

Advisory Committee on Developmental Disabilities

Meeting Minutes

July 29, 2026

I. Call to order:

Lorie Reiger called to order the regular meeting of the Advisory Committee on Developmental Disabilities (DD) at 10:00 am on Wednesday, July 29, 2026. This meeting was an in-person attendance at Conference Room P, 5220 South 16th St, Lincoln, NE.

II. Roll call:

The following people were present:

Advisory Members Present: Dorothy Ackland, Mike Browne, Paula Dodds, Philip Gray, Jennifer Hansen, Shane Hunter, Matthew Kasik, Kristen Larsen, Jennifer Miller, Cris Petersen, Lorie Regier, Alex Schweitzer, Joe Valenti, Angie Willey, Tiffany Wilson, Dianne DeLair

Advisory Members Absent: Paige Rivard, Mark Shriver, Jennifer Miller

DHHS Staff: Tony Green, Jenn Clark, Tyla Watson, Paul Edwards

III. Approval of Agenda:

- Motion made by Mike Browne 2nd by Dianne Delair to approve agenda as presented. Roll call vote taken. Motion carried.
 - All in Favor: Mike Browne, Paula Dodds, Philip Gray, Jennifer Hansen, Shane Hunter, Matthew Kasik, Kristen Larsen, Cris Petersen, Alex Schweitzer, Joe Valenti, Angie Willey, Tiffany Wilson, Dianne DeLair
 - All Opposed: None
 - Abstain from voting: None
 - Not Present: Dorothy Ackland

IV. Approval of May Meeting Minutes:

- May 2026 Minutes – Motion to approve minutes as presented made by Dianne DeLair 2nd by Kristen Larsen. Roll call vote taken. Motion carried.
 - All in Favor: Mike Browne, Paula Dodds, Philip Gray, Jennifer Hansen, Shane Hunter, Matthew Kasik, Kristen Larsen, Cris Petersen, Alex Schweitzer, Joe Valenti, Angie Willey, Tiffany Wilson, Dianne DeLair
 - All Opposed: None
 - Abstain from voting: Paula Dodds, Matt Kasik, Alex Schwetzer, Tiffany Wilson
 - Not Present: Dorothy Ackland

V. Division of Disability and Aging (DDA) Updates:

- **Quality Update presented by Paul Edwards, DHHS**
 - HANDOUT: Division of Disability and Aging Quality Initiatives July 2026
 - Committee discussion/questions followed:
 - How many mortalities do we review? This varies - around 60 a month. The majority are for people on the Aged and Disabled (A&D) Waiver.

- Human and Legal Rights: Psychotropic meds were an example shared as a possible rights restriction. Can we word that differently, that doesn't make people think they shouldn't be taking their medications? Response: Some people in our service do not understand what effects being on a psychotropic meds may have on them. Want to make sure we go through the appropriate due process to make sure any restrictions are what is most appropriate and the least restrictive.
- Do we track incident percentages based on provider and or by service type? Response: We currently track by provider. Can look to see this could be by service type.
- The last Quality Management Strategy Report was posted online was in 2024. Response: That was a statutory requirement, which has since ended. The Division does still do that report. This committee received the 2026 Quality Strategic plan at the March 2026 Meeting.
- Mortality Review report – last report was posted in 2023. Response: That report was previously created by Liberty, when reviewing reports received it was not one that continued. The Division will explore the feasibility of reviving this report.
- Critical Incident Management Process (CIMP) – Under Opportunities - Average of 47% incidents requiring a Service Coordinator safety check are completed within 1 business day (page 7). How are the Service Coordinators going to review these with everything going on and with vacancies? Response: Where we have vacancies or need coverage support our SC supervisors, SC Administrators, even the Deputy help to make sure these are being covered.
- Mortality Review Statistics the info shared is for all waivers (A&D and DD Waivers). Would be helpful if it could be broken down by waiver since the services on the DD waivers are different than the A&D waiver. Response: There is a vast difference in volume between DD and A&D. Outside of Assisted living the majority of services in A&D Waiver are intermittent
- Committee comment: We need to Improve training for direct support professionals at the provider level. While the Divisions advocacy is appreciated, what do we need to get it done? Response: Want to be clear that our providers do care about quality. The question that comes up is how do we fund the training? The basic training Munroe Meyer is working on; we're trying to approach it with the idea that the Basic training created could replace some of those trainings that were being done.
- Committee comment from Provider perspective – There are not enough staff to cover those doing training.
- Committee comment: We need to focus on front-line supervisors – One of the hardest positions. Supervisors must cover shifts when staff don't come in. Response: Agree that is a hard job. We do try to support when we can. With ARPA funding, the Department did provide funding to providers for training to enhance and invest in their staff development.
- **Follow up:** National Care Indicator (NCI) Data - Potential future meeting agenda item. The Division can provide additional information from the NCI data. Specific interest from the committee is to look at Supported employment.

