**From:** Dawn Rudolph  
**Sent:** Friday, October 2, 2020 10:16 AM  
**To:** 'Gerhard, Lori (ACL)' <Lori.Gerhard@acl.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: AT3 Webinar: Social Isolation, Assistive Tech., and a Partnership in Action

Happy Friday Lori, hope you are looking forward to a rejuvenating and beautiful fall weekend.

I’ve enjoyed some very informative, informal conversations with leadership at the AT program at Montana UCEDD, the Coleman Institute of Technology, and Communication First regarding ways that AT Act programs can help address the digital divide that is exacerbated and growing during this pandemic.

AT programs specialize in key areas that are beneficial for that state, and do this really well. A number of ideas are below, organized into 3 categories: (1) small-picture ideas that AT Act programs might easily implement, (2) big-picture ideas that AT Act programs might incorporate into long-term strategic impact, and (3) some ideas for ACL. All these recommendations fall within the existing responsibilities and functions (both mandatory and option) authorized under the AT Act (Section 4).

These suggestions are intended to:

* Reduce risks for acquiring COVID19 OR acquiring illnesses, secondary conditions or being institutionalized during the pandemic at least in part because of its effects (e.g., lack of personal assistance)
* Supplement but do not substitute for necessary services and supports, whether paid or unpaid
* Reduce social isolation
* Reduce the digital divide

Small-picture ideas that AT Act programs:

1. One of the biggest barriers creating social isolation is lack of access to wifi. Providing the bridge to wifi through [MyFi](https://www.signalbooster.com/blogs/news/mifi-vs-wifi-what-is-the-difference-between-mi-fi-and-wi-fi" \t "_blank) and smart phones as hot spots. Libraries are loaning these out so people can have easier access. Can the AT Act programs alert customers that this resource exists? Can the AT programs do the same, where libraries don’t provide this service or the need outnumbers the available library resources?
2. Providing Accessible Multi Modal Virtual Assistance such as Amazon Big Screen Show which can interface with communication devices and using program scripts so people can connect automatically via virtual assistance on larger screens that have accessibility features built in and can be script programmed with other AI devices (ex: "Alexa, call my DSP” and the visual component of the call can be on the big TV screen.
3. Automation of live captioning on platforms such as ZOOM and microsoft teams etc..  [Otter.AI](http://otter.ai/)provides this for zoom but it is not easily available. Google offers Live Transcribe that can provide captioning for remote meetings via Zoom, teams etc. AT Act programs can help raise awareness of the need for, and access to resources for, captioning.
4. Utilizing a click and ship process for distributing AT for rapid deployment using remote consultation for use in natural contexts and including a self addressed mailer for return of devices.  This saves on time, driving, and offers remote consultation where people will actually use the device. US postal service click-n-ship service is easy to use from home, and saves time & cost, and a return box with postage can be included when a device is shipped out to be tested with remote consultation.
5. Installing and setting up smart homes (Alexa, Google Home/Nest, etc.) which goes back to the #2 recommendation of ensuring people have multi modal virtual assistance
6. Using remote consults to teach people how to make their own devices out of every day items and shipping tools to people to make them (ala[Therese Wilkomm making at in 5 minutes or less with everyday items](https://iodbookstore.org/assistive-technology-solutions-in-minutes-ii-ordinary-items-extraordinary-solutions/))
7. Adding assistive technology inventory to lending library to address social isolation, prepare for remote/hybrid learning, access telehealth/therapy/medicine
8. Offer live drop-in webinars and open lab sessions for educators to problem solve how to provide accessible virtual content for their students with disabilities
9. Starting a new lending library of hotspots
10. Purchasing a mobile AT unit to reach remote or underserved areas, especially in rural, tribal, and frontier areas
11. Outreach to CILs, AAAs to partner and provide AT expertise related to the CARES funding they received
12. Virtual trainings to statewide programs for widespread outreach – consider apps, online training, other ways to expand reach
13. Virtual consultations on an individual level

