

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

April 14, 2023 at 9:30AM, CDT

In-Person Meeting

Country Inn & Suites – Nebraska Ballroom

[North Hotel & Conference Center]

5353 N. 27th Street

Lincoln, NE

The agenda was mailed to Council members prior to the meeting. The meeting was chaired by Rachel Siffring and called to order at 9:30AM, CDT. Quorum was present.

Present: Quinton Corwin, Caiti Donaldson, Jason Gieschen, Shauna Graham, Tony Green, Shaistha Kiran Karipi, Matt Kaslon, Cheryl Montgomery, Stephen Morton, Paige Rose, Dr. Mark Shriver, Rachel Siffring, Judy Trent, Nate Watson, and Kirsten Wilcox.

Absent: George Griffith, Seamus Kelly, Eddie Kraska, Beth Libra Plisek, Amy Rhone, Tricia Strauch, Sara Morgan, and Dee Valenti.

Guests: Anna Deidel, Tiffany Donaldson, Dr. Tom Janousek, DJ Plautz, Jennifer Severe-Oforah, Sherry Stansberry, and Pam Wilcox.

Staff: Kristen Larsen, Rachel Ward, Edith Titamoh, and Nikki Krause.

Welcome

Rachel Siffring welcomed everyone, and attendees were asked to introduce themselves.

Kristen Larsen explained that Dustin Henderson has resigned from the Council. Dustin moved to Oklahoma to be near his family. Kristen also mentioned that she is continuing to work with the Governor's Office to get Dr. Tom Janousek and Jennifer Severe-Oforah appointed as new Council members. Dr. Tom Janousek would be the Behavioral Health Representative and Jennifer Severe-Oforah would be the Division of Public Health – Maternal and Child Health Representative.

Nebraska Open Meetings Act

Rachel S. explained that Council meetings fall under the Nebraska Open Meetings Act and a copy of the Act is posted on the entrance door by the sign-in table.

The Governor's Public Meeting Calendar referred members of the public and media to the Council's Meetings webpage for additional information (posted March 29, 2023).

Public Comment

Rachel S. mentioned that all public meetings must allow time on the agenda for people who are not members of the Council to comment. Members of the public, who wanted to address the Council, were instructed to identify himself or herself, including an address and the name of any organization represented. No public comments were made.

Reordering the Agenda

Rachel S. asked for a motion to reorder the agenda to discuss and vote on amending Caiti Donaldson's Conference Request Form to attend the 27th Prader-Willi Syndrome Association | USA National

Convention (June 23-24, 2023 in Orlando Florida) after the Approval of Minutes. Nate Watson made the motion to reorder the agenda and Matt Kaslon seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 13, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried. [Tony Green stepped out of the meeting and Chair Rachel Siffing voted.]

Approval of Minutes

Council members were asked if there were any corrections to the *DRAFT* February 3, 2023 Council meeting minutes. As there were no corrections, Judy Trent made the motion to approve the minutes and Stephen Morton seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 13, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried. [Tony Green stepped out of the meeting and Chair Rachel Siffing voted.]

Amending Caiti Donaldson's Conference Request Form

At the February 3, 2023 Council meeting, the Council approved Caiti's funding request of \$4,480.84. for Caiti to attend the 37th Prader-Willi Syndrome Association | USA National Convention. While preparing Caiti's Out-of-State Travel Request, Council staff noted that some funding adjustments needed to be made to her Conference Request Form in the areas of lodging and meals. The amended total of funds requested was \$4,747.59, an increase of \$266.75. Jason Gieschen made the motion to approve amending the total funds requested on Caiti's Conference Request Form to \$4,747.59 and Matt seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 12, No – 0, Abstain – 1.*** Motion carried. [Tony Green stepped out of the meeting and Chair Rachel Siffing voted.]

Financial Report

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the Designated State Agency (DSA) for the Council. DHHS is the flow thru for Council funds. However, it is the Council that decides on how Council funds are to be allocated and monitors the allocated funds.

Kristen presented the Financial Report for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023, a handout at the meeting. At the August 5, 2022 Council meeting, the Council approved the budget of \$415,553 for FFY2023 (October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023). The Year-to-Date Expenditures for the second quarter of FFY2023 (October 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023) were \$177,589 – 42.7% of the FFY2023 budget.

NOTE: Edith Titamoh's salary does not fall under SOS Employee Salary but is a shared full-time employee (FTE) with Emergency Health Systems. That is why the Personal Expenses & Benefits is over 50% and Operating is under 50%.

The report reflects the balance of funds from FFY2022 and FFY2023 as of March 31, 2023. Available Current Funds totaled \$1,030,831. Expenditures totaled \$265,958. The Balance of Current Funds Available was \$764,874.

The Financial Forecast (what is being anticipated) shows a breakout of income and expenses by Federal Fiscal Year.

FFY2022 will need to follow the regular Period of Performance Schedule. The Project Period and Obligation of Funds is from October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2023. The Liquidation of Funds needs to be completed by September 30, 2024.

FFY2023 will follow the regular Period of Performance Schedule. The Project Period and Obligation of Funds is from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2024. The Liquidation of Funds needs to be completed by September 30, 2025.

NOTE: Council staff anticipate flat funding for FFY2024 – \$527,570.

Election of Council Officers & Applying for Reappointment to the Council with the Governor

Officer elections for FFY2024 will be conducted at the August 18, 2023 Council meeting. This includes the offices of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. If you are interested in any of these offices or would like more information, please contact Kristen Larsen at 402-471-0143 or kristen.larsen@nebraska.gov.

Eligible Council members whose term expire on October 1, 2023, and are interested in continuing to serve on the Council, are encouraged to reapply with the Governor. Applications can be submitted either online at the Boards & Commissions – Application for Executive Appointment webpage at <https://governor.nebraska.gov/board-comm-reg> or by mailing a **completed** Executive Appointment Application to Pat Selk at the Office of the Governor. Council members eligible to apply for reappointment are:

Quinton Corwin (Individual)

Seamus Kelly (State Protection & Advocacy System – Disability Rights Nebraska)

Shaistha Kiran Karipi (Family)

Judy Trent (Family)

Kirsten Wilcox (Individual)

NOTE: Shaistha Kiran finished out Erin Phillip's term. She is now eligible to serve two full 3-year terms.

The following Council member has a term that will expire October 1, 2023 and is ineligible for reappointment due to term limits:

Dee Valenti (Immediate relative/guardian of an individual with a developmental disability who resides or previously resided in an institution or an individual with a developmental disability who resides or previously resided in an institution [must be a resident of the State.]

