

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

November 18, 2022 at 9:30AM, CST

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, CST. Quorum was present.

Present: Quinton Corwin, Sheri Dawson, Caiti Donaldson, Jason Gieschen, Tony Green, Shaistha Kiran Karipi, Matt Kaslon, Seamus Kelly, Eddie Kraska, Beth Libra Plisek, Cheryl Montgomery, Stephen Morton, Amy Rhone, Paige Rose, Rachel Siffring, Tricia Strauch, Judy Trent, Dee Valenti, Nate Watson, and Kirsten Wilcox.

Absent: George Griffith, Shauna Graham, Dustin Henderson, Sara Morgan, and Mark Shriver.

Guests: Tania Diaz, Tiffany Donaldson, Sue Gieschen, Jennifer Herting, Dr. Tom Janousek, Candi Kraska, Kristin Flott, and Pam Wilcox.

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

Welcome and Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

Rachel Siffring welcomed new Council members Eddie Kraska, Beth Libra Plisek, Tricia Strauch, and NCDD staff member Edith Titamoh to the Council. Eddie is a self-advocate, Beth and Tricia are representing family members, and Edith is the new part-time Project Specialist. Edith splits her time between the Emergency Health Management section and the Council. George Griffith (representing a family member) and Dustin Henderson (self-advocate) were unable to attend today's meeting. Kristin Flott, a former Council member, introduced herself and her LEND student, Jennifer Herting. They were at the meeting to observe. [LEND – Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities]

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 by the sign-in table near the entrance to the meeting room.

The Governor's Public Meeting Calendar referred members of the public and media to the Council's Meetings webpage for additional information (posted October 21, 2022).

Public Comment

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

Council members were asked if there were any corrections to the *draft* August 5, 2022 DD Council meeting minutes. As there were no corrections, Judy Trent made the motion to approve the minutes and Matt Kaslon seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 11, No – 0, Abstain – 8.*** 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 were asked to verbally declare any potential conflicts of interest. They are noted below.

Quinton Corwin	Nebraska Youth Leadership Council
Sheri Dawson	Department of Health and Human Services – Behavioral Health
Caiti Donaldson	None
Jason Gieschen	Special Olympics Nebraska, Education Service Unit 16, Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council
Shauna Graham	Absent
Tony Green	Department of Health and Human Services – Division of Developmental Disabilities
George Griffith	Absent
Dustin Henderson	Absent
Shaistha Kiran Karipi	University of Nebraska Medical Center, Munroe-Meyer Institute, University Center of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities
Matt Kaslon	Special Olympics Nebraska, Nebraska Youth Leadership Council, Nebraska Statewide Independent Living Council, Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council, Hands of Heartland
Seamus Kelly	Disability Rights Nebraska
Eddie Kraska	Ollie Webb Center, Special Olympics
Beth Libra Plisek	League of Human Dignity, The Arc of Norfolk, Northeast Nebraska Diversity Council, Disability Rights Nebraska
Cheryl Montgomery	NorthStar Services, Nebraska Association of People Supporting Employment, Nebraska Association of Community Professionals, Holy Cow! What Now?, Nebraska Association of Service Providers
Sara Morgan	Absent
Stephen Morton	The Arc of Norfolk, University of Nebraska Medical Center (National Core Indicators)
Amy Rhone	Department of Education – Office of Special Education, Nebraska Special Education Advisory Council
Paige Rose	Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation, Client Assistant Program, Nebraska Association of People Supporting Employment, Nebraska Transition College
Mark Shriver	Absent
Rachel Siffring	The Arc of Platte County
Tricia Strauch	None
Judy Trent	None
Dee Valenti	The Community Support Network Nebraska – Omaha, Prime Home Developmental Disabilities – Omaha
Nate Watson	Department of Health and Human Services – Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care
Kirsten Wilcox	Ollie Webb Center, Special Olympics

Financial Reports and Nebraska Association of Service Providers (NASP) Proposal

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 Larsen presented the Financial Report for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022, a handout at the meeting. For FFY2022 (October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022), the Council budgeted \$392,269. The Year-to-Date Expenditures were \$299,521 – 76.36% of the FFY2022 budget.

Kristen explained that the Council was under budget for a few reasons.

- There were salary savings related to the full-time Program Specialist position when Joni Dulaney resigned in March 2022 before filling the position in May 2022 as well as the temporary Program Specialist when Sasha Reeks resigned in July 2022 before filling the position in October 2022.
- Dr. Mills requested a No-Cost Extension for the Employment Study Contract. The contract has a \$40,216 balance which has not been charged to FFY2022 Operating Expenses and will now come out of FFY2023 Operating Expenses.
- Travel Expenses are under budget due to COVID-19 and resulting virtual meetings in February 2022 and fewer requests to attend conferences.

NOTE: An adjustment will be made to change the Functions of the DSA to \$26,379, the allowed cap. The overcharge of \$416 will be corrected by the DSA.

Additionally, Kristen presented the FFY2023 Financial Report, 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 first month of FFY2023 (October 1, 2022 to October 31, 2022) were \$26,095 – 6.2% of the FFY2023 budget.

The report reflects the balance of funds from FFY2020, FFY2021, and FFY2022 as of October 31, 2022. Available Current Funds totaled \$726,365. Expenditures totaled \$154,683 The Balance of Current Funds Available was \$571,682.

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

Due to COVID-19, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) issued a No-Cost Extension for FFY2020 with a new Notice of Award (NoA) June 11, 2021. The new NoA revised the period of performance to October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2022. This allows the Council to keep drawing down the FFY2020 funds through December 31, 2022.

