



# 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual U.S. Conference on DISABILITY

*The Rehabilitation Act: Learning From Our Past, Knowing Our Present,  
& Building Our Future*

A Conference Focused on Access, Advocacy, & Employment  
In The Age of Artificial Intelligence

**Wednesday October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

- 7:45 - 8:30 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast
- 8:30 – 8:45 a.m. Opening Remarks  
**Rev. Joseph G. Marina**, S.J., President, the University of Scranton  
**Victoria Castellanos**, Ph.D., RD, Dean, The Leahy College of Health Sciences  
**Edward R. and Patricia Leahy**, Honorary Conference Co-Chairs
- 8:45 – 9:00 a.m. **Theresa Dennis**, State Director for the Honorable Senator Bob Casey
- 9:00 – 10:15 a.m. The Honorable **Dante Q. Allen**, Commissioner Rehabilitation Services Administration
- 10:15 – 10:30 a.m. Networking Break
- 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. **Leveraging AI Now to Create a Safe and Accessible Future**  
**Alison Levy**, Director of the Office of Technical and Information Services (OTIS) at the U.S. Access Board
- Artificial intelligence is rapidly evolving and becoming integrated into more aspects of everyday life than many people realize including employment, education, transportation, benefits, and healthcare, among others. Its applications are fundamentally transforming how we interact with technology and one another.
- In 2023, the President encouraged the U.S. Access Board—a federal rulemaking agency—to engage with the public and offer technical assistance and recommendations to minimize the risks while maximizing the benefits of AI to people with disabilities.
- In this session, Alison will provide AI basics, an overview of the Access Board’s actions findings related to AI. It’s critical for Individuals with disabilities, service providers and advocates to be part of this important conversation. Engaging now will help ensure that we harness this technology in a safe and inclusive manner before this opportunity slips away.
- 11:30 – 12:00 p.m. **In the Moment: Stress, Self-Care, and Mindfulness**  
**Kathy Stefanelli**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Counseling and Human Services, The University of Scranton

In this session participants will gain an understanding of the ubiquitous nature of the stress response, the importance of self-care to mitigate the effects of stress and will experience

an opportunity to engage in a mind-body relaxation exercise designed to reduce stress and enhance awareness of the importance of self-care.

12:00 – 1:30 p.m. Lunch – Tribute to Dr. Ralph N. Pacinelli & Award Ceremony

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. **The Impact of the Rehabilitation Act and the ADA in Shaping the Landscape of America**

*Kathy West Evans*, MPA, CRC, Director of Business Relations, National Employment Team (NET) at CSAVR

*John P. Evans*, BPA, HRDC, Consultant

In this session, Kathy and John will provide an overview of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Based on their lived and professional experience, they will share how the implementation and continued development of this legislation, coupled with community and business engagement, continues to advance the careers and independence of individuals with disabilities while also benefitting their families and society; as a result strengthening America's workforce.

2:30 – 3:00 p.m. **Advances in Rehabilitation Technology to Improve Human Mobility**

*Renee M. Hakim*, P.T., Ph.D., Professor of Physical Therapy, Chairperson and Program Director, University of Scranton, and Board-Certified Clinical Specialist emeritus in neurologic physical therapy.

Rehabilitation technology is a relatively new and expanding field which includes devices that may be used to help people regain and improve function after injury or illness. Various types of systems including robotics, virtual/augmented reality, and wearable sensors will be discussed with an overview of neuroplasticity and implications for motor recovery.

3:00- 3:15pm Break & Networking

3:15- 4:30pm **An Explosion of Capacity: The Emerging — and Still Untapped — Workforce with Disabilities**

*Gary Karp*

Modern Disability, Owner and Disability Awareness Speaker, Trainer, Consultant, and Author

In recent history, people with disabilities have fought to remove barriers, to create possibilities, and to enshrine their rights under law. This is great news for employers, who have access to a broader pool of qualified workers — and leaders — than ever before. In our newly accessible world, with greater access to higher education, and a technology-driven economy, people with disabilities of all kinds and degrees have shown what they can contribute. As they are better understood and embraced, every domain of our society will gain, from the family to the community, from non-profits to large corporations and government. It's truly a new age, as Gary Karp describes through his own story in both human and business terms. A new age in which everyone can, and should, have access to their greatest potential and success.

4:30pm ***Closing Remarks***