NOTE: If you know someone who meets these criteria and might be interested in being on the Council, please let Kristen Larsen know at 402-471-0143 or kristen.larsen@nebraska.gov.

Funding Request for the 2023 National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities Conference in Orlando, Florida

Council staff asked the Council to approve funding to send three to five Council members to the 2023 National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) Conference that is scheduled for July 24-27, 2023 in Orlando, Florida. Attendee preference would be given to Executive Committee members and funding would not exceed \$3,000 per attendee. Tony Green moved to approve funding, not to exceed \$3,000 per attendee, for three-five Council members to attend the 2023 NACDD Conference with attendee preference given to Executive Committee members and Matt seconded. A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 13, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried.

Council members were reminded to turn in their Council Member Conference Request Form to Council staff as soon as you know about a conference, so copies of the requests can be made and sent out in the meeting packets. Council members may request to attend two in-state conferences and one national conference per FFY (October 1 – September 30) as funds allow, and the conference relates to one of the State Plan goals. Upon return from a conference, Council members need to submit the Council Member Conference Report Summary and report on the conference at the Council meeting following the

conference. Expense Reimbursements and receipts must be submitted and approved no more than 60 days after the final day in which the expenses were incurred.

Report of the Planning Committee

The Planning Committee met in-person on April 13, 2023 to make recommendations for FFY2024 continuation subaward projects, formal competitive/noncompetitive subaward/direct contract projects, and funding for up to four opportunity subawards. Matt Kaslon, Planning Committee Chair, thanked the Council and non-Council members for their participation on the Planning Committee.

NOTE: Council members were reminded to follow the Conflict of Interest Policy. Those who had a conflict(s) of interest were asked not to participate in the discussion and advised to abstain from voting when their name is called to vote. This will provide transparency in the voting record.

The Committee recommended funding a Continuation Subaward with PTI Nebraska to continue its *Enhancing the Transitioning of Youth to Adult Services* project. It would only be continued for one year in the amount of \$30,000 to avoid any over obligation issues and to make sure PTI Nebraska is reaching the Hispanic population. This project meets Goal 2: Informal & Formal Supports, Objective B.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 13, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried.

The Committee recommended funding a Continuation Subaward with People First of Nebraska to continue its *State Advisor* project. It would only be continued for one year in the amount of \$40,000 to avoid obligating funds not needed. This project meets Goal 4: Advocacy and Self-Advocacy, Objective C. A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 13, No – 0, Abstain – 1.*** Motion carried. [Dr. Mark Shriver arrived at the meeting around 10:00AM, CDT.]

The Committee recommended funding a Continuation Subaward with Disability Rights Nebraska to continue its *Supported Decision Making* project. It would be renewed for a second and final year in the amount of \$25,000. This project meets Goal 4: Advocacy and Self-Advocacy, Objective B.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 14, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried.

The Committee recommended funding a Continuation Subaward with The Arc of Nebraska to continue its *Stopping School Pushout for Students with IDD* project. It would be renewed for a second and final year in the amount of \$20,000. This project meets Goal 3: Community Integration & Inclusion, Objective C.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 13, No – 0, Abstain – 1.*** Motion carried.

The Committee recommended funding a Continuation Subaward with Easterseals of Nebraska to continue it's the *Opportunity App* project. It would be renewed for a second and final year in the amount of \$20,000. This project meets Goal 2: Informal & Formal Supports, Objective A.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 14, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried.

The Committee recommended funding a Continuation Subaward with the University of Nebraska at Omaha to continue it's the *Family-Engaged Educational Training (Project FEET)* project. It would be renewed for a second and final year in the amount of \$20,000. This project meets Goal 2: Informal & Formal Supports, Objective A.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 13, No – 0, Abstain – 1.*** Motion carried.

The Committee recommended funding a Continuation Subaward with the Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI) to continue it's *Promoting the Autonomy of Autistic Individuals with Severe Behavior: A Survey of*

Opinions on Law Enforcement Interactions when in Behavioral Crisis project. It would be renewed for a second and final year in the amount of \$20,000. This project meets Goal 3: Community Integration & Inclusion, Objective A.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 12, No – 0, Abstain – 2.*** Motion carried.

Opportunity subawards may focus on any of the Council's State Plan Goals and Objectives. Typically, the funding is "seed money" for an entity to kick off a project. The Committee recommended funding up to four Opportunity subawards in the amount of \$20,000 each for FFY2024.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 13, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried. [Caiti Donaldson stepped away from the meeting.]

Before moving into the Committee's recommendations for formal competitive subawards, Kristen shared a DHHS Fact Sheet from February 2023 regarding *CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Rule: Federal Requirements for HCBS Settings*, a handout at the meeting. Kristen explained that educating stakeholders (individuals, families, and providers) on the final settings rule is a priority for Administration on Community Living (ACL). As such, it should be a priority for Councils too. This is the Council's opportunity to empower people and educate stakeholders. The final settings rule ties to human rights.

NOTE: The DHHS Fact Sheet is attached to the end of the minutes for your review.

The Committee recommended funding a formal targeted competitive subaward *to Educate and Empower Consumers on the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Rule and HCBS Public Comment Opportunities*. This project would educate, train, and mentor individuals with developmental disabilities and/or family members, and/or waiver providers to be knowledgeable about the new rule and the human rights that waiver participants are guaranteed in HCBS provider settings. The project's training and mentoring will equip participants to report an increase in their knowledge about HCBS waivers, the new rule, and its impact on the service system. Training will also empower participants to provide public comment when the State of Nebraska seeks Public Comment on HCBS waiver renewals or applications to CMS, and/or waiver amendments filed with CMS. This project would be for one year, with the possibility to renew for a second year in the amount of \$50,000. This project would meet either Goal 2, Informal & Formal Supports, Objective A or Goal 3, Community Integration & Inclusion, Objective B or C. A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 14, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried.

The Committee recommended funding two Employment focused competitive subawards in the amount of \$50,000 each that are based on recommendation #8 from Dr. Lisa Mills' February 2023 Comprehensive Supported Employment Outcomes Study, *Necessity or Luxury? Supporting Nebraskans with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to Join the Workforce and Contribute to Nebraska's Economy*. The focus would be on educating students (ages 14 and over) with DD, their families, and school personnel (teachers and administrators) on pursuing competitive integrated employment (CIE) as a post-secondary outcome. One subaward would be for rural communities and the other subaward would be for urban communities.

