

U.S. Education's Office for Civil Rights solicits public comments to help decide how best to improve current Section 504 regulations to assist America's students with disabilities. Read further for more information in this week's *Washington Weekly*.



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF STATE HEAD INJURY
ADMINISTRATORS**

Washington Weekly!

by National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

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Administration

Education Seeks Input on Section 504 for Possible Amendments to the Regulations

The U.S. Department of Education has announced plans to gather public input on possible amendments to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in order to strengthen and protect the rights of students with disabilities. The Department's Office for Civil Rights will solicit public comments to help decide how best to improve current regulations, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in public and private programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance, including schools and postsecondary institutions. The work that OCR will do this month to listen to and solicit public input will include input from those people with disabilities who also have mental health needs and their advocates.

The Department's Section 504 regulations were the first issued by the federal government that addressed the treatment of people with disabilities through a civil rights framework, rather than through solely a medical or vocational framework. In the years that followed, these regulations served as a model for the regulations of other federal agencies and were the foundation for many of the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Interested parties may submit comments [here](#). The Department will also hold listening sessions in the coming months.

HRSA Awards Funding to Expand Access to School-Based Health Services

This week, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) **announced** that Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) awarded nearly \$25 million to improve and strengthen access to school-based health services in communities across the country. Awards will support local partnerships between schools and health centers to provide children and youth the comprehensive physical and mental health care they need. Awards were made to 125 HRSA-funded health centers that deliver comprehensive, high-quality primary health care services to individuals and families through school-based sites in underserved communities. To locate a HRSA-supported health center, visit [here](#).

CMS Creates New Page on States' Compliance with EVV Requirements

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has created a new page on [Medicaid.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) featuring a table that lists each State or territory's compliance status with Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) requirements as of January 1, 2021 for personal care services. States and territories were required to self-report their EVV implementation status using a web-based survey, which the CMS used to determine compliance with the EVV requirements included in Section 12006(a) of the 21st Century Cures Act. The table indicates whether each State or territory reported it was fully compliant, partially compliant, or not compliant with EVV requirements as of January 1, 2021. The table also includes the date the State or territory reported it had achieved full compliance, if applicable, and links to download copies of the

compliance determination letters that CMS issued to each State or territory. You may find the table [here](#).

In addition, the EVV job aid was posted on Medicaid.gov that focuses primarily on appropriate documentation of EVV implementation efforts within Appendix I of the section 1915(c) HCBS waiver application. You may find that information [here](#).

Federal Funding Opportunities

ACL Announces Lifespan Respite Care Program Funding Opportunities

Two new funding opportunities are available from the Administration for Community Living (ACL) under the Lifespan Respite Care Program. Lifespan Respite Care Programs are coordinated systems of accessible, community-based respite care services that reduce duplication of effort and help to develop respite care infrastructures at the State and local levels. The grant opportunities are:

1) Grants to New States and States Re-Establishing Their Core Respite Infrastructures. Application deadline: June 17, 2022. [View more details and application instructions](#). (Grant Opportunity HHS-2022-ACL-AOA-LRLR-0050)

2) State Program Enhancement Grants. Application deadline: June 14, 2022. [View more details and application instructions](#). (Grant Opportunity HHS-2022-ACL-AOA-LRLI-0049)

ACL Offers Funding to Strengthen the Direct Care Workforce

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) is announcing a new funding opportunity entitled “Strengthening the Direct Care Workforce (DCW): A Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Initiative.” Approximately \$1.3 million per year from a combination of program funding from the Older Americans Act, Rehabilitation Act, and the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act will support this five-year project that will result in the establishment of a new National Technical Assistance Center, designed to strengthen the direct care workforce that provides home and community-based services (HCBS) to people with disabilities and older adults.

This new initiative will become a central hub for State, private, and federal entities involved in the hiring, recruitment, training, and workforce development associated with the delivery of HCBS. This initiative builds off and will advance the collaboration between ACL, the Department of Labor, and other Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) agencies, including the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. An information teleconference for interested applicants is scheduled for Tuesday, May 17, from 3:00-4:00pm (ET). Phone: 888-942-9712; participant passcode: 5313288. Letter of intent is due May 31. View the funding opportunity [here](#).

Reports and Resources

GAO Issues Report on Telehealth Use

Following the increase in telehealth use during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) [encouraged Medicaid to ensure that beneficiaries](#) receive an exceptional level of care before defining the new normal. During the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth use universally increased, and it is likely not to decline in the years to come.

This sudden increase occurred prominently among Medicaid beneficiaries. GAO studied telehealth data from five random States that had a similar rise between March 2020 and February 2021. During this time, telehealth delivered 32.5 million services, significantly higher than the 2.1 million a year prior. The number of beneficiaries also increased, rising from 455,000 to 4.9 million. For more information read the [report](#).

Federal Equitable Data Working Group Releases Report

The Federal Equitable Data Working Group, created by the President's Executive Order 13895 on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government, recently released their full report on recommendations for promoting equitable data collection and use. Among the key recommendations from this initial report is a charge to establish best practices for measuring disability status, as well as sexual orientation, gender identity, and rural location. The full fact sheet and report from the Working Group can be found [here](#).

ACL Posts Recording and Event Slides from TBI Stakeholder Day

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has posted the webinar recording and the event slides from the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Stakeholder Day held March 8. View the webinar recording (YouTube) [here](#) and the event slides [here](#).

Upcoming Webinars and Conferences

CASE to Host Training on Section 504

The Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) is hosting a comprehensive training on Section 504 virtually this summer, featuring Julie Weatherly, Esq. On June 13, 2022, the presentation will be geared toward participants who want the basics - including 504 general provisions, Child Find under Section 504, contents of a 504 plan, evaluation and eligibility, and more. Those who want more advanced training can join on June 14 to learn about topics including 504 safeguarded rights, extended school year services, COVID-19 and 504, service animals, and other important information. Participants can register for one or both days. For more information and to register, please go [here](#).

Registration is Open for Neuro-Optometric Rehabilitation Association Conference

Registration is now open for the Neuro-Optometric Rehabilitation Association, International (NORA) 32nd annual conference, September 8-11, 2022, at the Hyatt Regency Columbus, Columbus, Ohio. The NORA annual conference is a premier event for eye care and other health care professionals who provide rehabilitative services to individuals who have suffered a traumatic brain injury. The 2022 conference will provide a variety of continuing education presentations with key opinion leaders from optometry and other specialties offering a combination of hands-on and lecture style presentations. Further information may be found [here](#).

SARTAC Offers 2nd Webinar on Writing Policy Information that is Easy to Understand

The Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC) is offering webinars to strengthen the self-advocacy movement by supporting self-advocacy organizations to grow in diversity and leadership, SARTAC held its first webinar on April 25, and the next one, "Plain Language, is scheduled for May 10, 2022, 4:00pm – 5:00pm (ET). Register [here](#).

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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.

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