Big-picture ideas for AT Act programs:

1. Increase training to families, DSPs, and others who provide supports
2. Leverage additional funding to expand scope
3. Include policymakers in audience for training and technical assistance
4. Partner with other entities to expand loan program, and get the loan library out into the community rather than on a university campus
5. Expand efforts in historically underrepresented & underresourced communities
6. Train professionals with interest in working for tech companies, to support sustainable investment in accessibility on a broad scale
7. Work with educators to build STEAM curriculum to support employment of PWD in tech companies – prepare PWD for work in tech companies – this is where the jobs are and will be
8. [Tech first](https://www.openminds.com/market-intelligence/executive-briefings/are-you-in-a-technology-first-state-does-it-matter/#:~:text=If%20you%20are%20an%20executive,%2Dcentric%20approach%E2%80%94including%20Alaska%2C) partnerships
9. Engage with Teach Access <https://teachaccess.org/> to help make universities more accessible
10. Partner with public schools to teach about tools for online learning (also consider ACL & ED partnership to address accessible online learning)
11. Walk people through how to access funding for AT – ex, there are 12 opportunities for state AT funding, and AT programs should be walking people through how to do that (beyond just making a flyer available). Increase visibility of AT opportunities for the public.
12. Partnership with provider agencies, tech companies, start-up companies, other federally funded programs such as RERCs. Many such partnerships exist to fill gaps left by AT programs (who are strong in their niche area), and would be ideal for AT programs to expand such partnerships. Don’t want to lose current expertise, but expand # assessments to reduce wait lists & meet current needs
13. Conduct email campaign to get PWD access to and training to use email to access digital information
14. Partner with state Voc Rehab to infuse AT consultation and access for PWD in VR services

Suggestions for ACL:

1. Increase federal financial investment in AT programs (not to do more the same – to expand in the areas above)
2. AT programs to partner with NIDILRR even internally within ACL
3. Consider public-private partnership between ACL & Microsoft & other tech companies to leverage AT projects with Microsoft research & design
4. See emergency response ppt
5. Lori – it might be beneficial to chat with [Shea Tanis](https://www.colemaninstitute.org/team/shea-tanis-phd/), especially on the big-picture ideas ([shea.tanis@cu.edu](mailto:shea.tanis@cu.edu))

I hope this is helpful.

All the best,

*~ Dawn*

**From:** Gerhard, Lori (ACL) <[Lori.Gerhard@acl.hhs.gov](mailto:Lori.Gerhard@acl.hhs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 18, 2020 5:16 PM  
**To:** Dawn Rudolph <[drudolph@AUCD.ORG](mailto:drudolph@AUCD.ORG)>  
**Subject:** RE: AT3 Webinar: Social Isolation, Assistive Tech., and a Partnership in Action

Hi Dawn,

   Terrific.   I look forward to hearing the approaches and ideas.  Many thanks!

Have a wonderful weekend,

Lori

**From:** Dawn Rudolph <[drudolph@AUCD.ORG](mailto:drudolph@AUCD.ORG)>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 18, 2020 3:47 PM  
**To:** Gerhard, Lori (ACL) <[Lori.Gerhard@acl.hhs.gov](mailto:Lori.Gerhard@acl.hhs.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: AT3 Webinar: Social Isolation, Assistive Tech., and a Partnership in Action

Happy Friday Lori! I thought of you when I saw the announcement below, as we just recently discussed what the AT programs might do to help address isolation during COVID. How timely is this! This announcement below reminded me to share with you that I’ll have some additional suggestions in another week or so, as I’m reaching out (in confidence) to a couple folks who will be able to share some additional approaches and ideas for the AT programs.

