



# CENTER ON EFFECTIVE REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF THE BASELINE SURVEY

Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University

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# Baseline Survey

Identifying the State of Practice

# Baseline Survey

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- Purpose of the survey – identify state of practice:
  - ▣ Establish a baseline of current practice (services, systems, policies, practices, and outcomes as well as barriers and facilitators)
  - ▣ Help identify the important aspects of service delivery for detailed assessment and analysis, and
  - ▣ Allow for comparison across states, and
  - ▣ Inform the development of the quality indicators framework



# Survey creation process

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- Initial drafting by a core survey team with CERT using the above methods
- Rigorous review process with full project team, Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel, and invited testers
  - ▣ Requested feedback on every question in the survey pool regarding importance, relevance to different categories of service providers and suggestions for modifications
- Three similar but separate versions created for State VR agencies, State AT Act Programs, and CILs
- ~60 items across 14 categories



# Data Collection

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- Baseline surveys widely disseminated through RESNA, CSAVR, NCIL
  - Data collection on State AT Act Program version complete ( $38/56 = 68\%$  response rate; 56 is universe)
  - Surveys for State VR Agencies in progress ( $37/80 = 46\%$ ; 80 is universe)
  - Data collection on CIL activities complete ( $84/200 = 42\%$ , 50 was targeted limit)



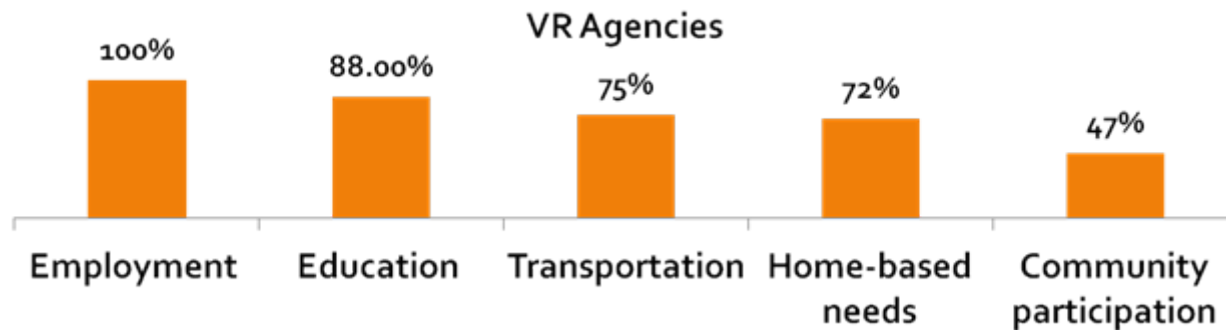
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# State VR Agencies

# Consumers served & services provided

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- Top three disability groups served: Multiple disabilities, sensory impairments, Orthopedic impairments
- Reasons why individuals go to VR for RT/AT services:



- Top three types of RT/AT services provided:
  - 1. Job/Workplace Accommodations 2. Computer Applications 3. Technology for visual impairment (includes agencies for individuals with blindness/low vision)



# Personnel

- Who is involved in providing RT/AT services? (n = 36)
  - ATPs (92%), CRCs (69%), Low vision specialists (69%)
  - Audiologists (50%), Driver rehab specialists (50%)
  
- Educational qualifications of RT/AT staff (n = 34)
  - Bachelors degree (38%), Masters degree (35%), Other (15%)
  
- 61% require specific certifications and licensure (n = 36)
  - ATP certification from RESNA, CRC
  
- 81% require/encourage RT/AT personnel to undergo ongoing training and continuing education (n = 37)



# VR agencies - Barriers

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- Top three challenges to appropriate use of RT/AT specialists within agency:
  - Time constraints of the RT specialist (41%)
  - Time limitations on the RT/AT assessments that can be provided (31%)
  - Lack of RT specialists (31%)
  
- Program perceived gaps in providing RT/AT to a consumer (n = 39):
  - Availability for supports, assistance, accommodations and maintenance for successful use (49%)



# VR and Employers

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- 91% assist employers in identifying RT/AT needs and solutions for individuals with disabilities (n = 32)
  
- Types of services provided:
  - Assessment (100%)
  - Device selection (100%)
  - Device training (100%)
  - Device modifications (89%)
  - Maintenance and repair (50%)



# RT/AT in vocational evaluations

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- Limited funding is not a challenge to using RT/AT in vocational evaluations
  
