



Washington Weekly!

December 30, 2022

Administration

TBICoE Proclaims January as National Winter Sports TBI Awareness Month

The Military Health System's Traumatic Brain Injury Center of Excellence (TBICoE) proclaims January as "National Winter Sports Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month," to call attention to the risk of concussions related to extreme sports while snow skiing or snowboarding. "[**A Head for the Future**](#)" campaign provides resources to help the military community prevent, recognize and recover from traumatic brain injury. More than 50% of concussions related to extreme sports occur while snow skiing or snowboarding. Members of the military are encouraged to check out [**resources**](#) from the TBICoE before hitting the slopes this winter.

TBICoE is the Defense Department's office of responsibility for tracking traumatic brain injury data in the U.S. military. Here you'll find data on the number of active-duty service members -- anywhere U.S. forces are located -- with a first-time TBI diagnosis in the calendar year 2022 through the second quarter. The data is also broken down by each branch of the armed services. You may download the "DOD TBI Worldwide Numbers At-A-Glance" for a high level overview of all TBI's diagnosed since 2000 and how the data breaks down by TBI severity and service branch [**here**](#).

NIH-funded Survey Finds that Substance Use Among Adolescents Held Steady in 2022

In the National Institutes of Health (NIH) December 15 news release, NIH reported that the Monitoring the Future Survey, which is conducted each year by researchers at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, with funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), indicated that percentage of adolescents reporting substance use in 2022 largely held steady after significantly declining in 2021. The survey monitors substance use behaviors and related attitudes among eighth, 10th, and 12th graders in the United States. Reported use for almost all substances decreased dramatically from 2020 to 2021 after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and related changes like school closures and social distancing. In 2022, reported use of any illicit drug within the past year remained at or significantly below pre-pandemic levels for all grades, with 11% of eighth graders, 21.5% of 10th graders, and 32.6% of 12th graders reporting any illicit drug use in the past year. Read more [**here**](#).

Federal Proposed Rules

HHS Issues Conscience and Religious Nondiscrimination Proposed Rule

Yesterday, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) announced a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), entitled *Safeguarding the Rights of Conscience as Protected by Federal Statutes*, which proposes to restore the longstanding process for the handling of conscience complaints and provide additional safeguards to protect against conscience and religious discrimination.

In 2019, OCR issued a regulation that provided broad definitions, created new compliance regulations, and created a new enforcement mechanism for a number of statutes related to the conscience rights of certain federally funded health care entities and providers. The 2019 Final Rule was held unlawful by three federal district courts. In light of these court decisions, and consistent with the Administration's commitment to safeguard the rights of federal conscience and religious nondiscrimination while protecting access to care, this NPRM proposes to partially rescind the Department's 2019 rule while reinforcing other processes previously in place for the handling of conscience and religious freedom complaints. Public comments on the NPRM are due 60 days after publication of the NPRM in the *Federal Register*. The NPRM may be viewed [here](#).

Reports and Resources

KFF Publishes Brief on Impact of Pandemic and Medicaid HCBS

KFF published a November 28 issue brief titled "Ongoing Impacts of the Pandemic on Medicaid Home & Community-Based Services (HCBS) Programs: Findings from a 50-State Survey" that reports on the latest findings from the 20th KFF survey of State officials administering Medicaid HCBS programs in all 50 States and D.C. The data were collected from April through September 2022. The survey was sent to each State official responsible for overseeing the administration of HCBS benefits (e.g., home health, personal care, and services for specific populations such as people with physical disabilities), but some States submitted responses for the State overall. States most frequently cited workforce shortages as the pandemic's primary impact across all HCBS settings. The brief also highlighted how States are using the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) HCBS funding incentives to make investments in their HCBS. Read about the findings [here](#).

