

# Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

April 19, 2024 at 9:30AM, CDT

In-Person Meeting

Country Inn & Suites – Nebraska Ballroom

[North Hotel & Conference Center]

5353 N. 27<sup>th</sup> 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 and the *Pledge of Allegiance* was recited. Quorum was present.

**Present:** Quinton Corwin, Caiti Donaldson, Shauna Graham, Tony Green, George Griffith, Shaistha Kiran Karipi, Matt Kaslon, Eddie Kraska, Beth Libra, Cheryl Montgomery, Sasha Reeks, Mark Shriver, Rachel Siffring. and Judy Trent.

**Absent:** Jason Gieschen, Dr. Tom Janousek, Seamus Kelly, Stephen Morton, DJ Plautz, Amy Rhone, Jennifer Severe-Oforah, Dee Valenti, and Kirsten Wilcox.

**Guests:** Christopher Chambers, Tania Diaz, Tiffany Donaldson, Candi Kraska, Stacy Pfeifer, Kristen Smith, and Sherry Stansberry.

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

## Welcome and Introductions

Kristen Larsen explained that she has reached out to Governor Pillen's Assistant on Executive Appointments to see where the Council stands regarding new Council member appointments to the Council. She was told that the point-person was on extended leave. She then spoke to Governor Pillen's Administrative Assistant and was told that the Governor's focus has been on the legislative session. And that we should encourage interested parties to apply early.

The new appointments include:

- A family member to fill the vacancy left by Tricia Strauch when she resigned.
- A self-advocate to fill Kristen Wilcox's position since she is not reapplying for a second year.
- An 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] to fill Dee Valenti's position since she has termed out.
- An Agency Representative from the Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care [As part of the Governor's initiative to save money, Nate Watson was terminated and is no longer with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).]

## 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 26, 2024).

## Public Comment Period #1

Rachel S. mentioned that all public meetings must allow time on their agenda for people who are not on 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.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Rachel S. asked the Council members if there were any corrections to the *DRAFT* February 2, 2024 Council meeting minutes. There were no corrections. Nikki Krause reminded Council members to abstain from voting if they were not in attendance for the February 2, 2024 Council meeting. As there were no corrections, Matt Kaslon made the motion to approve the minutes and Tony Green seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 12, No – 0, Abstain – 1.**\* Motion carried.

### **Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**

As required by Council policy, at the first meeting of each federal fiscal year, members of the Council shall verbally declare any potential conflicts of interest of which they are aware. Council members, who had not already done so or had updates, were asked to verbally declare any potential conflicts of interest. No Conflicts of Interest or updates to Conflicts of Interest were declared.

### **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 FFY2024 Financial Report, a handout at the meeting. At the August 18, 2023 Council meeting, the Council approved the budget of \$371,459 for FFY2024 (October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024). The Year-to-Date Expenditures for the second quarter of FFY2024 (October 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024) were \$201,510 – 54% of the FFY2024 budget.

Kristen explained that the Council was slightly over budget in one area.

- Personal Expenses & Benefits was at 65% of the budget. Edith Titamoh's salary was originally figured at part-time, as the position was shared with Emergency Health Systems. However, Edith's hours had been almost fully devoted to the Council and as of December 18, 2023, Edith began working full-time for NCDD.

The report reflects the balance of funds from FFY2022, FFY2023, and FFY2024 as of March 31, 2024. Current Funds Available totaled \$623,154.74. Expenditures totaled \$300,642.25. The Balance of Current Funds Available was \$322,512.49.

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

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) allowed Councils to seek a No-Cost Extension on FFY2022 funds. Kristen submitted the request for a No-Cost Extension on FFY2022 funds on August 25, 2023 and it was approved. The Council received a new Notice of Award (NoA) from ACL on September 14, 2023. The new revised period of performance for FFY2022 is October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2024.

**NOTE:** This is good news since many of the Council's grantees had funds obligated with FFY2022 funding and did not spend all their funds. The Council will continue to draw down remaining FFY2022 funds during FFY2024 until there is a zero balance. Then funding will shift to FFY2023 funds.

FFY2023 and FFY2024 will follow the normal the regular Obligation and Liquidation Schedule.

Kristen then reviewed the FFY2024 Budget Update Changes that the Council would need to approve.

- **A \$45,465 increase to the FFY2024 Budget is needed to reflect increased expenses as listed below.**
  - **Personal Expenses & Benefits** – \$10,939 increase to reflect Edith's time increase from EHS to NCDD.
  - **Operating** – \$2,300 increase in *Contracts for Council member support staff for Council meetings, trainings, or approved conferences* to reflect support staff at the 2024 National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) Annual Conference.
  - **Operating** – \$2,900 increase in *Conference Registrations* to reflect registration increase for those attending the 2024 NACDD Annual Conference, 2024 Association of Community Professionals (ACP) Spring Conference registration, the 2024 NACDD Executive Director Summit registration, the 2024 Nebraska Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Network Conference, and the 2024 Charting the Life Course (CtLC) Showcase and Annual Community of Practice (CoP) meeting. \$3,406.25 was an additional cost to cover the September 20, 2023 Supported Employment Summit at Embassy Suites.
  - **Operating** – \$1,415.05 increase in *Facility Rent for Council Meetings & Committee Meetings* to reflect the August 2023 Council meeting, the November 2023 Council Meeting, and the February 2024 meeting cancellation fee (includes budget estimate for April 2024 Council and Committee meetings, and August 2024 Council meeting).
  - **Travel** – \$25,920 increase to reflect Supported Employment Summit expenses and additional funds for seven Council members, two support staff, and four NCDD staff members traveling to the 2024 NACDD Annual Conference.

George Griffith made the motion to approve to increase the FFY2024 Budget by \$45,465 to reflect the above adjustments and Quinton Corwin seconded.

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

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

Officer elections for FFY2025 will be conducted at the August 16, 2024 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](mailto:kristen.larsen@nebraska.gov).