NOTE: Once all the FFY2020 funds are spent, remaining obligations will be shifted to FFY2022 funds.

Due to COVID-19, ACL has allowed Councils to seek a No-Cost Extension on FFY2021 funds. Kristen submitted this request on June 30, 2022 and it was approved by our ACL Program Officer. The Council received a new NOA from ACL's Office of Financial Operations on August 2, 2022. The new revised period of performance for FFY2021 will be October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2023.

NOTE: These funds will be drawn down and put towards the FFY2023 Council Budget due to the No-Cost Extension.

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. Liquidation of Funds needs to be done by September 30, 2024.

NOTE: A partial Notice of Award (NoA) for FFY2023 was received on November 1, 2022 for \$110,987. It is anticipated that the Council will receive an additional \$479,891 for a total of \$590,878.

Nebraska Association of Services Providers (NASP) Proposal

The Nebraska Association of Service Providers (NASP) reached out to the Council and applied for \$5,000 in Collaboration Funds for their “Inclusive Economy” Project. Per the Council’s Guidelines for Requesting Collaboration Funds, the funds are to be used for small, one-time projects and cannot exceed \$2,500 per federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30). Since NASP’s request exceeded the \$2,500 limit for Collaboration funds, NASP was asked to submit a proposal to the Council for a direct contract for \$5,000 for their “Inclusive Economy” Project.

NASP’s “Inclusive Economy” Project is a 30-minute education film produced in partnership with Nebraska Public Media. The focus of the film is employment and will be divided into three, 10-minute segments: 1) encouraging Nebraska employers to hire people with I/DD, 2) encouraging more Nebraskans with I/DD to seek competitive, integrated employment, and 3) encouraging neurotypical Nebraskans to consider a lifelong career in I/DD supported employment service provision. The 30-minute program will air on Nebraska Public Media’s television channel multiple times throughout July 2023 for Disability Pride Month. It will have a permanent landing page on the Nebraska Public Media website and NASP will own full copyright of the film.

A motion was made by Nate Watson to approve NASP’s contract proposal in the amount of \$5,000 and Stephen Morton seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 17, No – 0, Abstain – 2.*** Motion carried.

Committee Assignments and Election of Standing Committee Chairpersons

The standing committees include the Legislative and Advocacy Committee, the Planning Committee, and the Grant Review Committee. Kristen and Rachel S. reviewed the Committee Preference forms that were turned in and tried to assign members to their top-rated committee preference. The FFY2023 committee assignments were emailed on October 21, 2022 and were also included in the meeting packet. Council members were asked to review the committee assignments and to contact staff if there were any concerns or conflicts about the committee they were assigned to and if they had an interest in running for Chairperson of their assigned committee.

Per the By-Laws, elections for FFY2023 standing committee Chairpersons were conducted at today’s Council meeting. Chairpersons of standing committees shall serve at least a one (1) year term and may serve an additional two (2) terms.

Legislative and Advocacy (L&A) Committee Chairperson: Caiti Donaldson, Seamus Kelly, Beth Libra Plisek, Stephen Morton, and Dee Valenti had all said they would be willing to run for the L&A Committee Chairperson. There were no additional nominations from the floor. However, Seamus, Beth, and Dee withdrew themselves from the slate for L&A Committee Chair. Kristen clarified that there was nothing in the By-Laws that prevented Stephen, who is Vice-Chair, from running for the L&A Committee Chairperson.

Nate nominated Caiti for the position of L&A Committee Chairperson and Cheryl Montgomery seconded. Seamus nominated Stephen for the position of L&A Committee Chairperson and Matt seconded. A vote was taken by secret ballot. Stephen Morton is the L&A Committee Chairperson for FFY2023. (Stephen 17 votes, Caiti 3 votes)

Planning Committee Chairperson: Matt Kaslon and Cheryl Montgomery had said they would be willing to run for the Planning Committee Chairperson. There were no additional nominations from the floor.

Amy Rhone nominated Matt for the position of Planning Committee Chairperson and Paige Rose seconded. Jason Gieschen nominated Cheryl for the position of Planning Committee Chairperson and Beth seconded. A vote was taken by secret ballot. Matt Kaslon is the Planning Committee Chairperson for FFY2023. (Matt 12 votes, Cheryl 8 votes)

Grant Review Committee Chairperson: Quinton Corwin had said he would be willing to run for the Grant Review Committee Chairperson. Matt nominated Tony Green for the position of Grant Review Committee Chairperson. However, Tony declined the nomination.

Cheryl nominated Quinton for the position of Grant Review Committee Chairperson and Judy seconded. Nate moved to elect Quinton as the Grant Review Committee Chairperson by Unanimous Consent and Matt seconded. Quinton Corwin is the Grant Review Committee Chairperson for FFY2023.

Report of the Grant Review Committee: Re-release of the Professional Development Clearinghouse for Teachers to Build Capacity Formal Subaward

Judy Trent, Grant Review Committee Chair, reported that the Committee met virtually on November 17, 2022 to review evaluation scores and to make a recommendation for funding in response to the re-release of the Professional Development Clearinghouse for Teachers to Build Capacity Formal Subaward in response to the Request for Applications (RFA) #5699.

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 would provide transparency in the voting record.

No applications were received in response to the original Professional Development Clearinghouse for Teachers to Build Capacity RFA (#5455) that was released on July 7, 2022. It was felt that not enough time was allowed for applicants to complete their applications. As a result, the Council voted to re-release the RFA, as written, and to allow applicants at least six weeks to complete their application. Council members were encouraged to let Council staff know of any vendors who might be interested in applying for this RFA so they could be added to the Vendor List provided to Procurement. Council staff also worked with the DHHS Communications Team to prepare a press release that was disseminated to assist getting the word out to potential vendors regarding the re-lease of the RFA.