There was a great deal of discussion regarding about the Committee recommendation and where the focus of the Employment competitive subaward should be.

- Get all the entities together and decide how to collaborate.
- Training on Supported Employment best practices for employers and job coaches.
- Enhance and expand on what is being done so there is no duplicating/overlapping what different entities are doing.

- Many families do not know about transition and schools need to educate families about transition.
- Need to help families and students to have expectations of supported employment.
- Can supported employment be included in Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)?
- Start with training teachers.
- Focus on a couple of districts, one rural and one urban. (Would be able to use school training times to capture the teachers.)
- Educate families and teachers – focus on strengths.
- Not just high schools, include middle schools.
- \$50,000 will not cover the cost of all the travel time and training.
- Would need to find school districts willing to participate.
- What about \$100,000?
- This is a social issue, not only a DD issue.
- Engage parents to start thinking and planning about supported employment early.
- Limit where the work is done. Get it done well, and then share with others.
- The IEP process is more adversarial and there is not much the Council can do with the IEP process.
- Make this a two-year project. First year could be IEP baseline. The second year could be how much supported employment has gone up.
- \$100,000 for rural and \$100,000 for urban.
- Train school staff the first year. In the second year, school staff train families.
- Involve the Education Service Units (ESUs) in the respective school districts.
- The onus was on the parents to choose a provider and stick with the provider.
- Families need training that employment is possible.
- An employment summit is the foundation piece for getting this to go. The plan needs to be laid out by DDD and NE VR.
- Need a continued Community of Practice to keep this going.
- Do not put a bid out to explain how DDD and NE VR work. That is DDD's and NE VR's job to do.
- Does the Department of Education need to be at the table as well?

Kristen mentioned to engage stakeholders, the Council will take the lead in planning a one-day employment study summit to engage key report informants to discuss the study's findings and recommendations and determine what consensus can be reached about how a collaborative initiative could move forward to increase CIE outcomes for Nebraskans with IDD. Kristen has reached out to DHHS Procurement for guidance to seek a follow-up contract with Dr. Mills or another neutral party to facilitate the one-day summit. The earliest the summit would be held is August or September. It will be a collective discussion and possibly an idea for an employment focused subaward will come out of the summit discussions.

After discussion, a roll call vote was taken on the Committee recommendation to fund two Employment focused competitive subawards in the amount of \$50,000 each that are based on recommendation #8 from Dr. Lisa Mills' February 2023 Comprehensive Supported Employment Outcomes Study, *Necessity or Luxury? Supporting Nebraskans with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to Join the Workforce and Contribute to Nebraska's Economy*. The focus would be on educating students (ages 14 and over) with DD, their families, and school personnel (teachers and administrators) on pursuing competitive integrated employment (CIE) as a post-secondary outcome. One subaward would be for rural communities and the other subaward would be for urban communities.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 0, No – 14, Abstain – 0.*** Motion failed.

Quinton Corwin moved for Council staff to coordinate a one-day employment summit, up to \$10,000, with key study informants (DDD leadership, NE VR leadership, and other key people who assisted Dr. Mills' with her report) and have either Dr. Mills or another neutral party to facilitate the summit and Matt seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 14, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried.

Matt moved that the Council fund a competitive subaward that focuses on the Council's State Plan Employment Goal, either Objective A or Objective B up to \$50,000 and it is recommended to review Dr. Mills' February 2023 Comprehensive Supported Employment Outcomes Study, *Necessity or Luxury? Supporting Nebraskans with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to Join the Workforce and Contribute to Nebraska's Economy*, and is eligible to be renewed for an additional year. Jason seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 14, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried.

Annual Performance Evaluation Policy and Process for the DD Council Executive Director

Stephen explained the proposed changes to the Annual Performance Evaluation Policy and Process for the DD Council Executive Director to make the annual process smoother. The Executive Committee feels that it would be more beneficial for the Council members to be provided the simpler and briefer Executive Director Evaluation in the August Council meeting packet. This way the anonymous comments would be available to the Executive Committee when they meet to work on the DD Council's Executive Director's Annual Performance Evaluation which will be presented at the November Council meeting. Additionally, it was determined that the Council Chair would facilitate an in-person meeting or conference call with the current and immediate past Executive Committee members to complete the DD Council's Executive Director Performance Review template before the November Council meeting. If the Council votes to approve the proposed changes, the changes would be effective today – April 14, 2023. Matt moved to adopt the proposed changes to the Annual Performance Evaluation Policy and Process for the DD Council Executive Director and Cheryl Montgomery seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 13, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried. [Caiti Donaldson stepped away from the meeting, Jason Gieschen left the meeting, and Chair Rachel Siffring voted.]

2023 Hybrid Tri-Board Meeting Update

The Tri-Board consists of the DD Network Partners (the DD Council, Disability Rights Nebraska, and Munroe-Meyer Institute/University of Nebraska Medical Center [UCEDD]). The 2023 Hybrid (in-person and virtual) Tri-Board meeting will be on Friday – June 9, 2023. The topic will be Competitive Integrated Employment featuring a presentation by Dr. Lisa Mills. **We strongly encourage you to attend in-person if possible.** In-person participants will meet at the Munroe-Meyer Institute facility located near the UNO Scott Campus at 6902 Pine Street. A link to the Zoom meeting will be forthcoming.

NOTE: You will need to register with Council staff by May 25, 2023 for the meeting. To register, contact Nikki Krause at 402-471-2330 or nikki.krause@nebraska.gov.

NOTE: MMI is working on a hotel room block. A few of the hotel rooms are being held for the Council. Please let Nikki Krause know as soon as possible if you will be attending in-person and will need accommodations.

Comprehensive Supported Employment Outcomes Study and Dr. Mills' Nebraska Presentations

A four-page Comprehensive Supported Employment Outcomes Study Summary was included in your meeting packets and in today's handouts was a copy of Dr. Mills' PowerPoint presentation. On March 27, 2023, Dr. Mills presented her findings at the Nebraska Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (NCCD) in the morning and in the afternoon presented to NE VR and DDD separately and then had a joint

meeting with NE VR and DDD. On March 28, 2023, Dr. Mills presented her findings to the Nebraska Association of Service Providers (NASP). There is a lot to unpack as the full report was 125 pages. Kristen thanked everyone who assisted in providing information to Dr. Mills for her report.