Eligible Council members whose term expire on October 1, 2024, 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-req> 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:

**Caiti Donaldson** (Individual)  
**Sauna Graham** (Family)

The following Council members have terms that will expire October 1, 2024 and are ineligible for reappointment due to term limits:

**Jason Gieschen** (Individual)

**Stephen Morton** (Non-Profit Representative)

**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](mailto:kristen.larsen@nebraska.gov).

### **Funding Request for the 2024 National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities Conference in Washington D.C. and Council Member Conference Report Summary**

At the February 2, 2024 Council meeting, the Council voted and approved funding to send up to eight Council members to the 2024 NACDD Annual Conference. Attendee preference would be given to the Executive Committee members and funding would not exceed \$3,000 per Council member and up to \$3,000 for personal care attendants.

The following Council members submitted a Conference Funding Request by March 27, 2024 and will be attending the 2024 NACDD Annual Conference:

- Rachel Siffring
- Matt Kaslon, Jason Gieschen, and Sue Gieschen
- Caitlin Donaldson and Tiffany Donaldson
- Quinton Corwin
- Beth Libra
- Judy Trent

Council members were reminded to turn in their *Council Member Conference Request Form* to Council staff 2 ½ weeks prior to the Council meeting, 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.

Matt attended the 2024 Nebraska Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Network Conference April 4-5, 2024 in Kearney, Nebraska. Matt explained that he was glad to attend this conference because this is his disability and wanted to learn more about it. The trainings were really, really good and can be used to the advantage of all people - those with autism and those without. They learned about different ways to help communicate with autistic people with behavioral issues that do not require the use of force. He became friends with one of the presenters, Dr. Chinwe Williams, who has a son with autism.

### **Report of the Planning Committee**

The Planning Committee met in-person on April 18, 2024 to make recommendations for FFY2025 formal competitive/noncompetitive subaward/direct contract projects, and funding for up to four opportunity subawards. The Council will discuss and vote to approve the Committee's recommendations and approve Requests for Applications (RFAs) to be released this June. Caiti Donaldson, Planning Committee Chair, thanked the Council and non-Council members for their participation on the Planning Committee. It was a great meeting!

**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.

First Formal Competitive Subaward RFA Recommendation: 2022-2026 Five-Year State Plan Goal One – Employment, Objective A

It was discussed to have an awareness campaign around competitive, integrated employment. However, it was determined that it would be difficult to know what the awareness campaign should focus on if we do not know the concerns and hesitations around competitive, integrated employment.

Instead, the Committee's recommendation is to survey employers to see what questions they have or their hesitance on employing people with disabilities. Allow two years for this survey work to identify areas that can be addressed by our Partners at Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and at the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). The Council could also consider the survey outcomes to develop another Employment-based RFA project. This project will also have an indirect approach to raising awareness to employers across the state that people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) do have the capacity to work. The RFA would fund a project up to \$50,000, with an option to renew for a second year.

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

Second Formal Competitive Subaward RFA Recommendation: Goal Two – Informal and Formal Supports, Objective B (to address the Councils Targeted Disparity)

The Committee agreed that we need to expand the Council's targeted disparity work beyond what PTI Nebraska is doing with their current subaward project. PTI Nebraska only has a part-time Spanish speaking employee, and she simply does not have the capacity to meet the needs of the Hispanic/Latino community.

The Committee's recommendation is that this RFA will stress that the Council is seeking project ideas that will be tailored to reach individuals with I/DD and their families who live in the Omaha and/or Lexington area(s). Proposal ideas have the flexibility to address the objective with a broad array of strategies. The project must be culturally appropriate and delivered from a trusted source in the community. The RFA will include some of the strategies and ideas that the Planning Committee discussed:

- Coordinate lunch and learn events at businesses that have a lot of employees who speak Spanish. The speaker would present information on resources that can assist families who have children with developmental disabilities. These presentations would be in Spanish.
- Partner with faith-based communities and/or grassroots organizations to reach families through group presentations and one-on-one meetings with families. Projects would provide someone who speaks Spanish to help families navigate disability services.
- Fund an entity that will provide a Spanish speaking navigator, or a Cultural Broker, who will reach Spanish speaking families to help increase awareness of resources and assist with navigating the complex system. This would include providing direct assistance to families to apply for disability services, like Medicaid, Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver, Social Security, etc.
- Reach families who have young children with a developmental disability so that they can access resources and services to help them on their journey. Projects would provide someone who speaks Spanish to help families access resources and services.
- Encourage leaders of Spanish Speaking Support Groups to train other Spanish speaking parents to provide support in their communities. A train-the-trainer concept.
- Provide training or coaching on how to use the Charting the LifeCourse framework to improve the trajectory for family members who have a developmental disability. These trainings/coachings would be in Spanish.

- Use the Council resource, *Along the Way Guides*, which have been translated into Spanish, and share with families.
- Coordinate and host a Conference (such as a Transition Conference) in Spanish in either the Lexington or Omaha area to educate families on resources.

The RFA would fund a project up to \$50,000, with an option to renew for a second year.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 13, No – 0, Abstain – 0.\*** 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 FFY2025.

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

The Committee also recommended the following slight wording changes to the 2022-2026 Five-Year State Plan Goals and Objectives.

- Goals One and Four: Removing the word "stakeholders" and replacing it with "new and existing partners". (The word "stakeholders" could be offensive to indigenous people.)
- Goal One, Objective A and B based on suggested wording changes from Dr. Lisa Mills.
  - Objective A. By 2026, increase awareness, understanding and positive opinions of the general public, employers, and diverse policymakers with regard to the capability of people with I/DD to be valued members of the state's workforce.
  - Objective B. By 2026, increase partner collaborations, engagement, access, options, opportunities, and resources for competitive employment to increase the integrated workforce participation rate of Nebraskans with I/DD served by state systems.
- Goal Three, Objective B: Change from "three emerging issues" to "two emerging issues".

