



# Washington Weekly!

**December 16, 2022**

## Administration

### **President to Sign CR to Fund Federal Government Until Dec. 23**

Yesterday, Congress sent President Biden a continuing resolution (CR) to fund government another week as the previous CR was to end at midnight tonight, Dec. 16. This CR ends Dec. 23. Congress is to take up an omnibus spending bill next week which may include additional aid to Ukraine and other measures. An omnibus spending package would fund federal government through Sept. 30, the end of the federal fiscal year.

### **DOL Selects for ASPIRE Grants**

This week, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced the selection of seven States to participate in the second round of an initiative that seeks to align State policy and funding to advance competitive integrated employment for individuals with mental health conditions. States selected are: Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Montana, New York, and Virginia. The program, known as the Advancing State Policy Integration for Recovery and Employment (ASPIRE), is administered by the department's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). It is designed to provide States with tailored and targeted technical assistance to expand evidence-based practices, such as the Individual Placement and Support model of supported employment. These States will return for the second round with Louisiana, Montana and New York, who were chosen to receive first-time assistance.

The ASPIRE initiative offers subject-matter expertise to help participating State organizations to create – with input from key mental health advocacy organizations – strategic plans that employ mental/behavioral health, Medicaid, vocational rehabilitation, and workforce and education systems to deliver results. The initiative also gives State and federal agencies, mental health service providers and other stakeholders a forum to explore policies and practices for implementing evidence-based models aimed at increasing competitive integrated employment for people with mental health conditions. ODEP has contracted with Westat, a research firm based in Rockville, Maryland, to provide technical assistance to the States that participate.

### **HHS to Award 988 Lifeline Grants to Address Mental Health and Substance Use Crises**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), announced today that the agency will award more than \$130 million in 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline grants this month – part of the \$800 million provided to SAMHSA under the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act to address the nation's ongoing mental health and substance use crises. Today, HHS, through SAMHSA, **awarded** \$47 million to States and U.S. territories to expand and enhance 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline services.

Later this month, SAMHSA, plans to award \$21.1 million in 988 Lifeline Tribal Response Grants and technical assistance to improve 988 response in tribal communities, which face unique challenges to accessing technology and crisis services. SAMHSA plans to award additional funds to further improve 988 response in tribal communities early next year. Additionally, this

month, SAMHSA plans to award \$64.8 million to 988 Lifeline administrator, Vibrant Emotional Health, to manage and expand access to local and national 988 Lifeline crisis centers, maintain and enhance language-based services, ensure effective system routing, training, evaluation, network operational outcomes, and improve access to specialized care for populations known to be at higher risk for suicide.

Provisional data released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates a rise in the **number and the rate of suicides**, and in **drug overdose deaths**, in 2021 compared to 2020. SAMHSA's **2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)** reported the negative impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on Americans' well-being. The NSDUH also estimated that 4.9% of adults aged 18 or older had serious thoughts of suicide, 1.3% made a suicide plan and 0.5% attempted suicide in the past year. Among adolescents ages 12-17, 12% said they had serious thoughts of suicide, 5.3% made a suicide plan, and 2.5% percent attempted suicide in the past year.

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## Federal Proposed Rules

### **CMS Proposes New Rules for Accessing Prescription Drugs; Behavioral Health Care**

This week, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) proposed rules to 1) strengthen Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage to implement a provision of the Inflation Reduction Act to make prescription drugs more affordable; 2) protecting people from confusing and potentially misleading marketing with regard to Medicare; and 3) strengthen behavioral health network adequacy. To address behavioral health network adequacy, CMS proposes to add clinical psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, and prescribers of medication for opioid use disorder to the list of evaluated specialties. CMS also proposes new minimum wait time standards for behavioral health and primary care services and more specific notice requirements from plans to patients when these providers are dropped from their networks. Finally, CMS proposes to require most types of Medicare Advantage plans include behavioral health service in care coordination programs, ensuring that behavioral health care is a core part of person-centered care planning. Read more from the **Federal Register** when it is published.

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## Reports and Resources

### **Kessler Foundation/UNH Issue Findings on COVID-19 and Disability Employment**

The Kessler Foundation, in partnership with the University of New Hampshire (UNH), released a **report** and **Executive Summary** of the findings from the "2022 Kessler Foundation National Employment and Disability Survey: Supervisor Perspectives (2022 KFNEDS:SP2)" which examined the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment practices as they relate to people with disabilities, to identify the practices used by employers to increase the employment of people with disabilities, and to understand supervisors' views about the effectiveness of these practices. Building off the 2017 Kessler Foundation National Employment and Disability Survey: Supervisor Perspectives (2017 KFNEDS:SP) (Kessler Foundation and UNH, 2017), the 2022 KFNEDS:SP2 enables comparisons with supervisor perspectives today and pre-pandemic, capturing the impact of the national lockdown on employer practices and procedures to identify negative and/or positive changes since the original 2017 supervisor survey.

The 2017 KFNEDS-SP was the first national survey to look at the effectiveness of the practices that employers used to recruit, hire, train, and retain people with disabilities in their organizations, from the unique perspective of supervisors of employees with and without disabilities. It was intended to provide direction for expanding inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace. In addition to the full report and Executive Summary, you may read a handout on frequently asked questions about the survey **here**.

### **NCAPPS Solicits Applicants for the Racial Equity Learning Collaborative**

The National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems (NCAPPS) is soliciting applicants for the second Racial Equity Learning Collaborative being launched in partnership with colleagues at the Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC) this winter. Participants will engage in self-reflection and develop deep understanding of how each of us can promote racial equity within disability, aging, mental health, and related service settings. Participation is limited to 50 people who use or who work in Long-Term Service and Support (LTSS) settings such as provider organizations, State or county agencies, residential group settings, nursing facilities, etc.

Applicants can hold roles such as advocate, advisory board member, direct support professional, peer specialist, service or program coordinator, case or program managers, program administrators, and leadership. People with lived experience of using LTSS are especially encouraged to take part in this Learning Collaborative. NCAPPS staff, subject matter experts, and federal partners may also participate. Priority will be given to members of teams currently receiving technical assistance from NCAPPS.

Interested participants should complete and submit the brief application [here](#) by Monday, January 2, 2023. Questions can be addressed to NCAPPS Project Manager, Saska Rajcevic at [srajcevic@hsri.org](mailto:srajcevic@hsri.org). More information can be found [here](#).

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## Upcoming Webinars and Conferences

### Save the Date: Virtual Rural Disability Research and Practice Summit

The NIDILRR-funded [Rehabilitation Research and Training Center for Place-Based Solutions for Rural Community Participation, Health, and Employment](#) will host a virtual [Rural Disability Research and Practice Summit](#), January 10th and 11th, 2023, 3:00 – 4:30pm (ET) each day. The summit will explore timely issues affecting rural people with disabilities. Each session will feature presentations and panel discussions on personal assistance services and rural digital access. Subscribe to the [#RuralDisability eNews](#) for registration and agenda updates.

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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.**



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