Updates from State Agency Representatives

NOTE: Agency representatives were asked to briefly touch on any pressing issues or important updates the Council needed to be informed of. The written reports in their entirety are attached at the end of the minutes for review. No report was submitted for the Department of Education – Office of Special Education [VACANT, Division of Behavioral Health; Tony Green, Division of Developmental Disabilities; Sara Morgan, Maternal and Child Health – Division of Public Health; Amy Rhone, Department of Education – Office of Special Education; Paige Rose, Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation; Nate Watson, Medicaid and Long-Term Care and Aging]

Division of Behavioral Health (DBH)

Dr. Tom Janousek, Deputy Director of the Division of Behavioral Health, provided the DBH update. DBH has been involved in a Service Definition Revisions project in partnership with Medicaid to reduce variance between service definitions. The new changes to Substance Use Disorder Definitions are now live. The next focus will be on Mental Health Definitions.

DBH has recently engaged in a conversation with community stakeholders and sister agencies (over 90 individuals across the state) on a state strategic plan for behavioral health across divisions of DHHS and DBH is putting together the findings from the conversation.

April is both Child Abuse Prevention Month and Counseling Awareness Month. In May, DBH will be promoting an event for Children's Mental Health Awareness and have opportunities for participation.

Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

DDD is working on a Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver renewal for projected implementation on October 1, 2023. The Public Comment Period began on April 11, 2023, and the initial feedback has been very positive. Work continues on the Family Support Waiver (LB376). The intent of the waiver is to help eliminate unmet needs for children in Nebraska. The new waiver will serve up to 850 children with developmental disabilities. Each participant will have a maximum annual budget of \$10,000. DDD will have a multi-city Listening Tour focused on the proposed Family Support Waiver. They plan to visit four locations and include a virtual option. Regulations have been written and will go out for Public Comment in July 2023. Updates and information will be posted on DDD's *LB376 – Family Support Waiver and System Evaluation* webpage.

The state continues to meet with stakeholders and advocates to explore options for providing payments to Legally Responsible Individuals (LRIs) and Guardians. This will not be going forward in the waiver. There is a lot of work that still needs to be done, especially when you move from ordinary care to extraordinary care. You must define to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) what is ordinary care and what is extraordinary care for children. Policies must be created, and monitoring services must be implemented to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse. The parent/child (guardian/child) relationship changes when a parent/guardian becomes a paid caregiver. DDD has been looking into what other states have deemed ordinary care and what has been deemed as extraordinary care. The state can always submit future waiver amendments.

Regarding the Continuous Coverage Unwind, on April 1, 2023, DDD began to complete level of care (LOC) assessments for participants which may result in those individuals being found ineligible and transitioned off waiver.

Maternal and Child Health – Division of Public Health (MCH-DPH)

Jennifer Severe-Oforah, Lifespan Health Services Unit Administrator, provided the Maternal and Child Health report. Nebraska's Newborn Screening Program is sharing that the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC)/Children's Hospital Hematology received accreditation as a Sickle Cell Center of Excellence. These entities will now be eligible for federal funding which should translate into better services for these individuals.

The 2021 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) Child and Family Health Measures has been released. This is the best source for population-level data for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSCHN) in Nebraska. CYSCHN is a very broad term, it is not just disabilities. CYSCHN are children who have or are at increased risk for chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional conditions. They require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally.

FYI: As to the "unwind", they were asked to call it "redetermination" by the feds.

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation (NE VR)

Since today is Paige's last Council meeting, Kristen presented Paige with a Certificate of Appreciation for her dedication and outstanding commitment in working toward the development of better futures for and with people with developmental disabilities. Thank you for all your contributions, Paige!

NE VR now has 19 Windmills Trainers. Windmills is a highly interactive disability inclusion training that empowers and equips employment professionals to understand the business community and help businesses to become more inclusive of individuals. This program is based on the concept that attitudes about persons with disabilities are instrumental in forming behaviors toward individuals with disabilities. Trainers can provide Windmills exercises to businesses or agencies throughout Nebraska, either in person or remotely.

NOTE: A handout about the Windmills training is included with the NE VR report.

NE VR is developing a revised timeline for implementing changes to the supported employment policy and payment structure. This will be released to agency staff, partners, and providers by the end of the month. This includes a milestone rate increase and has an implementation goal of July 1, 2023. Training in best practices is coming.

FYI: The N. 27th Street NE VR Office will be moving on April 24, 2023, and will re-open on May 1, 2023 at its new location: 500 S. 84th Street, Lincoln, NE 68510-2611.

Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care and Aging (M<C)

Starting March 1, 2023, Nebraska Medicaid began regular reviews of Medicaid eligibility. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Medicaid members had Medicaid coverage even if no longer eligible. It will take approximately twelve months to review all cases. Medicaid members must ensure their contact information is up to date with Nebraska Medicaid. Members can make sure their contact information is up to date by logging into their ACCESSNebraska account or calling toll-free (855) 632-7633. If information is needed from a member to confirm current Medicaid eligibility, Nebraska Medicaid needs to be able to reach the member. If Nebraska Medicaid is not able to reach the member, the

member could unnecessarily lose Medicaid coverage. Ensuring the contact data is up to date is a top priority and Medicaid teammates will go above and beyond to try and reach the member. If a person is found to be no longer eligible for Medicaid, Medicaid teammates will let the person know of possible options available to him/her. One possible option is Marketplace which has little to no cost and the person can keep seeing his/her providers. There is a 90-day grace period and there is also an option to request a hearing if the person thinks the wrong determination was made regarding eligibility.

The “Unpacking the Unwind: A Medicaid Listening Tour” will be held in eight cities this April and May, along with two virtual options. This tour will include a presentation from Nebraska Medicaid that will focus on important updates for both members and providers regarding the end of the public health emergency and continuous coverage requirement. After the presentation, Nebraska Medicaid will field questions and feedback from those in attendance.

Updates from the DD Network Representatives

NOTE: DD Network representatives were asked to briefly touch on any pressing issues or important updates the Council needed to be informed of. The written reports in their entirety are attached at the end of the minutes for review. [Seamus Kelly, Disability Rights Nebraska; Mark Shriver, Munroe-Meyer Institute]

Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI)

MMI had 24 complete applications for the 2023-24 MMI-University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) Trailblazers Program cohort. Four new Trailblazers students will start in fall 2023. The Trailblazers Program is a two-year program that offers individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities an inclusive, challenging, and exciting college program that prepares them for employment. Students select courses relevant to their career interests, explore career opportunities, participate in advocacy and skills training, and get connected to mentors and internships. Employment is the goal and this inclusive program is a key to integrated, competitive employment and overall wellbeing.