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

### **Nebraska 2023 Supported Employment Summit Next Steps**

Kristen shared that the contract with Dr. Lisa Mills is going to be extended for six months. One of the deliverables in the contract with Dr. Mills is the final action plan report. Dr. Mills has shared an initial draft action plan report with Kristen, and Kristen has provided input. Dr. Mills has also reached out to DDD and Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and will be reaching out the other sponsors of the Supported Employment Summit to finish fine tuning the plan. Dr. Mills will also be providing an update on "*Nebraska's Journey to Improve Supported Employment and Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with IDD*" at the June 28, 2024 Tri-Board meeting

**NOTE:** Kristen mentioned that LB1285, to create the Task Force on Supported Employment, did not pass this year. It is likely similar legislation to create a Task Force on Supported Employment will be introduced next year and hopefully that will pass.

### **2024 Tri-Board Meeting Update**

The Tri-Board consists of the DD Network Partners (the DD Council, Disability Rights Nebraska, and MMI/UCEDD). The 2024 Hybrid (in-person and virtual) Tri-Board meeting will be on Friday – June 28, 2024. This will be a continuation of discussions on supported employment. **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 31, 2024 for the meeting. To register, contact Nikki Krause at 402-471-2330 or [nikki.krause@nebraska.gov](mailto:nikki.krause@nebraska.gov).

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

## Updates on Current Subawards and Contracts

Rachel Ward and Edith are monitoring all the subawards and contracts to make sure the information is accurate regarding activities, timelines, key performance indicators, and expense reports.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter is completed for the projects and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter reports are due next week.
- Projects will have new demographic data.
  - A meeting has been held with half of the projects to review the data and what is needed now and by the end of the project year and a second meeting is being set up with the remainder of the projects to review the same.
  - Some of the areas touched on are:
    - Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
    - Subaward Manual
    - Narratives
    - Why it is important to collect data.
    - Rachel W. and Edith are available at any time for questions/concerns.
- Rachel W. presented at a virtual Information and Technical Assistance Center (iTACC) Peer 2 Peer Training on DD Suite, what works for Nebraska, and how we keep track of projects.
- Edith provided updates on the following subawards:
  - Madonna School and Community Based Services' *Family Navigation Project*
  - PTI Nebraska's *Enhancing the Transitioning of Youth to Adult Services Project*
  - University of Nebraska at Omaha's *Family-Engaged Educational Training Project (Project FEET)*
  - Easterseals Nebraska's *The Opportunity App Project*

Mark Shriver asked if it would be a possibility to hear from the Project Managers regarding their projects, either in-person or a recording. Council staff will look into that possibility.

## LB376 DD System Evaluation Recommendations

In April 2022, LB376 was signed into law and directed DHHS to develop a Family Support Waiver. The intent of the waiver is to help eliminate unmet needs for children in Nebraska. The Family Support Waiver will serve up to 850 children with developmental disabilities and each participant will have a maximum annual budget of \$10,000.

Kristen Smith, Deputy Director for the Division of Developmental Disabilities, shared key recommendations included in the independent evaluation completed by CBIZ Optumas that was shared with the Legislature on December 15, 2023. The intent of the system evaluation was to "examine how the state can better service all Nebraskans with a variety of disabilities". Kristen S. had a PowerPoint presentation that listed the "Opportunities for Improvement" and "Recommendations" in the areas of:

- Eligibility and Access to Services;
- Coverage, Design, and Provisioning;
- Communication; and
- Long-Term Funding.

**NOTE:** A copy of PowerPoint presentation of the *Recommendations for Nebraska's Developmental Disability Service System from CBIZ Optumas System Evaluation for LB376 Report* is attached to the end of the minutes for review.

## 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. Dr. Tom Janousek and DJ Plautz were not present at the meeting to give their

reports. No written reports were submitted for Maternal and Child Health – Division of Public Health or Medicaid and Long-Term Care and Aging. [Tony Green, Division of Developmental Disabilities; Dr. Tom Janousek, Division of Behavioral Health; Jennifer Severe-Oforah, Maternal and Child Health – Division of Public Health; Amy Rhone, Department of Education – Office of Special Education; DJ Plautz, Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation; VACANT, Medicaid and Long-Term Care and Aging]

### Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

The Family Support Waiver (FSW) was approved by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) on March 1, 2024. Initially, DDD made 150 FSW offers. Out of 150, only 58 have not sent back a response if they want to accept FSW or not. The second batch of 150 FSW offers was going out this week.

Governor Pillen announced the elimination of the DD Waitlist on March 28, 2024. Tony will be having a multi-city “Let’s Talk Listening Tour” focused on the elimination of the DD Wait List starting with an in-person meeting on April 22, 2024 in Gearing, NE and ending with a virtual meeting on May 13, 2024. The Comprehensive Waiver is not what everyone needs. The intent of eliminating the DD Waitlist is to allow individuals with IDD and their families access to resources at the time they are determined eligible. Medicaid will be opened to all children that meet the “level of care” without family income being considered. The goal is to have an “End of the Waitlist” by October 2025. Nobody in an existing service will lose their waiver or existing budget. This is a new and different way of how services are offered to individuals with IDD in Nebraska. Tony announced that DDD will soon have a dedicated webpage to eliminating the DD Wait List and there will be the option to subscribe for updates. By subscribing for updates, an alert would be provided any time something is added to the webpage.

The Human Legal Rights Advisory Committee (HLRAC) launched in early 2024. DDD partners with Liberty Healthcare to operate the Committee. The goal of the Committee is to achieve a reduction of human and legal rights restrictions by ensuring human rights requirements and best practices that preserve choice and individuality are met.

For Developmental Disability Awareness Month DDD presented awards to showcase the exceptional efforts and passion of those involved in the DD community. As such, DDD has been going across the state to award the 12 winners. (DDD awarded three winners in each category.) **At today’s meeting, Caiti Donaldson was presented with the Individual Spotlight Award!** DDD is looking forward to presenting awards next year for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

### **Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) – Office of Special Education (OSE)**

Christopher Chambers, Special Education School Age Support Specialist, provided the NDE-OSE update in Amy Rhone’s absence. The OSE continues to change mindsets across Nebraska that students with special needs are general education students first. All students, including students with disabilities, deserve access to a high-quality education that prepares them for future success. Students are best served when they have access to effective instruction on a high-quality, grade-level curriculum that is tailored to their learning needs.

