



Washington Weekly!

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Administration

RSA Notifies States of FY2023 VR Funding

On Thursday, Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) notified State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs on projected funding for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2023. As a mandatory program, the State VR program is subject to annual increases based upon the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U). According to current estimates, the VR program may receive an estimated \$217.4 million in additional funding for FFY 2023. Projections indicate this would result in all States receiving an increase in their VR formula award allocation. Forty-four States would receive an increase of over \$1 million in FFY 2023 VR funds.

States with both Blind and General VR agencies can apply the percentage of VR funds assigned to each agency to the 2023 Estimate to obtain an estimated agency award amount. The totals are only for the VR program and do not reflect all U.S. Department of Education funds that a State receives. The department makes State program estimates available on a routine basis on the [website](#).

CMS Announces Cross Cutting Initiative to Support HealthCare at the End of the PHE

Yesterday, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced a Cross Cutting Initiative (CCI) to Support Health Care System Resiliency at the eventual end of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE). During the COVID-19 PHE, CMS used emergency waiver authorities and various regulatory authorities to enable flexibilities so providers could rapidly respond to people impacted by COVID-19. CMS has developed a cross-cutting initiative to use a comprehensive, streamlined approach to reestablish certain health and safety standards and other financial and program requirements at the eventual end of the COVID-19 PHE. This work compliments the work already underway to ensure as many eligible individuals as possible maintain a source of coverage, whether through Medicaid/CHIP, Marketplace, employer coverage, or Medicare. To learn about this initiative and find links to additional resources, please follow these links:

- August 18 [CMS Blog](#)
- [CCI Fact Sheet](#)
- COVID-19 [fact sheets](#) for each provider type
- Updated [waiver document](#)
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ACL Awards Respite Care Grants

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has awarded three new grants under the [Lifespan Respite Care Program](#) for FY 2022 to assist with coordinated State systems of accessible, community-based respite care services for family caregivers of people of all ages with special needs. Such programs reduce duplication of effort and assist in the development of respite care infrastructure at the State and local levels. ACL awarded two cooperative agreements for a five-year project period to Nevada (\$290,208) and Wisconsin (\$299,500). Through these awards, these two States will focus on expanding and enhancing respite services

in their State; improving coordination and dissemination of respite services across their State; streamlining access to their respite programs; filling gaps in services, where necessary; and improving the overall quality of the respite services that were available at the time they received their award.

ACL awarded a cooperative agreement for a three-year project period to New Mexico (\$299,500). Through this award, New Mexico will work on developing and enhancing of lifespan respite care at the state and local levels; providing evidence informed quality respite care services for family caregivers caring for children or adults; training and recruiting respite care workers and volunteers; providing information to caregivers about available respite and support services; and providing assistance to caregivers in gaining access to such services.

Federal Partners Produce Resource on Competitive Integrated Employment

On August 16, 2022, federal agencies and partners released [Resource Leveraging and Service Coordination to Increase Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities](#), which comprises a [Federal Joint Communication to State and Local Governments](#) and a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document, focus on the benefits of and support for blending, braiding, and sequencing resources to increase Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) for people with disabilities. The federal agencies which partnered to put together this resource include the U.S. Departments of Education's OSERS' Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP); Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), Social Security Administration (SSA) and Health and Human Services' Administration for Community Living (ACL), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). [Read more about this new Resource and CIE.](#)

NHTSA Estimates Increased Fatalities for the Year

On Wednesday, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration released its [early estimates of traffic fatalities for the first quarter of 2022](#). NHTSA estimates that 9,560 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes in the first quarter of 2022. This is an increase of about 7% as compared to the 8,935 fatalities projected for the same quarter in 2021. This would be the highest number of first-quarter fatalities since 2002. According to NHTSA's early estimates, the fatality rate for the first quarter of 2022 increased to 1.27 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, up from the projected rate of 1.25 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles in the first quarter of 2021.

NHTSA recently began breaking out fatality trends by State for these quarterly estimates. While fatalities increased nationwide, 19 States and Puerto Rico saw traffic deaths decline during this period. NHTSA will continue to monitor State-by-State numbers to make it easier for State practitioners, researchers and advocates to see if there is a trend and if there are activities these States are undertaking that are contributing to this decline.

As part of the U.S. Department of Transportation's [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#) to prevent traffic deaths, NHTSA launched a public education campaign last month to address one of America's most dangerous driving behaviors – speeding. NHTSA's [Speeding Wrecks Lives campaign](#) aims to change general attitudes toward speeding and remind drivers of the deadly consequences. In addition to education campaigns, NHTSA regional offices are working closely with States to assist them in directing NHTSA formula grant funds to address risky driving behaviors such as speeding and driving while impaired, protect vulnerable road users, and reach over-represented and underserved populations using a broad array of programs and countermeasures. NHTSA has also launched its annual [Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over Labor Day](#) high-visibility enforcement campaign, which focuses on preventing impaired driving and improving safety for all road users.

CMS Issues New Guidance on Behavioral Health Services for Children

Yesterday, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a new guidance document reminding States of their mandate to cover behavioral health services for children in Medicaid, and urged States to leverage every resource to strengthen mental health care for children. HHS is issuing a second

guidance document that urges States to expand school-based health care for children, including mental health care. As part of the third action, HHS issued a proposed rule that, for the first time ever, would require States to report certain quality measures to strengthen Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to ensure that the millions of children and families enrolled in these programs have access to the highest quality of care.