The Professional Development Clearinghouse for Teachers to Build Capacity RFA #5699 was re-released on August 22, 2022. Only one application was received in response to RFA #5699. That application was from Resource Advocates. The Committee felt that Resource Advocates does not have the skill set needed to set up the clearinghouse. Kristen explained that the Department of Education does not have the capacity to take on the heavy lift of creating a clearinghouse but would be able to take on the maintenance and sustainability of a clearinghouse. The Committee recommended not to fund Resource Advocates.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 18, No – 0, Abstain – 1.*** Motion carried.

The Committee recommended to authorize Council staff reach out to the Jeffery S. Raikes School of Computer Science and Management at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln or Answers 4 Families or another government entity to enter into a direct contract up to \$50,000 for the Professional Development Clearinghouse for Teachers to Build Capacity project. There was discussion to not list any specific organizational names from the Committee recommendation and authorize staff to reach out to governmental agencies that would have capacity to develop a clearinghouse. Stephen recommended to amend the Committee’s recommendation to authorize Council staff to reach out to governmental entities to enter into a direct contract up to \$50,000 for the Professional Development Clearinghouse for Teachers to Build Capacity project and Matt seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 18, No – 0, Abstain – 1.*** Motion carried.

Judy moved to approve the amended Committee recommendation and Matt seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 18, No – 0, Abstain – 1.*** Motion carried.

Kristen reminded Council members that we are not allowed to discuss the outcomes of the RFA process until the Notice of Intent to Award is posted by Procurement.

Conference Member Conference Report Summary

Judy Trent attended the 2022 Association of Community Professionals (ACP) Fall Conference, September 8-9, 2022, in Kearney, Nebraska. Kristen and Nikki Krause attended the conference as well.

Judy mentioned that Dr. Emily Shea Tanis covered the importance of technology in our communities and not leaving people in the DD community behind. Technology needs to be accessible to ALL people and people with disabilities need to be taught how to use technology, so they are not left behind. Websites and apps need to be accessible. If they are not, then we need to reach out to the designers/creators/businesses and let them know about the problems we are encountering.

Cheryl Montgomery, President of ACP, mentioned that Dr. Tanis showed how technology is integral to everyday life. There are numerous things that you can only access with technology. She also mentioned that several states have started an initiative of being a Technology First State.

Kristen mentioned that Dr. Tanis stressed the importance of technology in the integration and inclusion in the community is part of person-centeredness.

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.

FFY2023 Person-Centered Planning – Charting the LifeCourse

Rachel Ward explained that the purpose of setting up a contract with University of Missouri Kansas City (UMKC) is to establish a network of innovators and early adopters who can champion and support the adoption and integration of the Charting the LifeCourse framework into policy, practice, and procedure. UMKC’s strategy is to provide overview information for broad stakeholder groups, and focused

professional development, technical assistance, and implementation support to a team of Ambassadors who will expand awareness of the framework and facilitate ongoing activities for creating buy-in and adoption of the principles in the day-to-day work of their peers. The total cost of the project is \$32,980. Kristen mentioned that a signed contract with UMKC is in place. Next is setting up the selection process to train the 15 people to become Certified Ambassadors.

FFY2023 Assistive Technology and Technology Training with ATP Nebraska

Rachel W. explained that knowledge of assistive technology devices and services is varied among students, families, educators, related service providers and administrators. The purpose of the interagency agreement with ATP Nebraska is to create three high-quality online modules that focus on aspects of assistive technology devices and services. The modules will be interactive and multimodal allowing learners to engage with the content in different ways, check their understanding, and go at their own pace. The three modules are:

- What is assistive technology and why is it important for my child?
- Could my child benefit from assistive technology?
- Talking about assistive technology with my child's Individualized Family Service Plan/Individualized Education Program (IFSP/IEP) team.

The total cost of this project is \$10,000 and will commence on January 1, 2023.

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 report for Disability Rights Nebraska is attached at the end of the minutes for review. No report was submitted for Munroe-Meyer Institute, as Mark Shriver was attending the National Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) Conference in Washington D.C. [Seamus Kelly, Disability Rights Nebraska; Mark Shriver, Munroe-Meyer Institute]

Disability Rights Nebraska

Disability Rights Nebraska's Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Program just finished another session with seven trainees. This is training people in the community to be lay advocates helping students in special education. Beth was in the last session. There will be another training in the spring. If you are interested in participating in the next session, please contact Pat Cottingham at Disability Rights Nebraska. The other big project that they have been working on is Supported Decision Making (SDM). They have been going out giving presentations on SDM as being an alternative to guardianship. In August, Legal Services Director Dianne DeLair attended an on-line training of the Department of Justice (DOJ) Collaboration and Olmstead Update and met with U.S. Department of Justice to discuss an upcoming visit to Nebraska. Tania Diaz was able to confirm that they were here for a visit.

Rachel S. asked for a unanimous consent vote to jump to Agenda #16 since the Council meeting was running ahead of schedule and lunch was not ready. Nate made the motion and Quinton seconded.

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 reports were submitted for the Department of Education – Office of Special Education or Maternal and Child Health – Division of Public Health. [Sheri Dawson, 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]

Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) – Office of Special Education

Amy Rhone's oral report indicated that the Office of Special Education has had a 350% increase in state complaint filings in the last year (July-June). Starting July of this year, they are on track to exceed last year's percent in state complaint filings. The extreme teacher shortage crisis is what they are attributing a part of the state complaints filings too. They are in crisis mode to create different pathways to support students better. NDE's Journey to Inclusion stresses the importance of educating all students in the general education environment. The Journey to Inclusion helps all educators, including administrators, general education teachers, physical education teachers, music teachers, everyone in the building, to provide better support to students with disabilities.