- 87% assess the need for RT/AT during vocational evaluations
  
- RT/AT services considered at which status:
  - 100% during IPE development (status 10, 12)
  - 91% while providing services (status 14, 16, 18)
  - 84% during placement/follow-up (status 20,22)



# Matching consumer and RT/AT

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- The following requirements of RT/AT solutions are matched with consumer resources:
  - **Most often:** Training, Cognitive demands
  - **Less often:** Physical/Sensory demands of the RT/AT including use and maintenance, Support services and maintenance, environments
  - **Least often:** Expense, Method of service delivery



# Underserved

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- Many respondents noted partnerships with other community agencies which serve underrepresented populations, churches, senior centers, village community centers etc.
- Partnerships with independent living centers and IL specialists
- Partnerships with Agrability programs , subcontracts to universities
- Conduct outreach and awareness services through health fairs, county health departments, job fairs, community events
- Designated and dedicated staff for community outreach activities



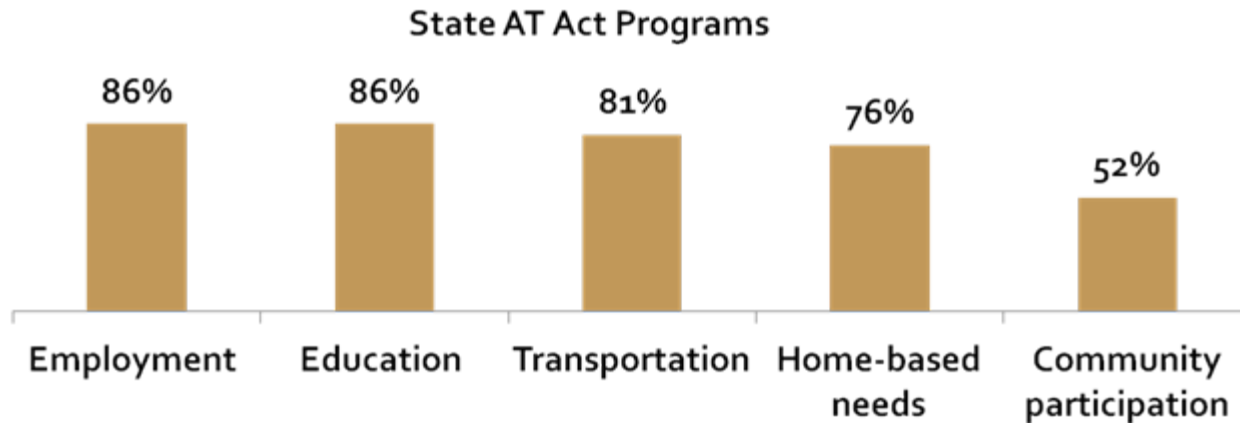
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# State AT Act Programs

# Consumers served

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- Top three disability groups served: Multiple disabilities, sensory impairments, Orthopedic impairments
- Reasons why individuals go to AT Act programs for RT/AT services:



# Services provided

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- Top three types of RT/AT services provided:
  - Alternative and Augmentive Communications, Computer Applications, Technology for visual impairment
  
- Programs available:
  - Device loan programs (83%)
  - Device demonstration programs (67%)
  - Device exchange programs (58%)
  - Reuse or refurbish programs (58%)
  - Used equipment referrals (54%)
  
