

SPOTLIGHT ON STEVEN JAMES TINGUS, MS, CPHIL

Each month this Clearinghouse message spotlights a North American who has "made a difference" with ICF. In fact, the WHO slogan for ICF is: "To make a difference, measure the difference with ICF". Steve Tingus is highly deserving of that recognition because the agency which he directs has proposed to explicitly select the ICF for its official definition and measurement of disability. The acceptance of the ICF definition in his agency's Long Range Plan is just the most recent of his ICF achievements. As Chair of the Interagency Committee for Disability Research (ICDR), he has encouraged open discussion of ICF issues. The ICDR is the parent committee to a number of the Subcommittees, and several of the Subcommittees have held formal ICF conferences.

Steve has an illustrious past. Four years ago, he was appointed by President George W. Bush as Director of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). NIDRR is a component of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) within the U.S. Department of Education (ED). By statute, Tingus Chairs the Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR). In 2002, Tingus was appointed by Secretary Paige to lead ED's New Freedom Initiative (NFI) efforts and Chair the ED New Freedom Initiative Workgroup. The Department-wide workgroup promotes, facilitates, and coordinates policies, programs, and activities across ED, as they relate specifically to the implementation of the President's NFI. Prior to his appointment as Director of NIDRR, Tingus was the Director of Resource Development and Public Policy for the California Foundation for Independent Living Centers, Inc. (CFILC) and its non-profit project, the Assistive Technology "AT" Network. During his management of the AT Network, Tingus was recognized as a strong voice for the disability community, fighting for equal access to employment, health care, education, housing, and transportation. He testified on state legislation affecting disability policy issues ranging from special education, Medicaid eligibility guidelines, home modification and universal design, assistive technology, and long-term care. Prior to joining CFILC in 1998, Tingus was appointed in 1995 by Governor Pete Wilson to serve as his Health Care Policy Analyst for the California Department of Health Services (DHS). As public liaison and legislative expert for DHS, one of the largest state departments, he represented DHS at interagency meetings and helped the Director design and implement initiatives pertaining to long-term care and disability policy. Tingus earned a Bachelor of Science degree in 1985 from the University of California, Davis, in Biological Sciences, and also earned a Master of Science degree in 1990 and a Candidate in Philosophy degree (Ph.D. ABD) in Physiology in 1994. During 2003, Tingus received the "Best New Freedom Individual" Award from the Jim Mullen Foundation—fellow nominees included Judge Ann Burke, David B. Gray, Christopher Reeve, and Pat Scherer—this award honors the individual whose efforts have the most extraordinary impact on people who have a disability. He also received the National Spinal Cord Injury Association's Gil Moss Award—this award honors outstanding contributions enhancing the quality of life for people with spinal cord injuries. Five years ago, Tingus contributed to the development of the NFI. The NFI is the blueprint for current Federal policy supporting individuals with disabilities. On February 1, 2001, just two weeks into his administration, President George W. Bush

invited Tingus to the East Room of the White House to introduce him in unveiling the NFI before members of Congress and the press. The ICF world should be grateful to Steve Tingus for his many contributions to disability science and policy, and for having his agency formally embrace the ICF in its Long Range Plan. Contact Mr. Tingus as follows: Steven James Tingus, M.S., C.Phil., Director, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20024-6122, Direct Line: (202) 245-7549, NIDRR's Main Line: (202) 245-7640
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