There has been a large increase in Office of Civil Rights Complaints. These do not go through the Nebraska Department of Education but through the Office of Civil Rights, which is a federal office. They are trying to build a better connectivity with Office of Civil Rights, so they know what is going on in Nebraska schools. An increase of complaints equals an increase of corrective actions, which equals an increase of required trainings.

There has also been an increase in seclusion and restraint discussion. They are anticipating some legislation may be brought forward in the upcoming legislative session around seclusion and restraint. She noted that members of the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) are really in tune to this issue.

They have partnered with Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation and Nebraska Career and Technical Education (CTE) on a national initiative called Advancing CTE. For the next three years, Advancing CTE will bring specific training to CTE teachers on how to include students with disabilities in CTE programming. The hope is to have a pathway for students with I/DD to truly enter the workforce after secondary education. This fits into their transition/post-secondary outcomes goal by increasing the number of students graduating with a high school diploma and dual certifications increasing the number of students graduating with certificates.

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

There are no individuals on a waitlist for Nebraska VR services for any priority group. All VR staff participated in mandatory *Bridges Out of Poverty through the Institutional Lens* training on October 6, 2022. Work continues with the Olmstead Education and Employment Committees. Social Security Cost Reimbursement (money to get people employed totaled \$1.5 million this past year. Draft changes are underway with the Supported Employment program after having consulted with Dr. Lisa Mills with implementation effective June 30, 2023. Competitive Integrated Employment remains the first and preferred option for people with disabilities. Nebraska VR monitors those participants in sub-minimum wage work and annually provides counseling to them about moving into competitive integrated employment. Paige also included a 2022 14c (sub-minimum wages) Legislative Brief with her report. It provides a snapshot of those in Nebraska earning sub-minimum wages. As of September 2022, approximately 685 individuals, supported by seven provider agencies with active 14c certificates, were earning sub-minimum wage. Work continues in Nebraska to shift from sub-minimum wage to fully inclusive employment. Subminimum wage is illegal in 13 states. It is legal in Nebraska. Currently, sub-minimum wage recipients in Nebraska work on average 1.5 hours per week and earn an average of \$8.26 per hour. Work has begun on fee schedule repealing Rule 72. Cathy Callaway was promoted to VR

Assistant Director on October 12, 2022. Carla Lasley's position is being split. February 1, 2023 Carla's new title will be Benefits Services Program Director. A supported employment Program Director will be hired in January.

Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

The Division is currently working on the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Waiver renewal for implementation October 1, 2023. The TBI Waiver will be more inclusive. Survey and listening sessions were conducted in October/November 2022 regarding the Family Support Waiver. The Division is currently working to draft sections of the waiver and have begun regulations development. They are looking to implement this in December 2023. DHHS signed with CBIZ Optumas with Myers and Stauffer to complete the evaluation of all Nebraska Home and Community-Based waivers. Liberty Healthcare is assisting the Division with enhanced quality oversight across the state. They are beginning to implement changes as the state will be taking a much more active role with providers. The Let's Talk Tour is currently in process and the purpose is to gain stakeholder input on services provided by the Division and to provide updates on future initiatives.

It is anticipated that guardians being paid caregivers will emerge in the coming legislation session. Tony explained that payment of guardians as caregivers of children under 19 years of age is legal. However, Nebraska chose not to go that route. 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. Policies must be created, and monitoring services must be implemented. The parent/child (guardian/child) relationship changes when a parent/guardian becomes a paid caregiver. Tony mentioned his team is already looking into what other states have deemed ordinary care and what has been deemed as extraordinary care. DDD is willing to sit down and talk to advocacy groups to discuss guardians being paid caregivers in a methodical way rather than mandating this through state statute. The state can always submit waiver amendments.

Division of Behavioral Health

Sheri Dawson introduced Tom Janousek, Deputy Director of the Division of Behavioral Health, and who they are working to have appointed as the new Division of Behavioral Health representative on the Council. The three digit Suicide Prevention Line, 988, went live on July 16, 2022. As of October 23, 2022, 988 is averaging 52 calls a day. Mobile Crisis Response services were offered 93 times with 38 activations. A workgroup for ideas on serving individuals with I/DD who require mobile crisis response is being formed.

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. Nebraska stands to receive approximately \$100 million over an 18 year period from settlements with prescription opioid distributors and manufactures. Additionally, the Division administers grants focusing on the opioid crisis and prevention efforts which include: drug take-back events, medication lock boxes, media campaigns, and access to Naloxone. [Naloxone is a life-saving medication that can be administered to temporarily reverse an opioid overdose. Anyone who is a resident can obtain Narcan for free at a participating pharmacy with out a prescription.] Substance use in the I/DD population is often hidden and compounded by a lack of recognition.

Behavioral Health partners with Nebraska VR to provide supported employment to individuals with serious mental illness and substance use disorders. There is a request to move to a different model, the Individual Placement and Support Model. They have engaged consultants to explore this model with

Behavioral Health supported employment partners and people who receive services. In addition to looking at how we do services, we are looking at how we fund the service to make sure we can get as many people employed as possible. Currently the payment for services is braided with Nebraska VR paying for three milestones and Behavioral Health paying for two milestones.