- 67% have alternative financing programs





# Personnel

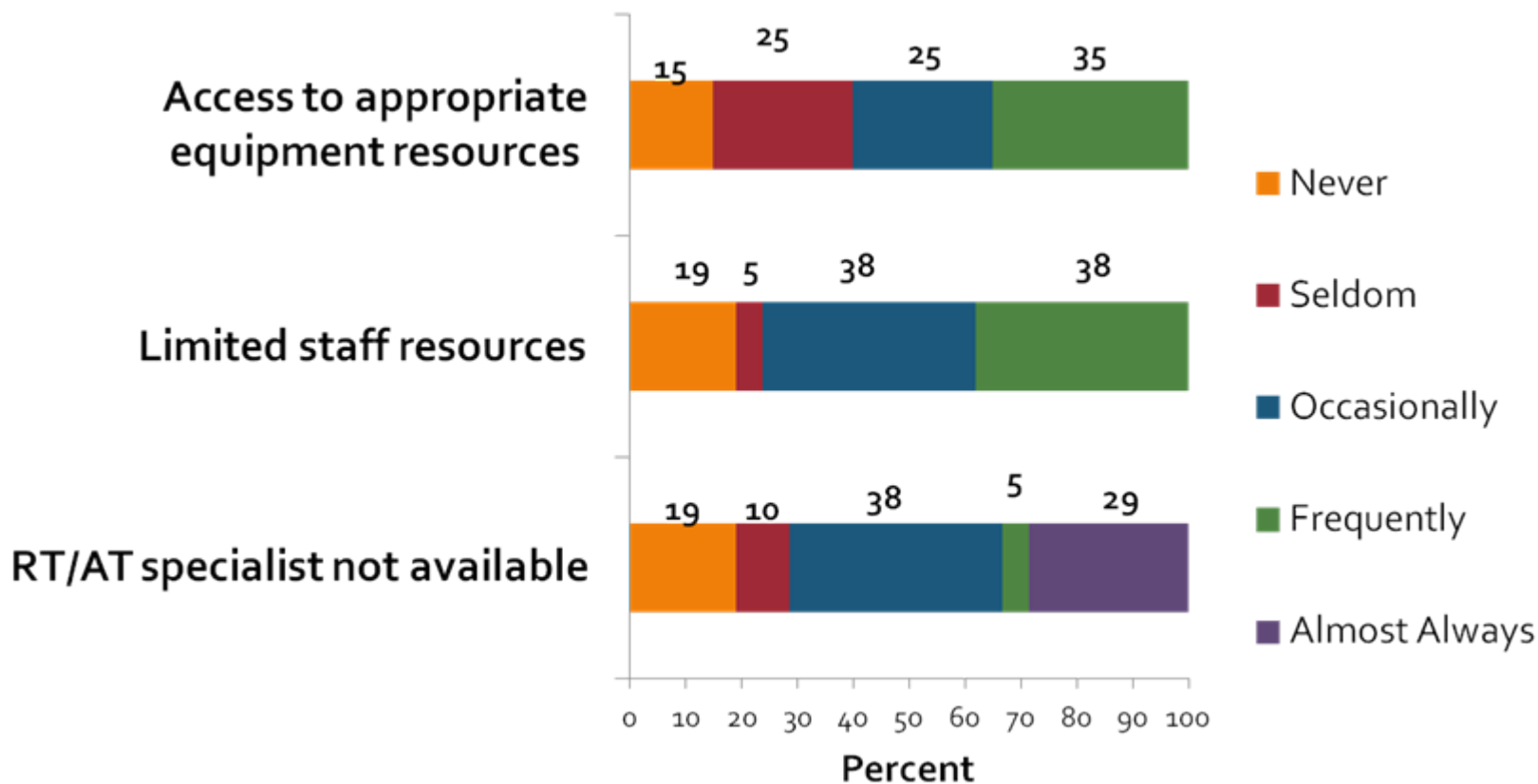
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- Educational qualifications of RT/AT staff (n = 29):
  - Bachelors degree, 50%
  - Masters degree, 19.2%
  - Some college, no degree, 15.4%
- 59% require specific certifications and licensure (n = 30)
  - ATP certification from RESNA
  - ATACP, ATS



# Challenges

- Top three challenges in using RT/AT services (n = 28)



# Matching consumer and technology

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- The following requirements of RT/AT solutions are matched with consumer resources:
  - **Most often:** Physical, sensory, and cognitive demands for selected RT/AT
  - **Less often:** Expense, support services and maintenance, training, and environments
  - **Least often:** Method of service delivery



# State AT Act Programs - Barriers

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- Top three program perceived gaps in providing RT/AT services to a consumer:
  - Understanding user perspectives on, attitudes about, and comfort with RT/AT
  - Assessing the fit between RT/AT and the environment in which it will be used
  - Availability for supports, assistance, accommodations and maintenance for successful use



# Outreach to underserved groups

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- Top three approaches used:
  - ▣ Remote access AT Loan Programs
  - ▣ Partnerships with external on-site service providers
  - ▣ Remote device demonstrations, one on one onsite assistance
  
- Many respondents noted partnerships with other community agencies which serve underrepresented populations, senior centers, village community centers etc.



