT is available & affordable, “off the shelf”
• AT Resources are always developing
• Keep Exploring Smart Home technologies as AT
• Collaboration is Key!!
Thank you!

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