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

Nebraska Medicaid invites providers, or anyone interested, to participate in the monthly COVID Update Calls for Providers on how Medicaid continues to respond to COVID-19. They do not know when the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration from the federal government will end, but it is still a good idea to remind the Medicaid clients you work with that they should make sure their contact information is up to date. When the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration ends, individuals who are no longer eligible for Medicaid, will lose their Medicaid eligibility. CMS has told the state that they will give them 60 days notice when the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration ends. There are about 378,000 people on Medicaid in Nebraska. The best guess is 10-20% of those people are no longer eligible for Medicaid. Medicaid wants to reach out to people to make sure those that are eligible for Medicaid stays eligible and those who are not eligible for Medicaid get the help they need.

NOTE: Everyone is renewed for Medicaid every 12 months under regular circumstances.

Nebraska Medicaid announced its selection for the next managed care contracts. These new contracts begin January 1, 2024. The new contracts are with Nebraska Total Care (current vendor), United Healthcare (current vendor), and Molina (new vendor). The vendors are not scored based on cost, but which vendors are best suited for Nebraska. Some of the highlights from the upcoming contracts include removing the annual dental benefit maximum, consolidating provider enrollment, and integrating dental benefits into existing plans' covered services.

A total of five entities have bid on contracts with the state of Nebraska to provide health care benefits to Medicaid enrollees. Medicaid is now evaluating each of the proposals with the intent of announcing the three winners of the contracts in August 2022. The five entities who bid are: Health Blue, Nebraska Total Care, and UnitedHealthcare [these are the current three entities] and Medica and Molina [the two new entities]. The goal is to have the new plans up and running by July 2023, but it could be as late as January 2024. The current plans stay in place until the new ones are live. For the next five-year cycle, people wanted dental benefits to work better in a more integrated way. So, the three health care plans picked will be responsible for their member's dental care. When you have the same entity responsible for their member's physical health, dental health, and behavioral health it encourages them to cover dental more than we do.

CY2022 NE DD Council Executive Director Annual Performance Evaluation

Rachel S. explained that a motion was needed to enter into a closed session to discuss the Executive Committee's recommended evaluation of the Executive Director. Dee so moved and Matt seconded. A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 18, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried.

At 1:55PM, CST, the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities meeting entered into a closed session and Council staff and members of the public (non-Council members) left the meeting room while the Executive Committee's recommended Executive Director Annual Performance Evaluation was discussed.

At 2:22PM, CST, Tony made a motion to close the closed session and Matt seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 17, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried. [Shaistha Kiran Karipi left the meeting.]

The Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities meeting was re-opened to the public at 2:24PM, CST and Council staff and members of the public (non-Council members) returned to the meeting room. A roll call vote was taken to accept and submit the Executive Committee's recommended Executive Director Annual Performance Evaluation to Sue Medinger, the Designated State Agency (DSA) representative: **Yes – 16, No – 0, Abstain – 1.*** Motion carried.

Council Chair and Staff Updates

Kristen and Dr. Lisa Mills met with Stevens Berry, Governor's Office on Policy Issues on the Comprehensive Employment and Supported Employment Outcomes Study and the need to improve supported employment outcomes. He liked what he heard and encouraged us to reach out to the candidates running for Governor. Kristen decided to wait to reach out to the new Governor.

The Council did receive some funding from ACL to assist with the COVID Vaccine Awareness outreach and Council staff set up a direct contract with the Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI) to do a vaccine awareness social media campaign and campaign directly towards Direct Service Providers. The campaign has wrapped up and they have had phenomenal success.

Kristen attended the Executive Director Leadership Summit in October. This was a chance to meet with her peers to learn about some innovative projects. One of the projects was "Informing Families" which is comparable to Charting the LifeCourse. Another interesting presentation was on Generational Training.

This year's Tri-Board Meeting will be on June 9, 2023 at MMI. The topic will be *Competitive Integrated Employment* with Dr. Lisa Mills.

Disability Pride Day will be on July 22, 2023 at the Auld Pavilion in Lincoln.

Rachel W. attended the People First of Nebraska 2022 Annual Convention in October. There was a lot of good conversations/discussions and several breakout sessions to choose from.

Four final reports were included in the meeting packet for your review.

- Niagara University – *Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery – Year 2*
- Kolb Foundation for Disability Education – *Adult Sibling Network Final Report*
- Eastern Nebraska Human Services Agency (Duet) – *Training for Personal and Professional Development; Staff, Supported Person, and Caregiver*
- Munroe-Meyer Institute – *Empowering Families of Children with Autism in Nebraska through Community Trainings and Awareness*

Also included in the meeting packet was an updated *Who We Are* document and a list of the Council's Current Subawards and Contracts for your review.

Council Member Updates

Kirsten Wilcox said that she had a fun time at the Joni Eareckson Tada (Joni and Friends) family camp in Minnesota. Some of the activities she participated in included Karaoke, zipline, and dancing on the beach. She shared the *Along the Way Guides* with her bowling team. She is also looking forward to Thanksgiving.

Cheryl mentioned that the Nebraska Transition College presented at Holy Cow! What Now? in Norfolk. It was fascinating. Next year's Spring Association of Community Professionals (ACP) Conference will be virtual and the fall ACP Conference will be in-person.

Quinton mentioned that in the last legislative session Legislative Bill (LB) 1216 the Council took a neutral position. As a result of LB1216, Senator M. Cavanaugh recommended that a Legislative Resolution (LR) 368 or an interim study be done. A hearing for LR368 has been scheduled for December 2, 2022. Kristen said it would be an LR on the use of paid family caregivers.

Jason has been helping a couple people in the apartment where he lives. One person has Down Syndrome who likes to leave the door open at night. So when Jason walks his dog, he checks on the person to see if the door is open and shuts the door. He let the Housing Committee know that they needed more accessible and affordable housing in Ogallala.

