

Mental Disability Rights International

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Mental Disability Rights International (MDRI) is a non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting the recognition and enforcement of the rights of people with mental disabilities. MDRI documents conditions in mental health systems, supports the promotion and development of the rights of people with mental disabilities, assists advocates seeking legal and service system reforms, and promotes the international oversight of the rights of people with mental disabilities. Drawing on the skills and experience of attorneys, mental health professionals, human rights advocates, people with mental disabilities and their family members, MDRI is forging a new alliance to challenge the discrimination and abuse of people with mental disabilities throughout the world.

MDRI has sponsored fact-finding missions in Uruguay, Mexico, Hungary, Ukraine and the Czech Republic. Working together with locally-based advocates, MDRI is supporting the creation of new projects that promote the rights of people with mental disabilities in Argentina, Hungary and the Czech Republic. MDRI has published two reports: *Human Rights and Mental Health: Uruguay* (in English and Spanish), and *Human Rights and Mental Health: Hungary* (forthcoming).

Together with the Pan American Health Organization, MDRI is establishing the *Americas Group for the Rights of People with Mental Disabilities*. The *Americas Group* is a new forum created to support mental health and human rights initiatives. Participants will share ideas and experiences about advocacy strategies and alternative models for mental health care. The *Americas Group* will serve as a focal point for a diverse array of non-governmental, governmental, regional, and international organizations. Participants may include: human rights, mental health, civic, and legal advocacy organizations; consumers (users) and former consumers of mental health services; family members; mental health professionals; lawyers; university professors; media; government officials of health and justice; legislators; judges; and others.

MDRI is a joint project of American University's Washington College of Law Center for Human Rights and the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law in Washington, D.C. For more information about MDRI, please contact: Eric Rosenthal, Executive Director, Tel. (202) 274-4182 or Catherine O'Malley, Program Director, Tel. (202) 274-4187 (for information regarding Latin American programs).