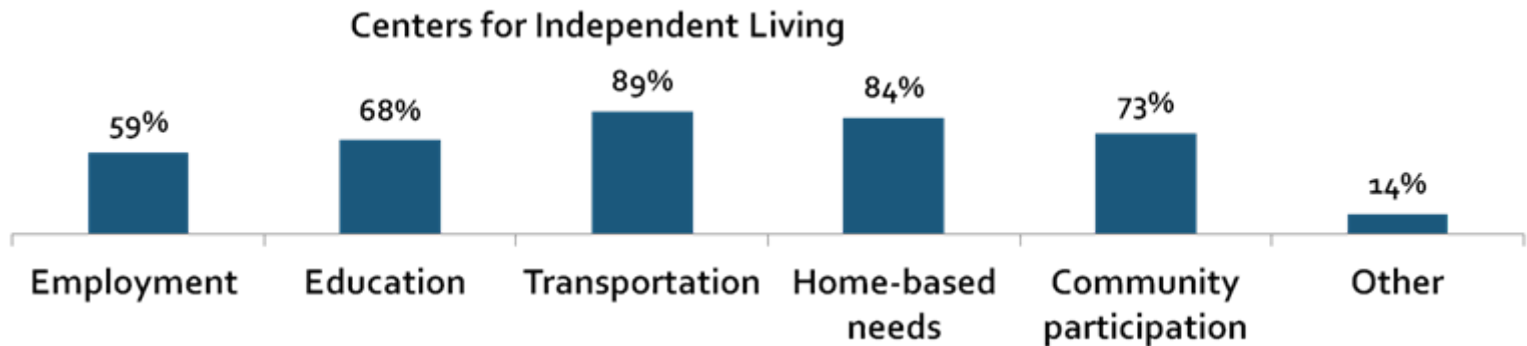
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# Centers for Independent Living

# Consumers served & services provided

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- Top three disability groups served: Multiple disabilities, sensory impairments, Orthopedic impairments
- Reasons why individuals go to CILs for RT/AT services:



- Top three RT/AT services provided:
  - Architectural accessibility (includes home and outside), Computer Applications, Technology for visual and hearing impairments



# Personnel

- Educational qualifications of RT/AT staff (n = 52):
  - Bachelors degree, 31%
  - Other, 29%
    - **Greater weight given to real world and life experiences with technology and disability**
  - Some college, no degree, 14%
- 55% had a designated RT/AT expert on staff
- Although a majority (53%) do not require specific certifications and licensure for RT/AT staff, 88% require/encourage RT/AT personnel to undergo ongoing training and continuing education





# Challenges in providing RT/AT

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- A significant majority of CLIs cited budget constraints as a barrier to the purchase (78%) and provision (64%) of RT/AT to consumers
- 53% stated that funding available to RT/AT specialists for purchase of devices was insufficient, and 37% noted no such funding was even available



# Decision making on RT/AT

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- Top three factors that impacted decision-making about RT/AT services (n = 37):
  - Financial/ funding considerations (81%)
  - Consumer goals (78%)
  - Consumer functional need (43%), consumer/family requests (43%)



# Outreach to Underserved groups

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- Advertising through newspapers, radio, TV, and marketing in schools, rehab facilities, public areas such as laundromats and stores
- Participation in events that draw crowds including fairs (state, health, job), blood drives, DME drives
- Hire individuals from rural areas to spread the word in the community



# CILs and Employers

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- 75% assist employers in identifying RT/AT needs and solutions for individuals with disabilities (n = 36)
  
- Services provided:
  - Assessment (75%)
  - Device selection (68%)
  - Device training (54%)
  - Device modifications (32%)



# Innovative programs

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- Across respondent groups, participants highlighted services available in state as whole
- Low or zero interest loan programs
- Reuse, recycling, and reutilization programs (offered through the respondent groups or private resources such as Craigslist)
- Assistance to fill out funding applications
  - E.g. A State AT Act Program that trains staff on locating public and private funding, who then help consumers to complete funding justifications, and submit documents
  - \$500,000 of AT acquired in past 12 months.



# Summary

- A broad snapshot into the current state of practice
- VR agencies are the key providers of RT/AT to aid in employment and workplace accommodations
- All three stakeholders show common traits in the highest disability groups served: Multiple disabilities, sensory impairments, Orthopedic impairments
- TBI, cognitive disabilities, and psychosocial disabilities least served
- Computer applications and technologies for visual impairments are most common across providers



# Summary

- Funding for RT/AT services varies with mission and mandate
  - CILs experience demand but lack adequate funding to meet demands
- All groups partner with other stakeholders to provide RT/AT services including CRPs, university based programs, private consultants and other government agencies
- Providers use multiple marketing strategies, remote assistance units, and partnerships with appropriate consumer groups to reach out to underserved groups
- Programs based on innovation and creativity in how AT is funded and accessed are highlighted: low interest loans, recycling, and assistance in identifying funding sources



# For further Information:

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- Please visit our website:

<http://bbi.syr.edu/projects/cert/cert.htm>

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