Dee was at the 40th Annual Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders in Midwest Symposium in February 2022. They spoke to an audience of Special Education Teachers and Board of Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) and Dee shared the *Along the Way Guides* at breakout sessions. The *Along the Way Guides* are a gift that keeps on giving. They are still getting calls about how much people love them.

Rachel S. was at the Autism Conference in October 2022 and observed that other attendees were pushing the *Along the Way Guides*. That was great to see. She mentioned that a lot of things in the school are becoming more inclusive. There is a Leadership Contest coming up where students give speeches and creeds, and they have added a contest to make it more inclusive so Braxton can compete. So, Braxton is giving the Future Farmers of America (FFA) Creed. The woman who did the radio interview with Braxton, submitted the interview for a national award, and Rachel S. got a text today saying that she won the national award for the interview with Braxton. Rachel S. and Braxton's speech teacher are making a proposal to speak at the Martin Luther King Jr. Day they have for teachers in York and the Autism Conference in April on *Small Town Communities - Big Time Opportunities for Everyone*. They will present on opportunities and the things going on at Shelby-Rising City Public Schools. Bowling season has gotten underway, and Braxton gets to compete now. The first ball he threw was a strike.

Stephen mentioned that he saw in the Lincoln Journal Star that Lincoln High is doing its first unified play.

Caiti mentioned that through Hands of Heartland they went to Sioux City and she had a lot of fun. There was a hiking trail and this was the first time she got to go hiking. She was excited that her brother and his family moved to Norfolk and now they live by them.

Eddie Kraska was thankful to be on the Council and enjoyed the Council meeting.

Candida Kraska mentioned that they have been training on Charting the LifeCourse and is implementing steps and talking to Eddie's peers to see if they could get them interested as well. Ollie Webb has an Adult Unified Community Play and Eddie is an actor in the cast. They have also gone through the Person-Centered Planning training and Eddie leads his team in his Individualized Education Program (IPE) meetings.

Beth reported that the Nebraska School Activities Association did a big training for all the judges in schools on how to make school activities accessible for all students with disabilities and she assisted

with the PowerPoint. It went really well, and they had to schedule an additional session since they filled the room over capacity. Northeast Community College submitted a grant proposal to the National Endowment of the Arts for the “Big Read” and chose the book *Sitting Pretty* by Rebekah Taussing and they were chosen. So, they are starting activities in February, and it is all around disabilities and inclusion in northeast Nebraska. The Norfolk Transition House for Norfolk Public Schools was totally remodeled this summer. Norfolk is hoping to break ground in the next couple weeks for Americarts. It will be a family fun center that will be accessible to people with DD, but they are also going to do classes for DD providers in Norfolk. They want 75% of the staff to have some kind of developmental disability.

Tony had a celebratory item to report. They have significantly reduced their registry of waiting list for DD by 1,500 folks in the past few years. We are down to a historic low of 2,200 folks now.

Matt wanted to thank everyone for electing him Chair of the Planning Committee. Matt is a member of the Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council, and he is the Chair of the Client Services Committee. The Committee has a couple vacancies. If you are interested in being on the Committee, let him or Paige know. Matt is also on the Nebraska Statewide Independent Living Council. If you are interested on being a member, let him know and he can assist you.

Paige mentioned that in September, she went to a National Vocational Evaluation Conference in Alabama. The breakout was on Long COVID and Post COVID. Long COVID and Post COVID are being recognized now by The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) as disability types. They are anxious to bring education to staff for career planning and employers on best ways to accommodate individuals with lingering COVID symptoms. One fact was that stood out was that 83% of adults have lingering brain fog beyond two years after having COVID.

New and Current Council Member Orientation

Kristen presented an orientation to new and current Council members. All Council members were strongly encouraged to stay for this training as a refresher.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:11PM, CDT.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2023. The Legislative and Advocacy (L&A) Committee meeting will be February 2, 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.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members
November 14, 2022

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:

- Public Policy Director Brad Meurrens conducted two Steering Committee and two Taskforce meetings the fourth quarter (July 1- September 30 2022)
- Brad met with Jonathan Martinis (Consultant), Kristen Larsen (DD Council Director) and Mary Phillips (Consultant) to finalize direction and activities for this project in FY 23. Brad then wrote and submitted a grant to the Nebraska Developmental Disabilities Council to fund this project in FY 23. The grant was approved for \$25,000.
- Brad, Johnathan, and Mary Phillips gave a presentation about Supported Decision Making to the [Association of Community Professionals](#) Nebraska at their conference.
- Brad and Mary presented about Supported Decision Making to a group from the Brain Injury Alliance (Imperial, NE). This was during one of their monthly meetings.

Olmstead Plan Advocacy:

- **July 28, 2022: Olmstead Advisory Committee meeting.** The Department of Health and Human Services reported on the quarterly update of the Home and Community-Based Services Spending Plan ([https://dhhs.ne.gov/Documents/HCBS Spending Plan - 4.2022 Update.pdf](https://dhhs.ne.gov/Documents/HCBS_Spending_Plan_-_4.2022_Update.pdf)), with emphasis on the new Medicaid Section 1115 Demonstration Waiver. Concerns were raised due to the apparent narrow focus of covering community-based residential treatment facilities for people with Severe Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorder instead of supportive housing options. Also of concern was the proposal for the hiring of a consultant for Assisted Living Facilities to enhance this “community based” services (pgs. 12-13).
- **August 10, 2022:** Legal Services Director Dianne DeLair attended on-line training of the DOJ Collaboration and Olmstead Update.
- **August 15, 2022:** Meeting with U.S. Department of Justice to discuss upcoming visit to Nebraska.
- **August 16, 2022:** Meeting with Mark Smith and Kathy Hoell to discuss Olmstead agenda and letter to Danette Smith about Olmstead progress.
- **August 25, 2022:** Olmstead Advisory Committee meeting. Dianne gave a presentation to the committee about Olmstead requirements, with a focus on the

necessary data points that are missing from our plan. See Olmstead #6 Checklist.