- When students with disabilities succeed, all students succeed.
- Inclusion is a mindset.
- Students with special needs do not need fixed. They need supports.

The Nebraska Multi-tiered System of Support (NeMTSS) is a framework designed through the lens of continuous improvement to guide school districts, schools, and educators to ensure each and every



student has access to learning experiences that enhance their educational outcomes. The 2024 NeMTSS Hybrid Summit will be held September 26-27, 2024 in Kearney at the Younes Conference Center North. This year's theme is "Super Systems for Success". Sessions will provide educators with opportunities to develop their individual "superpowers" to systematically promote inclusive practices and support staff in improving outcomes for all students.

OSE has completed the NECounts Risk analysis which is the first step to the Monitoring Process. The NECounts risk analysis allows OSE to monitor all 244 districts' data annually. (All 244 Districts support students with disabilities.) OSE assigns risk scores and gives each data component a weight. OSE is in the process of updating the documents and once the documents go through 508 compliance, the documents will be available for review on the website. OSE is federally mandated to provide District Determinations annually.

### **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 (MMI)/University Center of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)]

#### Disability Rights Nebraska

In Seamus Kelly's absence, Chief Executive Officer Tania Diaz provided the Disability Rights Nebraska update. Governor Pillen hosted a press conference on March 28, 2024 at the Munroe-Meyer Institute where he and Director Green announced the elimination of the DD Wait List. Directors from the federally funded DD Network Partners were invited to attend the press conference to celebrate this historical and exciting announcement.

Surveys were sent out by Partners for Insightful Evaluation (PIE) to evaluate Nebraska's Olmstead Plan Efforts. Surveys were sent to individuals with disabilities, their family members/guardians, and caregivers. The intent of the evaluation is to determine what should be included in the Nebraska Olmstead Plan, including ways to measure progress and identify what works well and what improvements could be made for implementing the plan. Findings will be used to draft the next Nebraska Olmstead Plan by December 2024.

Brad Meurrens, Public Policy Director, continues to work with Mary Phillips and Jonathan Martinis on year two of the Supported Decision-Making Project. A Summit on Supported Decision-Making is being planned for August 24, 2024 in Omaha. Jonathan Martinis will be the featured speaker. Disability Rights Nebraska is in the early stages of planning the Summit. More details to come.

Beatrice State Development Center (BSDC) monitoring continues. At the February 20, 2024 Monitoring Visit, there was a population uptick with 81 residents. All new admissions are housed at the crisis stabilization center. They were informed by BSDC Administration that new admissions are housed alone initially to allow assessment and acclimation before being moved to a cottage or being ready to be released. After being closed for three years, the swimming pool has been reopened.

Work continues with Disability Rights Nebraska's Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Program to continue training people in the community to assist families in understanding the special education process, empowering them to effectively advocate for their children. A spring training is currently being conducted

which will result in an additional five advocates being trained. There will be a fall Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy training. Please contact Pat Cottingham if you are interest in the training.

April 29, 2024 is the deadline to register to vote and the Nebraska Primary Election is May 14, 2024. Disability Rights Nebraska has a three-minute “New Voter ID Guidelines for Nebraska” video explainer that tells which IDs can be used to vote and how to obtain a State ID if people don’t already have one of the other options listed in the video. (Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzyBub-0uR0>.) Disability Rights Nebraska also has a “Voter Information” webpage that allows people to register to vote, check their registration, volunteer to conduct a quick survey of their polling place for accessibility, and other resources including links to the Secretary of State’s office. (Link to webpage: [https://www.disabilityrightsnebraska.org/what-we-do/voting\\_information.html](https://www.disabilityrightsnebraska.org/what-we-do/voting_information.html).)

Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI)/University Center of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)  
MMI is currently negotiating contracts with area school districts in the Omaha Metropolitan area for 2024-25 with a projected 48% increase in students that MMI will serve across all programs. MMI currently serves over 120 transition student/adults per week across all programs.

MMI had 12 applications for the MMI Trailblazers Program with six applications from out of state. MMI is in the process of application review and plans to announce the recipients the week of April 22, 2024.

The Nebraska Connecting Families project is supported by funding from the DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services Medically Handicap Children’s Program through funding from Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant. The purpose of the project is to expand knowledge and create a framework for sharing and advancing skills to navigate family support and maximize the interaction of family and service providers relating to Behavioral and Mental Health in Schools. MMI is hosting a summit of families and leaders in behavioral health and schools from across Nebraska on April 29, 2024 to bring together diverse perspectives on how to improve family’s access to needed mental health services and resources.

MMI has an agreement with DHHS DDD to develop a standardized training for all Direct Service Providers. The final contract and budget are being finalized and hope to have training implemented by fall 2025. General training topics include History of DD in Nebraska, Civil Rights, Confidentiality/Consent, Abuse/Neglect, Emergency Procedures/Medical Support Plans, Individual Support Plans (ISPs), DHHS Organization/Services/Processes. Once implemented, more advanced and specialized topics and tracks will be developed (e.g. Supervision and Front-Line Management, and Behavior Supports).

On June 27, 2024, in collaboration with the Midwest Mental Health Technology Transfer Center, MMI/UCEDD is hosting a summit of leaders in developmental disabilities and behavioral health from across Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, and Missouri to share ideas on how to improve systems of care for individuals dually diagnosed with IDD and Mental Health.

The MMI/UCEDD will be hosting the Seeking Opportunities for an Advocacy Revolution (SOAR) conference in October 2025 in Omaha, NE. The SOAR conference will bring together self-advocates from Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Colorado, Wyoming, and South Dakota to share ideas on how to advocate. Planning is starting now and will be led by self-advocates with support from MMI/UCEDD.

## **Council Chair and Staff Updates**

Rachel S. met with Sue Medinger, DSA representative, and completed the CY2023 NE DD Council Executive Director Annual Performance Evaluation for Kristen. She also attended the DD Awareness Month Proclamation signing ceremony.

Kristen had a few updates to share.

