



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact:**

Erica Moulton

[emoulton@eastersealsma.org](mailto:emoulton@eastersealsma.org)

508-751-6372

## **MassMATCH Assistive Technology Regional Center Opens in Worcester**

*Increasing Access to Assistive Technology for Individuals with Disabilities in Central MA*

**WORCESTER, MA-** Today, Senator Harriette Chandler, 1<sup>st</sup> Worcester District, Senator Mike Moore, 2<sup>nd</sup> Worcester District, Commissioner Toni Wolf, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, and Easter Seals MA client Pete G., all joined Paul Medeiros, President & CEO, Easter Seals MA for the grand opening of the MassMATCH Assistive Technology Regional Center: Worcester.

The MassMATCH Assistive Technology Regional Center: Worcester will help children and adults with disabilities in central Massachusetts make informed decisions about assistive technology they can use to increase their independence at home, on the job, or in school. Individuals or groups will be able to explore hundreds of high and low tech devices that can meet a variety of needs. The process is much like a lending library in that individuals can take home the equipment and try it out for up to four weeks. Hundreds of devices are available in the areas of communication, education, hearing and vision impairment, and daily living.

“I am very proud to come together today with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, a state agency, and Roy & Diane Brazelton, our generous private donors, to bring the MassMatch Assistive Regional Technology Center to Worcester,” said Paul Medeiros. “This center shares the Easter Seals MA mission of ensuring that children and adults with disabilities have equal opportunities to live, learn, work and play,” added Paul.

As guests entered the Easter Seals MA office on Main Street in Worcester, Easter Seals MA client Pete G. greeted them from remotely from Canton, MA using a state of the art VGo robot. The VGo is a robotic telepresence that replicates a person in a distant location. Pete was able to see, hear, talk and move around the office as if he was here.

“I know first-hand how important centers like this are, the devices people use here have long-term effects, and for me it instilled a confidence that I could become a part of the American workforce,” said Peter. “From an educational perspective, I became disabled my senior year in my final semester and I had to take a medical leave of absence for 25 years. Then a few years ago, I was able to take online courses and graduated this May and I am currently working on my Masters Degree. For daily living I use assistive technology to live independently, and when I first starting using a voice activated environmental control

unit, I used it to turn on the lights in my home. It had been 10 years since I was able to do that for myself. The devices you see in this center enable people with disabilities of all ages to accomplish their dreams and their value cannot be understated. I live each day with assistive technology, knowing it gave me a new lease on life,” added Pete.

Senators Chandler and Moore presented an official citation during the mornings ceremony reading, “Be it known that the Massachusetts Senate hereby extends its congratulations to Easter Seals Massachusetts in recognition of the momentous occasion of the grand opening of the Assistive Technology Regional Center; and be it further known, that the Massachusetts Senate extends its best wishes for continued success; that this be duly signed by the President of the Senate and attested to and a copy thereof transmitted by the clerk of the senate.”

Commissioner Wolf added, “It’s so wonderful to be here to celebrate this grand opening but before we celebrate, I want to acknowledge that celebration first takes a vision, and I want to thank Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission’s partner, Easter Seals MA for having the vision to bring MassMATCH’s third Assistive Technology Regional Center to Worcester. Assistive technology means freedom, it eliminates the divide among us, the more we see ourselves as alike, the more we support each other.”

Commissioner Wolf also challenged the audience; “In a time where there is less, we can create more by continuing to work together.”

The MassMATCH Assistive Technology Regional Center: Worcester is conveniently located in downtown Worcester in the Easter Seals MA offices located at 484 Main Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor. Individuals are invited to visit and try our different assistive technology devices, participate in a free workshop, or reserve a time to host a staff meeting, or in-service training on-site at the Center

#### **About Easter Seals Massachusetts**

*Easter Seals Massachusetts provides services to ensure that children and adults with disabilities have equal opportunities to live, learn, work and play. Nonprofit and nonsectarian, Easter Seals MA offers technological assistance, employment and training services, recreational activities, youth transition and leadership programs, rehabilitation services and public awareness programs. For more information, call 800-244-2756 or go to [EasterSealsMa.com](http://EasterSealsMa.com).*

#### **About MassMATCH**

*Funded by the Rehabilitation Service Administration (RSA) of the U.S. Department of Education under the AT Act of 1998, as amended in 2004, the MassMATCH Assistive Technology Regional Centers lead the Commonwealth's efforts to implement the provisions of the federal Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended. The Device Demonstration and Loan program is part of the MassMATCH Massachusetts Assistive Technology Act Program. The purpose of MassMATCH is to get AT into the hands of people with disabilities through programs that provide increased access and acquisition to assistive technology. Assistive technology is any item or piece of equipment used to maintain or improve the capabilities of people with disabilities. Assistive Technology can help people with disabilities participate and be more independent in school, at home, in the workplace and in the community. MassMATCH assists individuals with disabilities, family members and disability-related providers, agencies and organizations across the state. For more information, call 877-508-3974 or go to [MassMATCH.org](http://MassMATCH.org).*

###