- **September 22, 2022:** Olmstead Advisory Committee Meeting. The housing, employment, data, education and transportation workgroups reported on several strategies to recommend to the Olmstead Steering Group. Several strategies were sent back for more clarification.
- **September, 2022:** Deputy Director of the Office of Public Guardian reported several associate public guardians, the director and deputy, had a conference call to discuss the issues the OPG experiences in trying to advocate for their wards in the area of mental health.

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

- **Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy:** The Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Program training cohort scheduled for September 13-October 20, 2022, began with 10 participants. This cohort includes advocates from northeastern and northwestern Nebraska in addition to several from the Omaha/Lincoln area. The newly trained volunteers will replenish volunteers from previous cohorts who have already honored their six family/one-year commitment.
- A total of five (5) families were referred to the Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Program during this period. Three (3) of these families asked to be referred and a Lay Advocate was recruited, and the match was made.
- **Beatrice State Developmental Center Monitoring:** As of September 29, 2022, the current Long-Term Care census was 73 individuals and the Crisis Stabilization Program census was 8 participants, for a total census of 81. Three of the eight crisis participants were defined as newer admissions to the program. On the morning of our phone call, the facility administrators discussed getting flu shots and COVID-19 second booster shots scheduled for interested individuals. Earlier in the month, one individual had been diagnosed with COVID-19 after visiting the hospital for an unrelated matter. They had since recovered and their home was no longer in quarantine status. When asked about visitation protocols, Case Advocate Karen Masterson was informed that on the day prior, 60 guardians had come to the facility to participate in the Fall Festival. It was defined as a wonderful day outdoors that was filled with food, games, and fun.
- **Outreach:** Staff Attorney Madison Wurtele conducted a training for 50 individuals on Disability Rights Nebraska's limited advocacy program, on common violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other ways to address violations for the Nebraska Statewide Independent Living Council's webinar series on disability related issues on 9/1/22.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

- Disability Rights Nebraska Board of Directors Meeting scheduled for February 11, 2023

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:

There are no individuals on a waitlist for Nebraska VR services for any priority group.

All VR staff participated in mandatory *Bridges Out of Poverty through the Institutional Lens* training on Oct. 6th. Discussion continues in offices with monthly Bridges Out of Poverty activities.

Work continues on Olmstead Education and Employment Committees.

Social Security Cost Reimbursement this past year totals 1.5 million dollars.

Draft changes are underway with the Supported Employment program after having consulted with Dr. Lisa Mills. Implementation will be effective 6/30/22. The changes will include: rate methodology revisions based on the PCG study completed this year and we are presently considering recommendations for performance incentives and job coach fading.

Cathy Callaway was promoted to VR Assistant Director Oct. 12th.

Competitive Integrated Employment remains the first and preferred option for people with disabilities. Work continues in Nebraska to shift from sub-minimum wage to fully inclusive employment. See 14c Survey attachment shared with the ARC of Nebraska.

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

Comprehensive Case Review Instrument in development to monitor federally required info and best practices.

[Client Assistance Program](#) Specialist submitted resignation with November 10th as last working day. [Position](#) is posted and closes Nov. 28th. CAP is a free service assisting clients having problems with Nebraska VR, Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired NCBVI, and Centers for Independent Living. CAP acts independently of any agency.

Work has begun on fee schedule repealing Rule 72.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

Feb 1, 2023 Carla Lasley's new title will be Benefits Services Program Director and a Supported Employment Program Director will be hired in January.

Job coaching cost methodology is planned.

October 25, 2022

2022 14c Legislative Brief

POLICY & LEGISLATION

Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) authorizes employers, after receiving a certificate from the Wage and Hour Division, to pay **subminimum wages** (wages less than the Federal minimum wage) to workers who have disabilities for the work being performed. [U.S. Wage and Hour Fact Sheet](#)

The [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) (WIOA) of 2014

- Established Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) as the primary objective of employment services
- Placed limits on youth entering segregated work subject to subminimum wage
- Emphasized transition-age youth as critical population to improve CIE rates
- Mandated 15% of state VR budgets be dedicated to Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for transition-age youth

The [Olmstead Decision](#) of 1999 includes employment in the most integrated setting possible.

NEBRASKA SNAPSHOT

In 2014, an estimated **2200** Nebraskans earned sub-minimum wage under a 14c certificate. On April 1, 2022, **327** sub-minimum wage earners were recorded in Nebraska on the federal reporting site. In reality, the most accurate way to obtain data is by inquiry with each provider. [Nebraska VR](#) completes this survey annually. As of September 2022, approximately **685** individuals supported by **7** provider agencies with active 14c certificates were earning sub-minimum wage.

*Currently, sub-minimum wage recipients in Nebraska work on average **17.5** hours per week and earn an average of **\$8.26/hour** (Range of \$1.67-\$15.00).

