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**AS ADA TURNS 20, HARRIS INTERACTIVE SURVEY FINDS
LIFESTYLE AND ECONOMIC GAPS STILL REMAIN BETWEEN
AMERICANS WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES**

Kessler Foundation and National Organization on Disability Call on Disability Advocates from Non-Profit, Business, Education and Government Sectors to Join Together for Change

NEW YORK (July 26, 2010) -- On the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a new survey sponsored by Kessler Foundation and National Organization on Disability (NOD) finds that most Americans with disabilities are still struggling with many of the same lifestyle and economic issues they confronted in 1990 when the ADA became federal law. The *2010 Kessler/NOD Survey of Americans with Disabilities*, conducted by Harris Interactive, reveals little or no substantial gains in 10 key indicators ranging from employment and income to social engagement and life satisfaction.

Employment remains the largest gap between people with and without disabilities and is directly linked to the continued lack of progress in other key areas for people with disabilities, such as income, access to health care and socialization. Among all working-age people with disabilities, only 21% say they are employed full or part time, compared to 59% of people without disabilities – a gap of 38 points. This gap has decreased since it was first examined in 1998 but it still remains large and its decline has been slow.

“We are privileged to live in a country that committed 20 years ago to equalizing rights and opportunities for people with disabilities,” said NOD President Carol Glazer. “The disability rights movement lags behind other civil rights movements and we have to catch up. There is a role for everyone. Governments need to remove disincentives for people with disabilities so they can start to work. Businesses need to realize the enormous contributions workers with disabilities can make. Schools need to prepare students with disabilities sooner for the world of work. And Hollywood should routinely feature more people with disabilities in their TV shows and movies.”

Rodger DeRose, President & CEO of Kessler Foundation, says the stark survey results must be a call to action.

“While it’s important to celebrate the ADA as a powerful legislative tool that has provided people with disabilities equal access to education, housing and employment, let’s not pat ourselves on the back when so much work clearly remains,” said DeRose.

DeRose would like to see leaders from non-profit, education, business and government sectors come together to examine ways to bridge the gaps identified in the survey. “A great deal of innovation and passion exists, but we have yet to truly come together as a community to talk through these issues and deliver solutions for the largest minority group in the nation,” DeRose added.

This marks the sixth effort over the past 24 years to assess the quality of life of people with disabilities on these indicators, and to track them over time. NOD, Kessler and Harris Interactive have established a series of 10 indicators of significant life activities of Americans with disabilities. These indicators, which have been tracked over the course of six surveys, are: employment, income, education, health care, access to transportation, socializing, going to restaurants, attendance at religious services, political participation and life satisfaction. This year, three new indicators were added, which include: technology, access to mental health services and overall financial situation.

Among the findings:

- Employment represents the largest gap between the two groups. Of all working-age people with disabilities, only 21% say that they are employed, compared to 59% of people without disabilities – a gap of 38 percentage points.
- People with disabilities are still much more likely to be living in poverty.
- People with disabilities are less likely than those without disabilities to socialize with friends, relatives or neighbors, once again suggesting that there are significant barriers to participation in leisure activities for this population.
- The second-largest gap between people with and without disabilities is regarding Internet access. 85% of adults without disabilities access the Internet, whereas only 54% of adults with disabilities report the same – a gap of 31 percentage points.

“There have been some improvements measured over the years that may be in part attributable to the implementation of the ADA of 1990,” said Humphrey Taylor, Chairman of *The Harris Poll* and member of the NOD board. “However, much work remains to be done in order to narrow the considerable gaps that still exist. Hopefully policymakers, employers, and the disability community will work together to translate these findings into action and policies designed to improve the lives of the millions of Americans with disabilities.”

To review the complete survey, please visit www.2010DisabilitySurveys.org.

Survey Methodology

The 2010 survey was conducted using the same basic sampling approach and methodology as previous years’ research. For the majority of the survey questions, the findings are based on two samples, both of which were conducted by telephone: (1) a national cross-section of 1,001 adults with disabilities and (2) a national cross-section of 788 adults without disabilities. These interviews took place between May 5 and June 3, 2010. When a person with a disability was unavailable for an interview or unable to be interviewed, a proxy from the same household who was best qualified to answer questions about that person was chosen to complete the interview. Overall, 10% of the interviews were conducted with proxies. In the case of findings on employment among people with disabilities, the data is based off of employed people ages 18 to 64 from the national cross-section, as well as an oversample of 315 people with disabilities in the labor force which was conducted online using sample from the Harris Poll Online panel. All of the results were weighted to be representative of the general population ages 18 and over with and without disabilities. A full methodology is available at www.2010DisabilitySurveys.org.