Millard Public Schools, Papillion-LaVista Public Schools, and Westside Community Schools are all seeking contracts for the 2023-24 academic year for transition services related to independent living and employment skills training. MMI’s Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy staff work with student on independent living skills and utilize MMI’s mock apartment. Employment skills currently are taught around environmental services, retail service, and office work.

MMI, in collaboration with DHHS, has completed the National Core Indicator (NCI) data dashboard. NCI surveys provide a snapshot of Consumers’ perspective regarding the quality of services received. The surveys allow for comparison of Nebraska’s performance across years and comparison with other states nationally that administer the survey. The dashboard will allow for a visual representation of this data, will be more accessible for the public at large, and shows the strengths of what Nebraska is doing. The dashboard will be displayed at the upcoming Tri-Board meeting.

MMI has a new contract with DHHS’ Child and Family Services Division Title V to identify all mental/behavior health education related resources throughout Nebraska and to identify gaps in resources and improve accessibility of information for families.

A proposal is being prepared for MMI leadership for an interdisciplinary transition clinic. The clinic would serve as a bridge between pediatric to adult care. It would serve as a training clinic for residents and medical students as well as other disciplines and provide education/training for providers in the area of

transitional and adult care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Sarah Swanson and her team are preparing a proposal for the Early Development Network to continue to provide funding to help support the Family Care Enhancement Program which provides parent resource coordinators (PRC) at MMI and in primary care clinics and other agencies throughout Nebraska.

Council Chair and Staff Updates

Rachel S. thanked the Council staff for all the work they did during the legislative session.

Kristen had a few updates for the Council.

- A virtual New Member Orientation will be coming.
- She has been participating in meetings regarding the Family Support Waiver.
- 15 individuals were recruited to become certified Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) Ambassadors and will partner with the Council to champion the adoption and integration of the CtLC framework into policy, practice, and procedure across Nebraska. Kristen and Rachel W. will be attending the 2023 Community of Practice for Supporting Families Annual Meeting and the 2023 Charting the LifeCourse Showcase in May 2023.
NOTE: Rachel W. will become a certified Charting the LifeCourse Ambassador.
- Kristen has touched base with staff at the Jeffery S. Raikes School of Computer Science and Management to see if they would be interested in exploring the option of entering into a direct contract up to \$50,000 for the Professional Development Clearinghouse for Teachers to Build Capacity Project. Perhaps it could be a senior capstone project. They seemed very interested in exploring this further.
- The Arc of Nebraska's 52nd Annual Senatorial Dinner was on March 8, 2023. The Council paid \$500 in Collaboration Funds to be a Gold Sponsor. Shauna Graham and her daughter Bailey spoke at the event and did a fantastic job!
- Thank you to Tony for helping to organize the DD Awareness Month Proclamation Press Conference and the self-advocate who participated in the event!

Disability Pride Day will be on July 22, 2023 at the Auld Pavilion in Lincoln from 10:00AM, CDT to 2:00PM, CDT. The focus will be on families. There will be belly dancers, face painters, and balloon artists.

Rachel W. mentioned that both the Public Health Workforce Subaward and ATP Subaward have just begun. She will be able to provide more of an update at the August 18, 2023 meeting.

The Munroe-Meyer Institute final report – *Expand COVID-19 Vaccine Access for People with Disabilities* was included in the meeting packet for your review.

Edith mentioned that she has been working on updating the *Newsline 2023* with the bills the Council decided to follow.

Council Member Updates

Quinton thanked Kristen and Tony for all the work they did to get the DD Awareness Month Proclamation Press Conference done! It was a lot of fun!

Cheryl mentioned that the Spring Association of Community Professionals (ACP) Conference will be on June 1, 2023 and it will be a virtual conference. John Raffaele from the National Association of Direct

Support Professionals (NADSP) will be presenting, and the theme is “Creating a Culture of Competency”. and the fall ACP Conference will be in-person. The Transition Conference Holy Cow! What Now? will be in Norfolk on October 11, 2023. Brad Meurrens and Mary Phillips will be presenting on Supported Decision Making.

Shauna Graham mentioned that she and her daughter Bailey spoke at The Arc of Nebraska’s 52nd Annual Senatorial Dinner. The Governor was very accommodating. It was a really fun evening!

Matt is going to Kansas City to the SOAR Conference. He will be presenting a Council Member Conference Request at the August 18, 2023 Council meeting. He has also been attending the virtual National Institute of Mental Health’s summits and committees. One that was very interesting had to do with pediatricians and autism. He also wanted to thank the Planning Committee members for their work, especially Kristen, Rachel S. and thank you to Sherry for bringing him to the meetings!

Rachel S. and Braxton’s speech teacher spoke at the Autism Conference on *Small Town Communities - Big Time Opportunities for Everyone*. They presented on opportunities and the things going on at Shelby-Rising City Public Schools. Their school was named a “Banner School” and they will be celebrating that. She mentioned that she was nominated for the Women in Agriculture Award. Tomorrow is the High School Prom and freshman are allowed to go, so everyone is getting ready for it. Since Braxton is ready for services, they have decided to go with an independent provider.

Caiti Donaldson mentioned that she got to meet the Governor at the DD Awareness Month Proclamation Press Conference and he was pretty amazing! She went to an Easter event in Sioux City and had fun and liked the people there. She is also excited for her trip in June to Orlando, Florida to attend the 37th Prader-Willi Syndrome Association | USA National Convention. Caiti also mentioned that she is starting to reduce her staff at work so she can be more independent.

Shaistha Kiran Karipi also attended The Arc of Nebraska’s 52nd Annual Senatorial Dinner. She said the Governor was very nice and loved Shauna and Bailey’s presentation! She ordered some of the *Along the Way Guides* for her group, and they were much appreciated.

Stephen mentioned that The Arc of Norfolk is celebrating their 75th anniversary. The Board has grown and becoming much more active. It has been a great year for The Arc of Norfolk!

Judy mentioned that she has been going with Justine to her Special Olympic games and local weightlifting practices Justine also likes to help Judy with calving.

Kirsten Wilcox said that she attended the DD Awareness Month Proclamation Press Conference, and it was fun going to the Capital and meeting the Governor. She has been very busy at work and likes her manager. She is looking forward to going to family camp!

Public Comment Period #2

Rachel S. mentioned that all public meetings must allow time on the agenda for people who are not members of the Council to comment. Members of the public, who wanted to address the Council, were instructed to identify himself or herself, including an address and the name of any organization represented. No public comments were made.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:12 PM, CDT.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for August 18, 2023 and will be in-person. The Grant Review Committee meeting will be held virtually the afternoon of August 17, 2023.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

Mission

The Council engages in **Advocacy**, **Capacity Building**, and **Systemic Change** activities that assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design and have access to needed community services, individualized support, and other forms of assistance that promote *self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion* in all facets of community life.