VA Reports Special Operation Forces Experience Greater TBI Symptoms

Last week, the Department of Veterans Affairs featured a study that indicated that special operations forces personnel reported greater traumatic brain injury (TBI) symptom severity compared to conventional forces. The study was conducted by James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital researchers and colleagues. Special operations forces are at increased risk of TBI compared with conventional forces. In a group of service members and Veterans receiving inpatient rehabilitation for TBI, special operations personnel had greater PTSD symptoms, but less alcohol and drug use, than conventional forces. These personnel also reported greater neurobehavioral symptoms, such as dizziness, vision problems, and slowed thinking. Addressing TBI symptoms in special operations forces may be especially important, concluded the researchers. This study conducted an analysis of the prospective veterans affairs (VA) TBI Model Systems Cohort, which includes service members and veterans (SM/V) who received inpatient rehabilitation for TBI at one of the five VA Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers. Read more in *Military Medicine*, Oct. 29, 2022, [here](#).

ACL Releases on Evaluation of Its Evidence-based Health Promotion Prevention Programs

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has released the findings of an evaluation of its evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention programs. Since 2012, Older Americans Act Title III-D (Preventative Health Services) and Title IV [Falls Prevention and Chronic Disease Self-Management Education (CDSME)] grantees have been required to deliver evidence-based programs (EBPs) -- that is, programs proven to improve health and well-being and reduce disease and injury. Read the report [here](#).

Upcoming Webinars and Conferences

ODEP Offers Webinar on Apprenticeship Models

Join the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy Employment First Community of Practice on January 11 from 3:00 – 4:00pm (ET) for the webinar "Apprenticeships: Understanding the Benefits and Funding Opportunities." This Webinar takes a deeper dive into apprenticeships, providing opportunities to learn its benefits, systems of successful implementation and possible funding sources. Presenters will share insights and narratives from successful community-based apprenticeship models, and learnings from on-the-ground training and technical assistance given to providers pursuing apprenticeships as part of their Competitive Integrated Employment offerings. Register [here](#).

Employment First is a national systems-change framework centered on the premise that all individuals, including those individuals with the most significant disabilities, are capable of full participation in **Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)** and community life.

HSRC Offers Webinar on Braiding Resources for Housing and Services

Join the Housing and Services Resource Center (HSRC) to learn how State and local systems can develop lasting cross-sector partnerships to increase access to accessible, affordable housing and supportive services for people with disabilities, older adults, and people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The January 9th webinar is intended for those who are looking to build dynamic partnerships that combine rental assistance and access to supportive services for people with disabilities, older adults, and people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. This webinar will feature examples of strong collaborations from federal, State, and local levels. Presenters will explore opportunities to braid funding and resources as well as approaches to developing effective partnerships. The webinar will be held on Monday, January 9, 2023, from 2:00 -- 3:00 pm (ET). [Click here](#) to register.

APS TARC to Host Webinar on Promising Practices to Provide Direct Client Services

The Adult Protective Services (APS) Technical Assistance and Resource Center (TARC) is hosting a webinar on Tues., Jan. 24th, 2023, from 2:00 -- 3:00pm (CST) featuring a panel discussion on APS programs using Administration for Community Living (ACL) formula grant funding to partner with providers for a "warm client hand-off" and provision of wraparound services/direct-client services. The goals of partnerships include identifying and overcoming resource and service gaps, increased communication among agencies, and improved client and community outcomes.

Panelists will be: Clifton Bryant, Social Services Specialist, Adult Protection Branch, Kentucky Department for Community Based Services; Tim Jackson, Section Administrator, Missouri Adult Protective Services; and Mary Ladd, Chief, Family Health Systems, OHA APS; OHA HCBS, Rhode Island Office of Healthy Aging. Register [here](#).

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.

This update was prepared by:

Susan L. Vaughn, Director of Public Policy
publicpolicy@nashia.org

Jennifer Braun, Chair of Public Policy Committee

Rebecca Wolfkiel, Executive Director
execdirector@nashia.org

Zaida Ricker, Governmental Relations Consultant
zricker@ridgepolicygroup.com

[Visit our website](#)

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.



National Association of State Head Injury Administrators | PO Box 1878, Alabaster, AL 35007