- She was unaware that there was going to be a DD Provider Rate rally the same day as the DD Awareness Month Proclamation signing ceremony. She was asked by Alana Schriver, Nebraska Association of Service Providers (NASP), and Edison McDonald, The Arc of Nebraska, to have the Council participate in the rally. Kristen explained that the Council could not take part in the rally because the rally was lobbying for provider rates and DD Councils are prohibited to lobby.
- Kristen attended the Autism Awareness Month Proclamation signing ceremony.
- A virtual New Council Member Orientation is in the process of being scheduled for those Council members who need to take it.
- Kristen was a panelist for the Midwest Disaster Preparedness for Organizations that Serve and Support People with Disabilities and Older Adults hosted by ACL and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Office of Disability Integration and Coordination (ODIC).
- Kristen and Matt will be panelists at the upcoming 2024 Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (OIDD) Technical Assistance Institute to highlight how the Council supports self-advocates to help them develop their leadership skills.
- No movement on the HCBS Final Settings Rule agreement as Council staff was waiting for the Access and Quality regulations to be published and then would be coordinating efforts with DDD to determine what entity/entities would be able to assist with this project.
- Kristen met with Sue Medinger, DSA representative, and Sue was encouraging Kristen to pursue a Memo of Understanding (MOU) between the Council and DHHS. There has been a lot of turnover at DHHS and there is a need to educate DHHS staff on what the Council is and what the Council does.

Rachel W. noted that Disability Pride Day is July 27, 2024 from 10:00AM, CDT to 2:00PM, CDT at Antelope Park. There will be several fun activities outside and the Auld Pavilion will just be a place to cool off and network. The Planning Group is looking for volunteers to assist at the event. If you are interested, please contact Rachel W. at [rachel.ward@nebraska.gov](mailto:rachel.ward@nebraska.gov) or 402-471-0151.

Edith has been working with the Leadership Development Fund (LDF). The LDF was established to make funds available to defray the costs for self-advocates and/or parents/family members/guardians of children/adult children with IDD to participate in conferences, workshops, and other training opportunities that would increase their knowledge of disability issues and increase their skills as advocates for people with developmental disabilities. Joshua Whitfield is the latest recipient of the LDF. He will be attending the 2024 Charting the LifeCourse Showcase April 23-25, 2024.

### **Council Member Updates**

Shauna mentioned they started the “You Are Worth It” scholarship for people with IDD three years ago and Bailey presents the scholarship every year. Bailey will be presenting the scholarship next week in front of about 350 people.

George said everything is going great! It is all about attitude. Doesn’t matter what is going on any given day, it is a good day if you choose to make it that way!

Candi Kraska explained that Eddie had been sick the last six-seven months. He is happy he is feeling better, but he has not been very active. He has been focusing on his health.

Beth has been giving several presentations on Person-Centered Planning (PCP). She spoke at the Transition Conference in Lincoln and at six schools that are trying to implement PCP in transition. At the end of July, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Craft Fair for self-advocates will be held. The Arc of Norfolk will be having a Disability Pride event on July 31, 2024 at the Knights of Columbus.

Caiti announced that her sister is going to have a baby at the end of May. Congratulations, Aunt Caiti! Caiti is meeting with a group of ladies monthly and they do a lot of fun activities. She really enjoys this. She also likes listening to music, especially Kodi Lee's "Journey of You and I".

Cheryl Montgomery mentioned that the Spring Association of Community Professionals (ACP) Conference will be virtual and take place on April 24, 2024. The morning session will focus on ethics and the afternoon will focus on managing quality ethics. The Fall ACP Conference will be October 17-18, 2024 and will be in-person. The Holy Cow! What Now? Transition Conference will be held on October 2, 2024 at the Norfolk Public Library. The theme is "Cruising into 16". Some of the topics will include how to get a photo ID, financial responsibility, and financial literacy.

Reeks shared her mentality is her reality. She is struggling with her work schedule and has been having a hard time lately getting the accommodations she needs, but she loves her job and what she is doing.

Judy mentioned that she, her mom, and her sister Justine are taking part in a study for UNL students on "Strategies for Emotion Regulation and Individuals with Down syndrome". The Arc of Kearney's prom is tonight, and Justine will be attending.

Tony reminded everyone that April 29, 2024 is the last day to register to vote.

Quinton mentioned he went to the Disability Awareness Month Proclamation Signing Ceremony. It was different from last year, but it was good to hear that the Governor is listening to us. As one of Senator Slama's last priorities before she leaves office, she is writing a resolution for Spina bifida Month in October 2024.

Sherry Stansberry mentioned that Disability Pride is going statewide.

- July 12, 2024 in Kearney
- July 20, 2024 in Grand Island
- July 27, 2024 in Lincoln
- July 31, 2024 in Norfolk

Matt mentioned that he has a new job opportunity coming his way. He will be working two days a week and every other weekend. He is excited to go to DC for the 2024 NACDD Annual Conference.

Rachel S. mentioned that the Resource Fair is Sunday in Columbus. Braxton gave a presentation to the United Way for The Arc of Platte County. Braxton got a silver medal for bowling at the Special Olympics. Today, Braxton has the District Music Conference and tonight is his Future Farmers of America (FFA) banquet. What is nice is that people are seeing him out participating at various events in the community with other kids.

## Public Comment Period #2

Rachel S. mentioned that all public meetings must allow time on their agenda for people who are not on 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.

**Stacy Pfeifer** – Director of Enable Savings Plan – 421 S. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 137 Lincoln, NE

- On April 24, 2024 ABLÉ and Autism Speaks are partnering for a National Webinar on “Empowering People with Autism Through Inclusive Hiring and Able Accounts”.
- ABLÉ Today created a Continuing Legal Education (CLE) for attorneys about ABLÉ Plans. That is close to being released.
- The “Give to Enable” webpage is getting close to fruition.
- They are a sponsor for the Cornhusker State Games and are looking for a volunteer to assist with bowling for individuals with DD.
- She has been working with Mark Shriver and several others on a “Disability 101” a general education college course.