CMS is reinforcing Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) statutory mandates for children's health coverage, in particular mental health coverage. The EPSDT benefit is a requirement for all States and provides comprehensive and preventive health care services, including mental health services, for most children under age 21 who are enrolled in Medicaid.

- Read CMS' guidance: "Leveraging Medicaid, CHIP, and Other Federal Programs in the Delivery of Behavioral Health Services for Children and Youth" informational bulletin [here](#).
- Read CMS' guidance: "School-based Health Services in Medicaid: Funding, Documentation, and Expanding Services" informational bulletin [here](#).
- To learn more about the proposed rule for mandatory annual State reporting of the Core Set of Children's Health Care Quality Measures for Medicaid and CHIP, the behavioral health measures on the Core Set of Adult Health Care Quality Measures for Medicaid, and the Core Sets of Health Home Quality Measures for Medicaid, please visit the [Federal Register](#).

ACL Announces Final Rule that Advances Equity in NIDILRR Peer Review Criteria

The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) has announced [publication of a final rule governing NIDILRR-funded research](#), following input from the public on a proposed rule published earlier this year. The final rule contains two significant changes: First, the final rule advances equity in the "Project Staff" peer review criteria that NIDILRR uses to evaluate disability research applications across all of its research programs. Second, the final rule makes changes to emphasize the need for appropriate engineering research and development activities within NIDILRR's Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERC) program. [View the final rule in the Federal Register](#).

Senate Confirms Postsecondary Education Assistant Secretary

Earlier this month, the U.S. Senate confirmed the nomination of Nasser Paydar as assistant secretary for Postsecondary Education within the U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Paydar served as the chancellor emeritus of Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) and executive vice president of Indiana University (IU). An IU faculty member for more than 36 years, he has held various administrative and executive leadership positions at the university.

PCORI Approves \$258 Million to Fund 26 New Research Studies

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) approved funding awards totaling \$258 million to support 26 new research studies on July 26, 2022. These studies aim to fill evidence gaps and improve health care decision making for a range of high-burden conditions among adults and children, including asthma, bone fractures, migraines, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and sinus infections. Five comparative clinical effectiveness research (CER) studies focus on improving mental health and another four CER studies focus on heart conditions, which have both continued to worsen in the U.S. amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, PCORI announced about \$3.9 million for two projects that aim to promote wider, faster adoption of useful findings from completed PCORI-funded CER studies into typical care practices. Click [here](#) to view the release.

Reports and Resources

INROADS Publishes Special Supplement on the Intersection of Disability and SUD

Researchers from the NIDILRR-funded project [INROADS: Intersecting Research on Opioid Misuse, Addiction, and Disability Services](#) edited [Disability and Substance Use, Misuse,](#)

and Addiction, a special supplement to the *Disability and Health Journal* dedicated to the intersection of disability and substance use disorders (SUD) including opioids, alcohol, and other substances. The articles in this collection expand the base of knowledge, with themes arising in the areas of prevalence and identification of disability-related disparities, perspectives of people with lived experience of disability, and adaptations to substance use measures and interventions. The issue includes articles from INROADS and other NIDILRR-funded studies, as well as other researchers. All articles are available free in full text.

HHS and DOJ Release Guidance on Nondiscrimination in Telehealth

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) **Office of Civil Rights** and the Department of Justice (DOJ) **Civil Rights Division** released **Guidance on Nondiscrimination in Telehealth: Federal Protections to Ensure Accessibility to People with Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Persons**. The new guidance covers various federal civil rights laws and seeks to inform providers and other covered entities of their obligations under federal law. The guidance provides examples and best practices to ensure people with disabilities are able to fully access telehealth services. It also includes information on how individuals can file complaints if they believe they have been discriminated against by a health care or telehealth provider.

Upcoming Webinars and Conferences

ADA Translation Center to Host Twitter Chat on Education and the ADA

The NIDILRR-funded **ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center** will host a Twitter chat, **Education and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**, August 24th, 1 - 2 pm ET. Representatives from the 10 regional centers will be covering back-to-school topics, the most frequently asked questions about higher education and the ADA, and more. Search **#ADANetworkChat** on Twitter to follow the chat. A Twitter account is not necessary to follow the discussion, but users must be logged into an account to post questions and answers.

TARC and TAL Offer Webinar on Being Involved in the Brain Injury Community

On August 31, 2022, from 2:30-4:30pm (ET), the TBI Technical Resource Center (TARC) and the TBI Advisory and Leadership Group (TAL-Group) are presenting the webinar, "Keeping the Passion Alive: Getting and Staying Involved in the Brain Injury Community." The purpose is to learn more about how survivors can become involved and stay actively engaged in State and national brain injury initiatives. Register [here](#).

AUCD Plans In-Person Conference on Health Equity

AUCD plans an in-person conference in November to take a deeper dive into *Health Equity*, the social determinants of health, and the steps needed to ensure that every person is provided the best opportunities possible. The conference is scheduled for November 13-16. Save the date and register by October 22. The AUCD 2022 Conference will be held at the Marriott Marquis Washington. More information about the Marquis, including access to the hotel room block, will be available on September 1. Everyone can also have the opportunity to access the main plenary sessions which will be available via livestreaming. **To learn more about livestreaming and to register for the virtual package, please visit the [To learn more about livestreaming and to register for the virtual package, please visit the Conference site on September 1. on September 1.](#)**

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The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators assists State government in promoting partnerships and building systems to meet the needs of individuals with brain injuries and their families.

Support States. Grow Leaders. Connect Partners.