CMS Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Rule Federal Requirements for HCBS Settings

Federal Requirement #1: The setting is integrated in and supports full access of individuals receiving Medicaid HCBS to the greater community, including opportunities to seek employment and work in competitive integrated settings, engage in community life, control personal resources, and receive services in the community, to the same degree of access as individuals not receiving Medicaid HCBS.

Federal Requirement #2: The setting is selected by the individual from among setting options including non-disability specific settings. The settings options are identified and documented in the person-centered plan and are based on the individual's needs, preferences, and resources.

Federal Requirement #3: The setting ensures an individual's rights of privacy, dignity, and respect, and freedom from coercion and restraint.

Federal Requirement #4: The setting optimizes, but does not regiment, individual initiative, autonomy, and independence in making life choices including but not limited to daily activities, physical environment, and with whom to interact.

Federal Requirement #5: The setting facilitates individual choice regarding services and supports, and who provides them.

***Federal Requirement #6:** The setting provides for a legally enforceable agreement between the provider and the consumer that allows the consumer to own, rent, or occupy, the residence and provides protection against eviction.

***Federal Requirement #7:** The setting provides for privacy in units including lockable doors, choice of roommates/housemates, and freedom to furnish and decorate the sleeping or living units within the lease or other agreement.

***Federal Requirement #8:** The setting provides options for individuals to control their own schedules including access to food at any time.

***Federal Requirement #9:** The setting provides individuals the freedom to have visitors at any time.

***Federal Requirement #10:** The setting is physically accessible.

**Applies only to residential settings*

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members

Representative: Thomas Janousek

Agency: Division of Behavioral Health

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

- We are involved in a Service Definition Revisions project in partnership with Medicaid to reduce variance between service definitions. The new changes to Substance Use Disorder Service Definitions are now live and we will be moving on to mental health definitions. The new definitions are located here: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Medicaid-Behavioral-Health-Definitions.aspx>
- We recently engaged in a conversation with community stakeholders and sister agencies on a state strategic plan for behavioral health across divisions of DHHS (Ad lib updates based on what occurs)
- We are presently in the midst of the legislative cycle and are working to support bills that promote behavioral health services in Nebraska.
- Reminder Nebraska's fight against the national opioid epidemic and other co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders is being assisted through the **Opioid Settlement Remediation Advisory Committee** created as a requirement of national opioid-related settlement agreements. The committee consists of local and state representatives.
 - Nebraska stands to receive approximately \$100 million over an eighteen (18) year period from settlements with prescription opioid distributors and manufacturers.
 - Subcommittees include Data/Needs Assessment, Disbursement Criteria and Outcomes Measurements.
 - The link to the committee's work can be found at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Opioid-Settlement-Workgroup.aspx>
- **April is both Child Abuse Prevention Month and Counseling Awareness month.** DHHS's facilities, DBH and Regional entities promoted the month in a variety of ways from speakers and social media events. In May we will be promoting an event for Children's Mental Health Awareness Month and have opportunities for participation. For more information contact jennifer.ihle@nebraska.gov

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities
State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members

April 14, 2023

Representative: Tony Green, Director

Agency: Department of Health and Human Services – Division of Developmental Disabilities and Home & Community Based Services

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

TBI Waiver

- The Division is currently working on a TBI renewal for implementation 10/1/2023
 - Public Comment period will begin on April 11th, 2023.
 - The drafted waiver renewal includes additional service options in home services and opportunities for community inclusion beyond our current specialized assisted living.

Family Support Waiver

- Incorporated provisions into 403 NAC and public comment is scheduled for July 2023.
- Updates/Information are posted on website: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Initiatives-for-LB376.aspx>

Fiscal Intermediary

- State is currently working with PCG to develop an RFP that would solicit a bid to provide fiscal intermediary services within the state. The current expected implementation timeline is early 2024.

Expanding Payments to Legally Responsible Individuals (LRIs) and Guardians

- The state continues to meet regularly with stakeholder and advocates to explore options for providing payments to LRIs and Guardians.
- The state has developed a document which outlines the differences between family, LRIs, and guardians. This document also includes what current services can be provided by each of the groups. This will be shared with stakeholders and other interested parties in April 2023 after it is finalized.

Continuous Coverage Unwind

- DD has begun, starting on April 1, 2024, to complete level of care (LOC) assessments for participants which may result in those individuals being found ineligible and transitioned off waiver. Additionally, Medicaid started on March 1st, 2023, completing renewals for each Medicaid member. It will take approximately 12 months to review each participant.

System Evaluation

- DHHS signed with CBIZ Optumas with Myers and Stauffer to complete the evaluation of all Nebraska HCBS waivers. Report is due December 31, 2023.
- Stakeholder engagement is set to begin mid- April and run through May. There will be multiple sessions available.
- They have an email address for stakeholder to send feedback, questions, concerns and comments: NE_DDSystemEval@mslc.com.
- Updates/Information are posted on website: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Initiatives-for-LB376.aspx>

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

- Monthly HCBS Stakeholder Meeting – May 1, 2023, 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM CT Zoom Meetings. Link on the DD Event Calendar <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Developmental-Disabilities.aspx>
- DD Advisory Committee Meeting – May 11, 2023, 10:00-2:00 PM, Conference Room P, 5220 South 16th St, Lincoln, NE. Public Comment at Noon.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members

Representative: Jennifer Severe-Oforah

Agency: NDHHS, Division Of Public Health

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

Nebraska's Newborn Screening program is sharing that UNMC/Children's hematology received accreditation as a Sickle Cell Center of Excellence. This is fantastic news for those in the State of Nebraska with Sickle Cell Disease, as these entities will now be eligible for federal funding, which should translate into better services for these individuals including an increase in ancillary services available (i.e. social work, pastoral care, nurse coordinators, etc.).