Please contact Stacy at [stacy.pfeifer@nebraska.gov](mailto:stacy.pfeifer@nebraska.gov) or 402-450-3134 if you would like her to send them to you.

## Adjourn

Quinton made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Matt seconded. The meeting adjourned at 3:28PM, CDT.

**The next Council meeting is scheduled for August 16, 2024 and will be in-person. The virtual Grant Review Committee meeting will be August 15, 2024.**

## 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.



1

Eligibility and Access to Services	
Opportunities for Improvement	Recommendations
Streamlined access to 1915(c) waiver services and other Medicaid-funded programs.	No Wrong Door initiatives and technology updates to provide greater access to information for families and individuals.
Improved navigation of services and programs.	Reorganization and divisional name change, so all individuals with disabilities are represented in the name of the division.
Expanded access to the Medicaid program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of transition from SSI to 1634 state.</li> <li>• Evaluation application of special income level rules in Nebraska's Medicaid program.</li> <li>• Evaluate expanded Katie Beckett eligibility.</li> </ul>

2

## Eligibility and Access to Services – Continued

Opportunities for Improvement	Recommendations
Elimination of waiting period for 1915(c) services.	Eliminate the Nebraska DD registry so that immediate access to services is available for individuals in need. Along with eliminating the registry, DDD should consider implementing a “future need” tracking system that distinguishes between a need for immediate access to 1915(c) services from individuals who may have a need for services at a future date.
Expanded access to 1915(c) waiver services.	Align Nebraska’s DD definition with the federal definition, to expand access to services provided by DDD.
Consistency between 1915(c) waiver programs.	Streamline needs assessments and assessors across waivers.

3

## Coverage, Design, and Provisioning

Opportunities for Improvement	Recommendations
More choice and options to serve individuals with DD.	Expand the service array to improve services across the DD system.
Provide services in a manner that bridges the divide between rural and urban areas; provide services to individuals who require sensory accommodations.	Allow telehealth as a mode of service delivery, to help address provider capacity concerns and improve services to individual in need of accommodations.
Highlight the importance of employment choices and technology.	Support employment and technology first initiatives to promote competitive and integrate employment opportunities.

4

## Coverage, Design, and Provisioning – Continued

Opportunities for Improvement	Recommendations
Encourage career development for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs).	Build a more robust DSP workforce to ensure the sustainability of all DD services in the future.
Strengthen the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) system.	Standardize services and quality across ADRCs to promote equitable access to services across the state.
Provide current information on the provider workforce for individuals, families, and service coordinators.	Maintain a list of active providers, so individuals and families have accurate and up-to-date information.
Eliminate system navigation difficulties for individuals and families.	Improve cross-system coordination to eliminate duplication and administrative burdens for individuals and families.

5

## Coverage, Design, and Provisioning – Continued

Opportunities for Improvement	Recommendations
Promote equitable, consistent, and evidence-based Medicaid program service utilization practices.	Review managed care prior authorization process to ensure appropriate policies are in place when reviewing access to Medicaid state plan services.
Develop the workforce to mitigate workforce challenges; promote increased choice to individuals and families receiving services from 1915(c) waivers.	Increase self-direction opportunities in all 1915(c) waivers to support flexibility for individuals and families in decisions regarding the provision of care.
Mitigate challenges experienced by families and individuals when a service and/or program eligibility is denied.	Review, revise, and monitor grievance and hearing processes to promote transparency and provide resources to individuals and families.

6



## Communication

Opportunities for Improvement	Recommendations
Address knowledge gaps experienced by individuals and families served by the DD service system.	Provide standardized education and resources to individuals and families in accessible ways across the DD system to improve navigation of the system.
Have schools and school districts take a more active role in the DD service system.	Leverage schools to be a “first point of contact” with individuals and families as individuals and families often rely on schools as sources of information.
Encourage consistency and applied understanding of policies for DHHS staff.	Train service coordinators and assessors on all waivers, services, and options to ensure consistent and accurate information is provided to the public.
Provide meaningful ways for individuals and families to engage policymakers.	Continued work with stakeholders and partners to build a service system: representing different viewpoints; serves various of needs; and that is a reflection of stakeholder and partner feedback.

7

## Long-Term Funding

Opportunities for Improvement	Recommendations
Determine funding strategies to support the needs and interests of individuals and families.	Combine American Rescue Plan Act funding with long-term investments to support 1915(c) program modifications.

8

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

February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024

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:**

**Family Support Waiver**

- Family Support Waiver (FSW) was approved by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) on March 1, 2024;
- Division is currently making FSW offers.

**Elimination of the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waitlist**

- Governor Pillen announced elimination of the DD Waitlist on March 28, 2024.
- Let's Talk Listening Tour Dates w/Tony Green:
  - Monday, April 22, 2024 Gering: 6:00-8:00 PM Gering Civic Center, 1050 M St, Gering, NE 69341
  - Tuesday, April 23, 2022 Kearney: 6:00–8:00 PM Holiday Inn Hotel & Convention Center – Stateroom C, 110 Second Ave, Kearney, NE 68848
  - Wednesday, April 24, 2024 Omaha: 6:00-8:00 PM Douglas Conference Center, Omaha State Office Building, 1313 Farnam, Omaha, NE 68102
  - Wednesday, May, 2024 Lincoln: 6:00-8:00 PM Holiday Inn Lincoln Southwest, Folsom & Lincoln Rooms, 2500 Tamarin Ridge Rd, Lincoln, NE 68512
  - Thursday, May 9, 2024 Norfolk: 6:00-8:00 PM Lifelong Learning Center, Suites E&H, 701 E Benjamin Ave, Norfolk, NE 68701
  - Monday, May 13, 2024: Virtual 6:00-8:00 PM; Zoom meeting link: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/DDListeningTour>

**Human Legal Rights Advisory Committee (HLRAC):**

- The Human Legal Rights Advisory Committee (HLRAC) launched in early 2024. DDD partners with Liberty Healthcare to operate this committee. The goal of this committee is to achieve a reduction of human and legal rights restrictions by ensuring human rights requirements and best practices that preserve choice and individuality are met through the local, agency HLRC review.
- More information about the HLRAC and other quality initiatives can be found at: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Liberty-Partnership-Quality-Project.aspx>