➤ **Division Organizational Chart – Follow up from May 2026 Meeting presented by Tony Green**

- HANDOUT: Organization Chart Division of Disability and Aging
- Committee questions: Are we filling the Deputy position? Response: As of today yes, the division is currently in the hiring/interviewing process.
- Currently have approx. 40 vacant A&D Service coordination (SC) positions vacant and 12 DD SC positions. Are currently making offers for 12 of those 40 vacancies on the A&D side.
- Feedback from families: Unable to reach their service coordinator. Some are being told their person is gone and they don't have a new contact. Two families have asked to switch SC's and reached out to the Supervisor and did not get switched. When people have a grievance; they aren't able to get ahold of their staff. Response: Please have them contact Jenn Clark, Deputy Director or Jillion Lieske, Administrator II if they are having these issues. Also, we do have a contact us/request a meeting link button on our main Division webpage if they aren't sure who to contact. Here they can also File a Grievance or make a complaint.

➤ **interRAI Update**

- HANDOUT: interRAI Results – June 30, 2026 Report
- HANDOUT: interRAI Appeals - June 30, 2026 Update
- The Division of Disability and Aging is currently in the final phase of contracting with an independent consultant/agency to evaluate the interRAI assessment. This was always the plan to evaluate year 1 data and implementation for any opportunities for adjustments.
 - An independent analysis will provide objective recommendations (if any) to optimize Nebraska's statutory requirement to have an objective assessment process for resource allocation.
 - Committee question: What sorts of things might consultant review/cover? Response:
 - Budgets Tiers: To review if the Case Mix index bands of scores within each tier seem appropriate
 - Family Living Arrangements - to review the impact on children/adults living at home who also attend a day program for best resource allocation.
 - Sampling of stakeholder engagement with providers and families – to obtain constructive feedback in enhancing systems.
 - Possible 4-month contact – ending by December or January.
- Committee question: On the assessment, some of the questions ask for a 3-days look back, why? Response: Each question is different and there are different times that cover different questions. Suggestion from committee member, the assessor asking the questions confirm the timeline/number of days they are discussing with each question to make sure it is clear. Member recently did an interRAI assessment. A question was asked covering a specific

time period, the next question/s they did not specify if they were still discussing the specific time period vs. in perpetuity.

- Committee question: Regarding appeals – those “Dismissed” can we get a breakdown on why a case is dismissed. Such as number of those that the assessment changed after review vs someone didn’t show to a hearing? Response: The interRAI appeals are completed by our legal appeal office, along with appeals from all the other DHHS programs such as SNAP and Medicaid Eligibility. We do not currently have a break down beyond the current dispositions received in the appeal report.
- Committee question: Is it concerning the department that the dismissed/withdrawn is higher than affirmed. Response: Not necessarily, this information is from July 2025 to current. Over the past year, things have evolved, such as additional training with our assessors.
- **Follow-Up:** Committee requesting a more recent breakdown on appeals, instead of from the beginning... would like to see a monthly or quarterly breakdown of the appeals.

➤ **DHHS Waiver Updates**

- Developmental Disability Waivers including the Family Support Waiver (FSW); Developmental Disabilities Adult Day (DDAD) Waiver; Comprehensive Developmental Disabilities (CDD) Waiver
 - March 1, 2027 - 5-year renewals will be required.
 - Will likely be in public comment in October.
 - **Follow-Up:** Request for September meeting to have someone from Policy team provide an update on potential changes being considered in the upcoming renewal/public comment period.

➤ **Restraining Spending in State Government**

- HANDOUT: July 8, 2026 Memo re: Restraining Spending in State Government
- Some topics in the memo include: No hiring without exception approval, Reduction not less than 5% in FY 26-27, Reduction initiatives to State Budget Division by January 31 – viable ideas and approaches for reducing state spending, etc.
- Will the Division be exempt? Response: No, The Division of Disability and Aging is not exempt from this. The Division is at the table with everyone else.
- We need to find efficiencies and cost savings.
- On hiring, we are asking for some possible blanket approvals due to health and safety for direct care staff at our facilities, Service Coordination, and Waiver Service Specialist positions. We have not heard back yet. Note: this is a new process for all of us. There is no blame on anyone.
- Most of the Division of Disability and Aging’s funding is in services.
- Look at 1) Eligibility, 2) Services provided, and 3) rates paid to providers. Where would we trim the budget back? I don’t currently have anything to report to you. I am currently reviewing all these areas.
- Some possible example other states are currently doing: waitlists, funding rate cuts to providers.

