



## **Mandate for Annual Conferences to Address Disability Concerns**

**From *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016***

**¶ 653.** There shall be in each annual conference a committee on disability concerns or other structure to provide for the functions of this ministry and maintain the connectional relationships.

1. The basic membership of the committee shall be nominated and elected by the established procedures of the respective annual conference. Each annual conference shall determine the number and composition of the total membership. Membership shall include persons with physical disabilities and persons with mental disabilities.
2. It shall be the responsibility of this committee:
  - a) To be aware of, and advocate for, the role of persons with disabilities in ministry, including ordained and diaconal ministries and local church and annual conference leadership positions.
  - b) To advocate for and help develop programs within the annual conference that meet the needs of persons with disabilities.
  - c) To be informed about current ministries within the annual conference that are related to persons with disabilities.
  - d) To develop ways to sensitize persons in leadership positions on issues that affect persons with disabilities and therefore the entire Church.
  - e) To foster cooperation among ministries with the annual conference that focus on specific disabilities (deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, development disabilities, mental retardation,\* mental illness, visual impairment, physical disabilities, etc.)
  - f) To be a resource for local churches who are attempting to develop ministries that are attitudinally and architecturally accessible.
  - g) To promote the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the life of the local church and the annual conference.
  - h) To participate in jurisdictional accessibility associations in the sharing of knowledge and resources.

\*The following petition by the DisAbility Ministries Committee of the UMC to General Conference 2016 was not considered in committee so never brought to the floor for consideration:

[Proposed Amendment to ¶ 653.2.e, The Book of Discipline.](#) This amendment proposes to correct the term “development disabilities” to “developmental disabilities” and removes the outdated term that many people find hurtful, “mental retardation,” to replace it with the current term, “intellectual disabilities.”