### **Developmental Disability Awareness Award Announcements**

- DDD has been across the state of Nebraska awarding the twelve (12) winners for the DDA month activity. We awarded three (3) winners in each category. Thank you to all who submitted a nomination and watch for a press release soon.
  - **Individual Spotlight Award** - This award recognizes a person with IDD who has overcome adversity to achieve or go beyond their goals. This person demonstrates a drive to be better, a desire to be more independent, and wants to make a difference in their life and the lives of others. Award Winners are:
    - Bob Winchester
    - Caitlin Donaldson
    - Trish Worley Kamler
  - **Outstanding Provider Award** - This award recognizes a provider who excels in delivering services, strives for person-centered outcomes, creates or supports a welcoming culture, and goes above and beyond to support people with IDD to live their best life as defined by them. Outstanding Provider Award winners are:
    - NorthStar Services in O’Neill, Nebraska,
    - Jordan Squires, Mosaic Tri-City, and
    - EasterSeals Nebraska.
  - **Community Leader Award** - This award recognizes a person or group who are extraordinary in giving their time (paid or unpaid) to help people with IDD. These selfless leaders work toward promoting independence and making positive changes. This leader showcases a passion for making advances in individual lives.
    - Ian Froemming, Madonna School and Community-Based Services,
    - Sheryl Winkler, O’Neill Lanes, and the
    - Kearney Police Department and Buffalo County Sheriff’s Office.
  - **Creative Employer Award** - This award recognizes a community employer who employs someone with IDD. This employer goes above and beyond expectations to help the employee thrive in their workplace. The culture at this place of employment is open and creative.
    - Runza Restaurants,
    - Trader Joe’s in Lincoln, and
    - Arthur’s Pizza in Scottsbluff

### **Future/upcoming Agency activities:**

- Monthly HCBS Stakeholder Meeting – May 6, 2024, 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM CT Zoom Meetings. Link on the DD Event Calendar
- DD Advisory Committee Meeting – June 17, 2024 10:00-2:00 PM, Conference Room P, 5220 South 16<sup>th</sup> St, Lincoln, NE. Public Comment at Noon.

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:**

1. CCBHC Implementation updates
  - a. What are CCBHCs: Clinic model is designed to ensure access to coordinated comprehensive behavioral health care. CCBHCs are required to serve anyone who requests care for mental health or substance use, regardless of their ability to pay, place of residence, or age - including developmentally appropriate care for children and youth.
  - b. We are establishing a process for setting our rates and defining our core services for the project.
  - c. We will be meeting with behavioral health providers and our regions to give an overview of our progress so far and we will be creating a CCBHC website to track all of our progress along the way.
2. Upcoming Trainings free for providers:
  - a. Person-Centered & Trauma-Informed Crisis Management & De-Escalation
    - i. April 23<sup>rd</sup>
    - ii. Registration: <https://go.unl.edu/crisis-management>
  - b. Tribal Standards of Care
    - i. May 28<sup>th</sup>
    - ii. Registration info coming soon: <https://ppc.unl.edu/about/all-events>
3. Peer Reinstatement Process:
  - a. We have released a process for certified peers to reinstate their certification if they are up to date on their CEUS.
  - b. More Details can be found on the DBH website: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/CPSS-Recertification-Application-and-Information.aspx>
4. New State Services coming July 2024:
  - a. Supported Employment extended supports for BH consumers
    - i. provided after an individual has made the transition from Supported Employment services through VR, and determined necessary to maintain and advance in individual employment absent the provision of supports
  - b. Client Assistance Programming
    - i. Five sessions with a licensed provider that can be reimbursed without a mental health assessment
  - c. Coordinated Specialty Care
    - i. Team-based care for individuals with early emerging psychosis symptoms
  - d. Therapeutic Consultation for Youths and Adults
    - i. Behavioral and therapeutic planning for youths and adults in schools, assisted living facilities or other community settings.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative  
Report to Council Members

Representative: DJ Plautz\_\_\_\_\_

Agency: Nebraska VR\_\_\_\_\_

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

Nebraska VR has developed a comprehensive training series on supported and customized employment services. This training has been made available to existing and prospective providers and will be a part of their requirement for possessing a service agreement with Nebraska VR.

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

Nebraska VR has been providing ongoing technical assistance to supported employment providers in an effort of improving the quality of service delivery.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

There are plans to develop a community of practice for Nebraska service providers through our agency's partnerships with VRTAC-QE and NEON.

## Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

### State Agency Representative Report to Council Members April 2024

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:

Developmental Disabilities Waiting List:

On Thursday, March 28, 2024, Governor Pillen hosted a press conference at the UNMC Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI) where he and DHHS Division of Developmental Disabilities Director, Tony Green, announced the elimination of the DD Registry (“waiting list”).

Directors from the federally funded DD Network Partners (NCDD, MMI UCEDD, and Disability Rights Nebraska) were invited to attend the press conference to celebrate this historical and exciting announcement.

Through the collective advocacy of the developmental disability community including individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, advocacy organizations such as The Arc of Nebraska and the Nebraska Association of Service providers, service provider agencies themselves, and others, we are at a juncture to actualize the elimination of the developmental disability waiting list. The press conference at Munroe Meyer Institute has already sparked substantial interest and curiosity within the developmental disability community – people are already discussing issues to address, policy solutions, and potential pitfalls. Engaging and including these groups will be instrumental if Nebraska is to accomplish a successful and equitable end to the waiting list.

Olmstead:

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services has retained the consultant Partners for Insightful Evaluation (PIE) to assist with the evaluation of Nebraska’s Olmstead Plan and implementation. Surveys were sent out by PIE to stakeholders, individuals with disabilities, family members

and caregivers. Focus groups will be held in April and May. The questions being explored include, to what degree has progress been made among the seven goals of the Olmstead Plan, what improvements and impacts have resulted and what are the barriers/challenges and facilitators/successes for implementation. The intent of the evaluation is to determine what should be included in the Olmstead Plan, including ways to measure progress and identify what works well and what improvements could be made for implementing the plan. Findings will be used to draft the next Olmstead Plan by December 2024. The Olmstead Advisory will commence meeting on a regular basis and the first meeting of the year will be on April 30, 2024. As a statutory member of the committee, we will be involved with the evaluation project and advocating for more detailed goals.