AGENCIES WITH ACTIVE 14C CERTIFICATES

CSN- Community Supports Network- Lincoln and Omaha

DUET- Develop Unite Empower Together- Omaha

Hands of Heartland- Omaha

MNIS- Mid Nebraska Individual Services- Broken Bow, Grand Island, Holdrege, Kearney, Ord, Oxford, and Superior

MOSAIC-Beatrice

Vital Services- Lincoln

VODEC- Vocational Development Center - Omaha

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

November 18, 2022

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:

Waiver Updates:

- TBI Waiver - The Division is currently working on a TBI renewal for implementation 10/1/2023
- LB 376/Family Support Waiver - Survey and Listening Sessions conducted Oct/Nov. The division is currently working to draft sections of the waiver and has begun regulations development. Updates/Information are posted on website: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Initiatives-for-LB376.aspx>

System Evaluation:

- DHHS signed with CBIZ Optumas with Myers and Stauffer to complete the evaluation of all Nebraska HCBS waivers. DHHS will receive best practice recommendations and comparisons to other states. This will include stakeholder engagement. Updates/Information are posted on website: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Initiatives-for-LB376.aspx>

Let's Talk Tour:

- Tour currently in process, purpose it to gain stakeholder input on services provided by the Division and provide updates on future initiatives.
- Meetings held in Scottsbluff, North Platte, Kearney, Norfolk, Papillion, Lincoln
- Remaining Meetings:
 - November 29, 2022 Omaha State Office Building, 1313 Farnam St
 - November 30, 2022 Virtual <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Developmental-Disabilities.aspx>

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

- DD Advisory Committee Meeting – December 1, 2022, 10:00-2:00 PM, Conference Room P, 5220 South 16th St, Lincoln, NE. Public Comment at Noon.
- Monthly HCBS Stakeholder Meeting – December 5, 2022, 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM CT WebEx Meetings. Link on the DD Event Calendar <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Developmental-Disabilities.aspx>

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members

Representative: _____ Sheri Dawson _____

Agency: _____ Division of Behavioral Health _____

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

- **3 digit Suicide Prevention line, 988, went live on 7/16/22.**
 - Background: Congress designated the new 988 national line to provide easier access to Lifeline network and related crisis resources.
 - Call Volume as of 10/23/22 – averaging 52 calls /day, a daily average increase of 73% since transition to 988
 - Chat/text volume averaging 1 contact every 1 hour, 55 minutes
 - Mobile Crisis Response services offered 93 times with 38 activations (36 of those in Omaha, Lincoln geographic areas) (33 responses were for adults)
 - Percentage of calls resulting in emergency intervention: 3.1%
- **International Overdose Awareness Day 8/31/22.**
 - 101 overdose deaths in Nebraska in 2020. Rise in synthetic opioids like fentanyl has caused cases to rise.
 - Substance use in I/DD population is often hidden and compounded by a lack of recognition.
- **September was National Recovery Month.** DHHS’s facilities, DBH and Regional entities promoted the month in a variety of ways from Lights of Hope, speakers, art shows and social media events. People can and do recover!
- **Celebrated global Peer Support Day October 20, 2022.** Over 190 peers have been certified as Nebraska Peer Support Specialists through new guidelines. <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Peer-Support-Training-Certification.aspx> is the link to the core curriculum and certification guidelines.
- 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>
- **The Public Health Emergency** that has been in place since January 27,2020 and renewed throughout the pandemic was extended on October 13,2022 through January 11, 2023.
 - The Division of Behavioral Health, as a result, has extended alternative service delivery through 2023. This permits expanded use of telehealth and telephone options of service delivery in addition to traditional methods.
- **Behavioral Health workforce** is a national crisis. The demand for service exceeds capacity on many fronts. Governor Ricketts and the DHHS Divisions continue to strategize short and long term solutions including service delivery models, digital solutions, policies, financial and human resources strategies.
- **Justice Behavioral Health Conference** held October 19-21, in LaVista, NE with over 800 participants.

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

- The Division administers grants focusing on the **opioid crisis and prevention efforts** include:
 - Drug take-back events
 - Medication lock boxes
 - Medica campaigns
 - Access to Naloxone
 - Naloxone is a life-saving medication that can be administered to temporarily reverse an opioid overdose.
 - Anyone who is a resident can obtain Narcan for free at a participating pharmacy without a prescription. To find a participating pharmacy near you, visit <https://stopodne.com>
 - Substance use in I/DD population is often hidden and compounded by a lack of recognition.
- **Suicide Awareness:** Awareness and risk assessment of characteristics of suicidality in the I/DD population is encouraged.
- **Labor shortage** is changing the landscape of service provision for all populations.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

- October was recognized as national Disability Employment Awareness month. The Division and Vocational Rehabilitation are in consultation with national experts on supported employment and looking to assess service expectations to expand employment opportunities.
- The Division is sponsoring two Stigma and Bias trainings in November. Look for more information on the DHHS website in early November.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members

Representative: Nate Watson, Deputy Director

Agency: DHHS – Medicaid & Long-Term Care

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

COVID Update Calls for Providers

Nebraska Medicaid invites providers or anyone interested to join us for monthly calls with updates on how Medicaid continues to respond to COVID-19.

The next calls will be held on Wednesday, December 7, at noon (Central). You can subscribe to our website to get notifications when details about the calls become available, like instructions on how to join the calls.

Managed Care Re-procurement

Nebraska Medicaid announced its selection for 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.

Public Health Emergency Unwind

Medicaid would like to remind those with Medicaid coverage to be sure their contact information is up to date with the agency so we can get in touch if there are important updates on your case. If you've moved or gotten a new primary phone number or email address recently, please be sure to let us know. You can log into your online account with ACCESSNebraska or call us at (855) 632-7633 to check if your information is up to date or to report a change.

- At the moment, we do not know when the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration from the federal government will end, but it is still a good idea to remind Medicaid clients you work with that they can make sure their contact information is up to date.

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

Please see above, which includes current and upcoming activities.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

Please see above, which includes current and upcoming activities.