- Motion made by Phil Gray, for the advisory committee to submit a letter to the Governor that the committee does not approve any cuts to the services. Motion 2nd Dorothy Ackland.
 - All in Favor: Mike Browne, Paula Dodds, Philip Gray, Jennifer Hansen, Shane Hunter, Matthew Kasik, Kristen Larsen, Alex Schweitzer, Joe Valenti, Angie Willey, Tiffany Wilson, Dorothy Ackland, Dianne DeLair, Cris Petersen
 - All Opposed: None
 - Abstained from Voting: Joe Valenti
- Question asked by Joe: Shouldn't we wait until we hear back about what cuts are being considered before sending anything. Discussion followed.
 - Mindful that on a national level some states have families with nothing.
 - Nationally having family members as paid care givers is being reviewed for appropriateness, levels of funding and ensuring consumer choice. Currently, this is a vital component of our service system, as we do not have enough direct care staff at agencies to accommodate all service requests absent this support
- Comment from Division. While the Division does have to come forward with cost-saving measures, I am also ensuring that impact is discussed as any changes to eligibility, rates or services, does impact the system.
- Any budgetary changes that are recommended to the Governor, which if approved, would be addressed in the budget presentation to the Legislature in January. Any changes/modifications not requiring budget approval will be shared as soon as possible.

VI. Medicaid Access Barriers for Disabled Residents in Western Nebraska presented by Donna Barker

- HANDOUT: Medicaid Access Barriers for Disabled Residents in Western Nebraska Report
 - Had been seeing doctors in Colorado. In the past year, denied and was told she had to go to Omaha. Had to appeal multiple times before the decision was overturned.
 - Dangers and missing care to families. Policy needs to meet reality and allow for care closer to home.
 - True safety concern for families that cannot take multiple days to go to a doctor's appointment
- Did attend the Beneficiary Advisory Committee (BAC) and Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) committee meetings recently, they did start a subcommittee for this issue. Should have a DHHS representative present and Managed Care Organization (MCO). (Clarification by Jennifer Hansen chair of the MAC committee – MCO's participation has not been confirmed.)
- Response received from the MCO at the MAC/BAC meeting was that if there is a hospital in Nebraska there is an expectation that someone will go to the hospital in Nebraska.
- If you have specific questions about the sub-committee, please send them to Phill Gray and/or Jennifer Hansen, happy to take that back to the BAC/MAC committees.

- Motion to recommend one (1) additional DD Advisory committee member serve on the MAC subcommittee for medical access made by Kristen Larsen and 2nd by Joe Valenti.
 - All in Favor: Mike Browne, Dianne DeLair, Paula Dodds, Philip Gray, Jennifer Hansen, Shane Hunter, Matthew Kasik, Kristen Larsen, Cris Petersen, Alex Schweitzer, Joe Valenti, Angie Willey, Tiffany Wilson, Dorothy Ackland
 - All Opposed: None
- In addition to the Subcommittee on Medical Access Barriers, the BAC started an interRAI subcommittee: Motion to recommend one (1) additional DD Advisory member serve on the BAC interRAI Sub-committee made by Kristen Larsen 2nd by Dorothy Ackland.
 - All in Favor: Mike Browne, Dianne DeLair, Paula Dodds, Philip Gray, Jennifer Hansen, Shane Hunter, Matthew Kasik, Kristen Larsen, Cris Petersen, Alex Schweitzer, Joe Valenti, Angie Willey, Tiffany Wilson, Dorothy Ackland
 - All Opposed: None

VII. Public Comments received at 1:00 PM (Note: The committee paused during interRAI update to take public comment)

- Lynn Ihde, Seward: I attended the last meeting and provided public comment. Ended speaking with distributing a list of questions. I'm not asking them into the air just to be asked. I am asking because they are important to me. I was hoping for a response. That meeting was on May 13, 2026. I have not heard any response from anyone. In the two months since then I have not received a response from anyone. If someone takes the time to present/speak that in some fashion a response should be given. I am speaking this to all of you. I hope you will respect us enough to answer. Attachment 1: Lynn Ihde Questions.