#### Supported Decision Making:

Brad Meurrens, Public Policy Director, continues to work with Mary Phillips and Jonathan Martinis on this project. Four events occurred to spread the word about the use of supported decision making: two sessions at the ESU Parents Resource Night, Transition Conference and the Millard Young Adult Resource Event. A summit is being planned for August 24<sup>th</sup> in Omaha.

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

##### Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC) 2/20/2024 Monitoring Visit

There has been a population uptick: 81 residents today. All the new additions are housed at crisis stabilization center. Two are men who were there because court ordered after being charged with a crime, two are 20-something men (one came from Mosaic and one from his family, both have behaviors needing stabilizing). Administration said people are housed alone initially to allow assessment and acclimation before being moved to a cottage or being ready to be released. During the visit, no one was in the unit so monitoring staff observed the rooms and talked to staff. The swimming pool has reopened after being closed for three years. The monitoring staff took pictures of the gym, social center and swimming pool schedules in order to choose next monitoring time that might intersect with residents being home.

Administration met with our monitoring staff to discuss our letter inquiring about voting registration and how BSDC residents handle voting. They would be open to a voter registration drive. We spoke briefly about the new Voter ID requirement, and I asked if they could provide a ""face sheet"" document with the residents' photo to meet the ID requirement and he said they could. He will follow up.

#### Case Example:

Disability Rights Nebraska continued their work on a service request that was opened to assist an individual with autism with higher education accommodations. The individual is seeking a medical science degree. He successfully completed all of his classroom obligations and began work in a clinical setting. In the clinical setting, not all of his accommodations were being implemented which resulted in various incidents. Because of these incidents, the individual was removed from the clinical setting and asked to attend a different clinical setting 3 hours away. Disability Rights Nebraska reviewed records, assisted the individual to gain appropriate accommodations, filed an appeal with the university, and submitted an OCR complaint on the individual's behalf. Disability Rights Nebraska's assistance is ongoing.

#### Lay Advocacy Program:

A fall training resulted in five new advocates from the Lincoln and Norfolk areas successfully completing their training. These five individuals have joined 31 others across the state in their mission to assist families in understanding special education processes, empowering them to effectively advocate for their children. A spring training is currently being conducted which will result in an additional 5 more advocates being trained which concludes by the end of April. Families in need of assistance with the educational process for their child with a disability can access advocates through Disability Rights Nebraska at (402) 413-2016 / 1-800-422-6691 or online at [www.disabilityrightsnebraska.org](http://www.disabilityrightsnebraska.org).

The Values Based Education Coalition is busy planning a training session utilizing Charting the Life Course and How to Implement Choices by People with Disabilities. The training will take place in September or October.



## Important Dates for Voting

April 29- Deadline to Register to Vote

May 14- Nebraska Primary Election

### Voting Resources:

- Our 3-minute [Voter ID video explainer](#) that tells which IDs can be used to vote and how to obtain a State ID if people don't already have one of the other options listed in the video.
- Our [Voter Information web page](#) that allows people to register to vote, check their registration, volunteer to conduct a quick survey of their polling place for accessibility, and other resources including links to the Secretary of State's office.

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 are currently negotiating contracts with area school districts in the Omaha Metropolitan area for 2024-25 with a projected 48% increase in students that we will serve across all programs. We currently serve over 120 transition students/adults per week across all programs.

We had 12 applications for the MMI Trailblazers Program with 6 applications from out of state. We are in the process of application review and plan to announce the recipients the week of April 22nd.

In honor of Disability Awareness Month, the Advocacy and the Arts program had an exhibit, entitled *Disability Awareness Month: Ensuring Our Voices are Heard*, at the Criss Library on the UNO campus. It was a multi-media exhibit that will include storytelling, video, photography, and 2-D and 3-D artwork created by our students and was on display in the library lobby March 4th through March 22nd.

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

Upon completion of a leadership program at the Miami UCEDD (Self-Advocate Leadership Training- SALT), Melanie Davis will launch an MMI Self-Advocate training June 11-14th, with collaboration from both the Miami and MMI LEND programs. Intention is to conduct this leadership development program twice a year.

The Nebraska Connecting Families project is supported by funding from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services Medically Handicap Children's Program through funding from Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant (CFDA #93.994). The purpose of the project is to expand knowledge and create a framework for sharing and advancing skills to navigate family support and maximize the interaction of family and service providers relating to Behavioral and Mental Health in Schools. We are hosting a summit of families and leaders in behavioral health and schools from across Nebraska on April 29<sup>th</sup> to bring together diverse perspectives on how we can improve family's access to needed mental health services and resources.

We have agreement with DHHS Division of DD to develop a standardized training for all Direct Service Providers. We are finalizing final contract and budget and hope to have training implemented by Fall 2025. General training topics include History of Developmental Disabilities in Nebraska, Civil Rights, Confidentiality/Consent, Abuse/Neglect, Emergency Procedures/Medical Support Plans, Individual Support Plans, DHHS Organization/Services/Processes. Once implemented, more advanced and specialized topics and tracks will be developed (e.g, supervision and front-line management, behavior supports).

**Future/upcoming Agency activities:**

In collaboration with the Midwest Mental Health Technology Transfer Center, the MMI UCEDD is hosting a summit of leaders in developmental disabilities and behavioral health from across Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, and Missouri to share ideas on how to improve systems of care for individuals dually diagnosed with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health.

The MMI UCEDD will be hosting the SOAR conference in October 2025 in Omaha, NE. The SOAR conference will bring together self-advocates from Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Colorado, Wyoming, and South Dakota to share ideas on how to advocate. Planning is starting now and will be led by self-advocates with support from MMI UCEDD.