Current Agency activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD:

Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau, announced the release of the **2021 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) Child and Family Health Measures**. These estimates are available through the [interactive data query](#) on childhealthdata.org

This is the best source for population-level data for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) in Nebraska. CYSHCN are children who have or are at increased risk for chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional conditions. They also require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally. For the survey, CYSHCN status is determined using a validated instrument for identification. The CYSHCN Screener asks whether a child currently experiences a health consequence and, if so, whether that specific health consequence is due to a medical, behavioral, or other type of health condition that has lasted, or is expected to last, 12 months or longer.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative Report to Council Members

Representative: Paige Rose

Agency: Nebraska VR

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

- Nebraska VR now has 19 **Windmills Trainers**. Windmills is a highly interactive disability inclusion training that empowers and equips employment professionals to understand the business community and help businesses to become more inclusive of individuals. This program is based on the concept that attitudes about persons with disabilities are instrumental in forming behaviors toward individuals with disabilities. Our trainers are able to provide Windmills exercises to businesses or agencies throughout Nebraska, either in person or remotely. Flier attached.
- VR is developing a revised timeline for implementing changes to the SE policy and payment structure. This will be released to agency staff, partners, and providers by the end of the month.
- VR staff met with Dr. Lisa Mills, DD, and Kristen Larsen March 27th to review the comprehensive supported employment report

Current Agency activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD:

- A draft **Informed Choice** document is planned to use with all Pre-employment Transition Services students and individuals interested in Nebraska VR services.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

- N. 27th ST VR Office will be moving April 24th and will re-open May 1st at new location 500 S. 84th St. Lincoln, NE 68510-2611



Windmills

Powering Inclusion

What is Windmills Training?

Windmills Disability Awareness Training provides businesses with the skills and tools to foster an inclusive workplace where every employee can have the opportunity to succeed.

What are the benefits?

Choose from 12 interactive training modules to address every day real-world business challenges.

- Recognize the benefits of diverse experiences and abilities
- Improve communication with and about people with disabilities
- Understand how to implement low-cost accommodations
- Learn disability employment law basics



Training Modules

Select from 12 training modules to design a successful training to meet your business or organization's needs. Training may include the following:



The Story

Identify the value of disability inclusion.

Profiles

Examine how disability stereotypes impact employment decisions.

Reasonable Accommodation

Develop creative strategies to accommodate the potential needs of an employee who experiences a disability.

Encounter

Interact with a panel of people with disabilities.

Ask it Basket

Learn simple ways to get answers about disability questions.

Windmills training is provided at no cost.

To learn more, contact:

Mary Matusiak

Nebraska VR

Program Director for Business Services

402-314-3099

mary.matusiak@nebraska.gov

vr.nebraska.gov/business



A proud partner of the

AmericanJobCenter[®]
network

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative Report to Council Members

Representative: Nate Watson

Agency: Medicaid and Long-Term Care

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

Return to Normal Medicaid Eligibility Determinations

Starting March 1, 2023, Nebraska Medicaid began regular reviews of Medicaid eligibility. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Medicaid members have kept Medicaid coverage even if no longer eligible. It will take approximately twelve months to review all cases.

Medicaid members must ensure their contact information is up to date with Nebraska Medicaid. Members can make sure their contact information is up to date by logging into their [ACCESSNebraska account](#) or calling toll-free (855) 632-7633.

If information is needed from a member to confirm current Medicaid eligibility, Nebraska Medicaid needs to be able to reach the member. If Nebraska Medicaid is not able to reach the member, the member could unnecessarily lose Medicaid coverage.

New websites for PHE and end of continuous coverage requirement

Our website has informational resources for providers and community partners. We have FAQs and fact sheets to share in community areas. We also have a pre-built social media toolkit to share this information online. We encourage everyone to visit this new page to learn more.

Learn more here - <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Medicaid-MOE.aspx>

On this website, you will see upcoming public meetings on the unwind and other information for members, providers, and community partners. We encourage you to read through this content and attend a meeting if you would like to learn more about these upcoming changes.

We have also added a new page for the public health emergency. This will have a number of very important updates for providers regarding upcoming changes. We encourage you to subscribe to stay up to date about the upcoming end of the public health emergency.

Learn more here - <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Medicaid-PHE.aspx>

Managed Care Re-procurement

Nebraska Medicaid continues to work on implementing the next managed care contracts. These new contracts begin January 1, 2024. Medicaid selected the following health plans:

- Nebraska Total Care
- UnitedHealthcare
- Molina

Some highlights from the upcoming contracts include removing the annual dental benefit maximum, consolidating provider enrollment, and integrating dental benefits into existing plans' covered services. We have been working internally to implement these contract changes and coordinate with the incoming health plans to ensure continuity for all members.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative

Report to Council Members

April 11, 2023

Representative: Seamus Kelly/ Tania Diaz

Agency: Disability Rights Nebraska

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

Establish Supported Decision-Making: A Steering Committee meeting was held February 24, 2023. The team (Brad, Mary and Jonathan) provided a presentation called “Supported Decision Making – From Theory to Practice” at the Nebraska Department of Education’s Transition Conference on March 15th. This presentation gave an overview of the theory of Supported Decision Making as a tool to promote self-determination of persons with disabilities, especially, a demonstration of its practical application to reduce unnecessary or overbroad guardianships, and a discussion of a statewide initiative to increase awareness of Supported Decision Making.

Collaboration with the Community Learning and Leadership program at Munroe Meyer Institute: Disability Rights Nebraska staff are working with the 3 externs we have through our collaboration with the Community Learning and Leadership program at Munroe Meyer Institute. Two externs are focusing on public policy and disability, building public policy skills to apply to their field in the future, and starting to build their network of advocates. One extern has chosen to work with us on developing infographics on disability issues that we can use in the future; she is also interested in understanding how policies define “restraint” and how those definitions could be compared to or applied in her field, Physical Therapy.

One of the externs testified on [LB 424](#), the bill to create the state Department of Housing and Urban Development. Quotes from her testimony appeared in the [Unicameral Update](#).

Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy: Training started on March 21st and will conclude on April 27th. The sessions are on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6-9PM and there is no cost to attend. Advocates who attend the entire training are asked to commit to being on call as a volunteer to assist six families or to be available for one year. 10 people were signed up for this session.

Strategic Planning: We have all the data and are close to completing a draft of the strategic plan. We’ve drafted new Vision and Mission statements and some other updates.

Current Agency activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD:

Legislative Work this Session:

The legislature has finished the public hearings for the bills introduced this session. The session is a little over halfway done and progress has essentially ground to a halt with the Hunt/Cavanaugh filibusters and motions attached to many bills. Below is an update on the high priority bills pertinent to this council.

1. LB 39 (support) would require disability impact statements for legislation identified by the Executive Board. The bill is still in committee.