Committee Response/Discussion: Want to be clear to those making public comment. Public comment is not an open dialog or a back-and-forth conversation. This is the public sharing your experience/comment/concerns with the committee. Comments made in the meeting are not to the Division. If you have questions for the Department (DHHS) or Division (DDA), those who need to go directly to them, this meeting would not be the appropriate avenue to get questions answered. Committee member Matthew Kasik offered to work on questions and work with the Division to get Ms. Ihde's responses to her questions.

- Mandi Wilson, Lincoln: All the assessors have been trained? The same assessors with an appeal on a different case, on a question on violence, would not give credit due to there not being a GER for verbal aggression. I explained that was ridiculous. Bringing the point that this assessor has been using the incorrect information, and if it happened on ours, how many others have they been incorrect on.
- Teresa Stewart, Lincoln: Hearing through social media we need to have a med-aid certificate. I am wondering if anyone has an update on that.

- Kathy Rohloff, Omaha – My son likes to pull fire alarms. He loves trucks. He gets a rise out of it. We are reinforcing his bad behavior. I will get hit more. Things will get thrown across the home more. I'm asking for some common sense into some of these decisions. These are the things that the third-party contractor needs to hear. Those of us out here trying to fight/do our best to minimize the cost to the state, it is just not making sense. I beg of all you to help is make sense of all this.

VIII. Subcommittee Updates:

- **Quality**
 - Shane Hunter: Requested permission with the chair and Tony to reach out to Paul directly to ask some questions about the presentation today. No concerns from Committee Chair or Tony Green, Director.
- **Legislative Services and Health and Human Services (HHS)**
 - Did not have a meeting between the May and July meeting.
 - Rountree has a hearing set for September 18, 2026 on Olmstead report as required by LB737 and LR404 Interim study to examine Nebraska statutes and the processes relating to the developmental disability and the aged and disabled waivers and the tools used to assess developmental disabilities.
- **DD Court Ordered Custody Act (DDCOCA) and Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC)**
 - No update presented.

IX. November 2026 meeting date rescheduled due to holiday conflict:

- Motion made by Joe Valenti, 2nd by Dorothy Ackland to move the November meeting to November 19, 2026. Motion carried.
 - All in Favor: Mike Browne, Paula Dodds, Philip Gray, Jennifer Hansen, Shane Hunter, Matthew Kasik, Kristen Larsen, Alex Schweitzer, Joe Valenti, Angie Willey, Tiffany Wilson, Dorothy Ackland
 - All Opposed: None
 - Not Present: Dianne DeLair, Cris Petersen

X. Adjournment: Committee meeting ended at 2:15 PM

Next meeting: September 9, 2026, 10:00-2:00, In-Person at 5520 South 16th St, Lincoln, NE

July 29, 2026

Governor's Subcommittee on Developmental Disabilities

Todd Green DHHS Developmental Disabilities

On May 13, 2026, I presented a list of questions to the above named. In the two months since then I have not received any response from anyone. Today, I am putting my request in writing that the questions I presented on May 13, 2026, be answered in writing preferably in the next two weeks. I fully understand the business of everyone. However, when I presented the questions no one suggested that my request that day was impossible.

Respectfully,

Lynn Ihde

lihde@neb.rr.com

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynn Ihde". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name and email address.

Questions for Governor's Sub Committee on Developmental Disabilities

Where can I find the previous months of data? I have only been able to find the most recent month.

When I was here in March you included the data on # of appeals, # resolved, # overturned, but that information has been missing in recent months. Where can I find that data?

It appears the algorithm is designed to create a drop for 17% of the individuals. Can you explain this more as to why this percentage of individuals are losing some of their funding?

Can you provide or direct me to where I can find a scoring guide for the hierarchy range, CMGDD-CY group # and other values being used? I see lots of numbers but have no explanation of how they are impacting Rebecca.

Are individuals living at home with their parents being weighed differently in assessments? Is anyone tracking this data? This is a perception that I have and am curious about.

Are the people giving the assessments being monitored for their outcomes? The reason I bring this up is that a while ago I questioned the # of assessments that had been given in our area. I questioned # of assessments (15) vs # that dropped (5). That is a 30% drop, almost double the 17% being reported.

Recently the Unicameral passed a bill to encourage more information on the process and interpretation of results be shared with individuals/parents/guardians. Will it be retroactive to all who have already gone through this process and are seeking explanations?

When I was here in March one question that was asked was how come the #'s (especially of those losing funding) are so different than the trial cases which showed little variance between ICAP and InterRAI?

You can respond to Lynn Ihde lihde@neb.rr.com