Have a good weekend,

*~Dawn*

**From:** Administration for Community Living <[acl@public.govdelivery.com](mailto:acl@public.govdelivery.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 18, 2020 11:58 AM  
**To:** Dawn Rudolph <[drudolph@AUCD.ORG](mailto:drudolph@AUCD.ORG)>  
**Subject:** AT3 Webinar: Social Isolation, Assistive Tech., and a Partnership in Action

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The “Stay Connected” program utilizes Prof. Nicholas R Nicholson’s six question Social Isolation Scale to identify older adults and individuals with disabilities who are socially isolated or at risk of social isolation. Based on survey results, an individual will be referred for an assistive technology consultation and services provided by the Connecticut Tech Act Program and AT Partners.  [Back to top](https://outlook.office.com/mail/AAMkADE1NGMxY2EzLTNiODItNGJkMS1hNDAyLTUzMGFkYTZmZDY1YwAuAAAAAACuOceU53ZcT7ykgO16pAmqAQDXpTl8X004RbUbQsWlYR5OAACMiwyXAAA%3D/id/AAQkADE1NGMxY2EzLTNiODItNGJkMS1hNDAyLTUzMGFkYTZmZDY1YwAQAPO0%2BehtjZRGj34j1T4Tsso%3D#gd_top) | | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | | [Facebook](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDUsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMDA5MTguMjczNzMyNDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mYWNlYm9vay5jb20vYWNsZ292In0.XczSOixGwX9DFk5RVnzH2s8XP96DuPsDc9RAO7y1KIs/s/246736903/br/85573619642-l)[Twitter](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDYsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMDA5MTguMjczNzMyNDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3R3aXR0ZXIuY29tL2FjbGdvdiJ9.s8ArLnNX04MXkGuLaJfVM-T_rva946yyNKjj2AWL6ss/s/246736903/br/85573619642-l)[Youtube](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDcsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMDA5MTguMjczNzMyNDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwOi8vd3d3LnlvdXR1YmUuY29tL3VzZXIvQW9BMjUifQ._dukTqNOuPOB8ACimXO9CBpdYMcOyjGxRKFXNNOS4M8/s/246736903/br/85573619642-l) | | | |  | | --- | | Please do not respond to this e-mail. [Contact the Administration for Community Living](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDgsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMDA5MTguMjczNzMyNDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL2FjbC5nb3YvY29udGFjdCJ9.sL3ZLxVG9gEXwGu8TAKy8xVKD7RPEORU195fvv2_IlA/s/246736903/br/85573619642-l)    SUBSCRIBER SERVICES  [Manage Preferences](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDksInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMDA5MTguMjczNzMyNDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3B1YmxpYy5nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeS5jb20vYWNjb3VudHMvVVNBQ0wvc3Vic2NyaWJlci9lZGl0P3ByZWZlcmVuY2VzPXRydWUjdGFiMSJ9.a-dng8M27a3I83GZoR2puuO9ffdjRB58OiiBPXaE7rM/s/246736903/br/85573619642-l) |  [Unsubscribe](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTAsInF1ZXJ5X3BhcmFtcyI6WyJ2ZXJpZmljYXRpb24iLCJkZXN0aW5hdGlvbiJdLCJ1cmkiOiJicDI6Y2xpY2siLCJidWxsZXRpbl9pZCI6IjIwMjAwOTE4LjI3MzczMjQxIiwidXJsIjoiaHR0cHM6Ly9wdWJsaWMuZ292ZGVsaXZlcnkuY29tL2FjY291bnRzL1VTQUNML3N1YnNjcmliZXIvb25lX2NsaWNrX3Vuc3Vic2NyaWJlIn0.CLgdTRWM2gLhkHj3P0sygtQq0x9R9Pe6E1rCwxANIYY/s/246736903/br/85573619642-l?verification=5.2cc23804e6d4c93673dcc5e563d7923b&destination=drudolph%40aucd.org)  |  [Help](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMDA5MTguMjczNzMyNDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3N1YnNjcmliZXJoZWxwLmdvdmRlbGl2ZXJ5LmNvbS8ifQ.QmLkY4CkAYTgLWWGwIQuNLSs-tZYc5yh0zcgQYmzSL8/s/246736903/br/85573619642-l) | | | |

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