- “Disability impact statements would provide the legislature a concrete reminder of the effect of policies it passes on this community and of its responsibility (both legally and morally) to best serve this community; especially considering that many Nebraskans with disabilities, through their disability—often no fault of their own—are more directly involved with and tied to public programs, resources, or services.”

2. LB 278 (support) would require the state to obtain grants for affordable, accessible, safe, housing for people with disabilities. The bill advanced out of committee unopposed and was advanced to Select File (unopposed) on February 23.

- “Point-in-time counts ... suggest that nearly one quarter of individuals experiencing homelessness have a disability, including physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities, as well as mental health and/or substance abuse disorders.”

3. LB 424 (support) would create a state Housing and Urban Development agency to administer programs providing for the housing needs of all Nebraska residents, with a focus on affordable housing, workforce housing, and missing middle housing; be the lead agency for addressing the shortage of all types of housing in the state; address homelessness; coordinate efforts to address housing shortages, homelessness, and other housing-related issues. The bill is still in committee.

- “In order to meet those intents and demands, housing policy and focus must be inclusive of people with disabilities. ... Having a centralized housing department will provide a location where the disability community can bring their issues without having to figure out which state department, division, or staff they should approach. A centralized department also increases visibility of underlying housing issues such as accessibility and provides an opportunity for all parties to use the same vocabulary”

4. LB 527 (support) would provide reimbursements for school expenditures to increase the mental health of students, especially improving the overall educational environment. The bill is still in committee.

- “Seventy percent of public schools reported an increase in the percentage of their students seeking mental health services at school since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and roughly three-quarters (76 percent) of schools also reported an increase in staff voicing concerns about their students exhibiting symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and trauma.”
- “Of the 830 public schools surveyed nationwide almost all public schools (96 percent) reported providing mental health services for their students during the 2021-22 school year. However, 88 percent did not strongly agree that they could effectively provide mental health services to all students in need. The three most prevalent limitations on their ability to serve their students' mental health needs were “an insufficient number of mental health professionals to manage their school's caseload, inadequate access to licensed mental health professionals, and inadequate funding”.

5. LB 811 (oppose) would authorize physical intervention to control dangerous student behavior. It was not prioritized by Senator Murman (sponsor), the Education Committee, or the Speaker. It will most likely be carried over for next session. A few senators have already placed “kill motions” and “bracket motions” on the bill and it has several amendments; so its debate will take a bunch of time which the legislature doesn’t have. I suspect these motions will stay on the bill if it is carried over, thus it will be a big debate regardless. The bill is still in committee.

- Disability Rights Nebraska joined a coalition of other advocacy organizations opposed to LB 811. The group shared information and developed common strategies if LB 811 were pushed out of committee (it can still be “pulled” out of committee to the floor—they did that a couple years ago—but given the current gridlock it would go nowhere and would just add fuel to the filibuster fire). This is the budget session—they must pass a budget along with a few other “must pass” bills, so the session is going to be much less prolific than in the past. We will be continuing to talk to senators over the end of this session and interim to discuss our ideas for a different approach than LB 811 to regulate and reduce restraint/seclusion.

“...Although California has fairly robust protections for public school students with disabilities, these protections are only effective when those administering them are held accountable for their actions.” “The state needs to listen to parents/advocates/educators who have lived experience, academic, or functional expertise and engage them in a serious deliberative policy discussion to strengthen or create appropriate state policy to regulate and reduce the incidences of dangerous physical force used on students”

We are watching LB 705 which provides for behavioral health training to see if parts of LB 811 will be incorporated into LB 705.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

- DD Partners Tri-Board meeting Friday, June 9th with focus on Competitive Integrated Employment
- Disability Rights Nebraska Board of Directors meeting Saturday, June 10, location to be determined.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members

Representative: Mark Shriver

Agency: University Center for Excellence in Development Disabilities-Munroe-Meyer Institute

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

We had 33 inquiries and 24 complete applications for the 2023-24 MMI-UNO Trailblazers Program cohort. Due to the large number of out of state applications this year, we elected to give Nebraska residents first priority. We will have four new Trailblazers students starting fall, 2023. The Trailblazer program offers individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities an inclusive, challenging, and exciting college program that prepares them for employment. Students select courses relevant to their career interests, explore career opportunities, participate in advocacy and skills training, and get connected to mentors and internships. Employment is the ultimate goal. As college is for everyone, our inclusive program is a key to integrated, competitive, employment and overall wellbeing.

Millard Public Schools, Papillion-LaVista Public Schools, and Westside Community Schools are all seeking contracts for the 2023-24 academic year for transition services related to independent living and employment skills training. We have had a successful year with transition program with the three school districts. Our OT and PT staff work with students on independent living skills and utilize our mock apartment. Employment skills currently are taught around environmental services, retail service, and office work.

In honor of Disability Awareness Month, the Advocacy and the Arts program had an exhibit at the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center on the UNO campus. Both 2-D and 3-D artwork created by our students was on display in the lobby of the CEC through March 24th. The Trailblazers students assisted the CEC with the digital media campaign for the month.

Current Agency activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD:

We have completed the National Core Indicator (NCI) data dashboard. The dashboard will allow for a visual representation of the NCI, NCI-AD, and Staff Stability surveys. National Core Indicator surveys are a partnership with NE DD Division and the National organizations that coordinate the survey across states. The NCI surveys provide a snapshot of consumers' perspective regarding the quality of services received. The surveys allow for comparison of Nebraska's performance across years and comparison with other states nationally that administer the survey.

We have a new contract with Child and Family Services Division Title V to identify all mental/behavior health education related resources throughout Nebraska and identify gaps in

resources and improve accessibility of information for families. This 2 ½ year project will largely occur through the work of a Steering Committee of stakeholders across Nebraska in education and mental/behavior health as well as family representatives. We may be developing survey of families across Nebraska and we will be conducting focus groups of families on this issue. We also plan to hold two working conferences of up to 50 stakeholders across Nebraska to help review our work, identify resources, help develop training, and provide recommendations for next steps.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

We are also preparing proposal for MMI leadership for an interdisciplinary transition clinic. The clinic would include a pediatrician/internist (Dr. Sarah Smith) and other disciplines (OT, PT, Behavioral Health, Care coordination, etc..) and serve as a bridge between pediatric to adult care. It would serve as a training clinic for residents and medical students as well as other disciplines and also provide education/training for providers in the area on transitional and adult care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Sarah Swanson and her team are preparing a proposal for the Early Development Network to continue to provide funding to help support our Family Care Enhancement Program which provides parent resource coordinators (PRC) at MMI and in primary care clinics and other agencies throughout Nebraska.