

Join ACL next week in celebrating its 10th anniversary. 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

Administration Extends PHE for 90 Days

Last Wednesday, April 13, 2022, the Administration renewed the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE), just before the initial April 16 expiration date. This will extend pandemic policies and flexibilities that have made it easier for millions of Americans to access health insurance coverage under Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, access telehealth services, and sign up for health insurance. CMS released guidance giving States 12 months to redetermine eligibility for Medicaid and CHIP, and Congress extended telehealth coverage of Medicare for five months after the emergency ends in the fiscal 2022 omnibus spending bill. This is the ninth extension. However, States may have different dates for ending PHE that impacts temporary State licensing, Medicaid, and local education agencies.

HHS Highlights Health Disparities During National Minority Health Month

In keeping with April as National Minority Health Month, the Office of Minority Health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is highlighting the important role organizations and individuals can play in reducing health disparities and improving the health of racial and ethnic minority and American Indian/Alaska Native communities. Research shows that people with disabilities are more likely to face health disparities compared to those without disabilities, and that likelihood may be even higher for those from minority communities. They may also face disparities in employment and access to the services and supports they and their families need to fully participate in the community.

Yesterday, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) announced the availability of nearly \$90 million in American Rescue Plan funding to support new data-driven efforts for HRSA Health Center Program-supported health centers and look-alikes (HRSA-designated health centers) to identify and reduce health disparities. HRSA's modernized data collection and reporting initiative, called Uniform Data System Patient-Level Submission (UDS+), is designed to collect more and better data on social determinants of health, while also streamlining and improving data quality reporting for health centers. This effort will enable health centers to tailor their efforts to improve health outcomes and advance health equity, more precisely targeting the needs of specific communities or patients.

ACL Celebrates 10th Anniversary Next Week

Next week, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) will host a livestream, Celebrating ACL's 10th Anniversary. The event, scheduled for April 26th, 1:00pm – 2:30 pm (ET), will celebrate ACL's achievements during the last decade, explore current opportunities and activities, and look ahead to what's needed to achieve ACL's vision for the future of the country. The event will feature two panels of leaders from the disability and aging communities. The first panel will discuss ACL history, the key milestones and accomplishments of ACL's first ten years, and how ACL can build on the strong foundation laid in its first decade to establish and support

a national expectation of community living. The second panel will discuss the future of community living with a focus on building partnerships and collaboration. No registration is required to access the livestream event. Join the livestream [here](#).

HHS Releases Data on Mergers and Consolidations in the Healthcare Industry

This week, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced that it is taking actions to promote competition and transparency in our nation's health care system that can improve the safety and quality of nursing homes and hospitals. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is releasing data publicly -- for the first time -- on mergers, acquisitions, consolidations, and changes of ownership from 2016-2022 for hospitals and nursing homes enrolled in Medicare. This data is a new tool for researchers, State and federal enforcement agencies, and the public to better understand the impacts of consolidation on health care prices and quality of care.

HHS's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) is also releasing a related report — an analysis of the new CMS data examining trends in changes of ownership over the past six years. These new data and analysis support [President Joe Biden's Executive Order on Promoting Competition](#), and advance the Biden-Harris Administration's goal of improving transparency around nursing facility ownership and enhancing nursing home safety and quality.

SAMHSA Announces Funding for National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is awarding nearly \$105 million in grant funding, provided by the American Rescue Plan, to 54 States and Territories in advance of the transition of the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) from the current 10-digit number to the 988 three-digit dialing code in July. States and Territories are expected to use the funds to improve response rates, increase capacity to meet future demand, and ensure calls initiated in their States or territories are first routed to local, regional, or State crisis call centers.

[Award recipients](#) may also use the funds to build the workforce necessary for enhancing local text and chat response. These grants along with other recent funding from the administration, represent a 40-fold increase in federal support of the Lifeline over the past four years. With States at varying degrees of operational readiness, the success of 988 now rests heavily on the willingness of State, Territorial and local leaders to make additional investments in shoring up the crisis care continuum.

HHS Secretary Swears in Assistance Secretary at the ACF

Yesterday, April 21, 2022, following bipartisan confirmation by the U.S. Senate, HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra formally swore in January Contreras as Assistant Secretary at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). She is a former county prosecutor and assistant attorney general who lead a legal aid center for children and young adults experiencing abuse, neglect, human trafficking, family separation and homelessness. Contreras previously served in the Obama-Biden Administration as ombudsman for citizenship and immigration services at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and as a designee to the White House Council on Women and Girls. In these roles she led efforts to launch new federal training and guidance to ensure immigrant victims of domestic violence and other crimes are treated with the same dignity and protection all victims deserve.

Previously, Contreras oversaw the Arizona Department of Health Services after serving as assistant director of the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, Arizona's Medicaid agency. She was a member of Governor Janet Napolitano's Children's Cabinet, as well as the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board.

Judiciary

SCOTUS Denies Puerto Rico Residents SSI

On Thursday, the U.S. Supreme Court of the U.S. ruled that Congress can deny Puerto Rico residents with disabilities to claim benefits under the federal Social Security Income (SSI) program, ruling that the Constitution does not require Congress to offer such payments to residents of the island even though people born there are U.S. citizens. The court ruled 8-1 against the challenge by Puerto Rico residents to receive equal treatment under the SSI program, with Justice Brett Kavanaugh delivering the opinion for the majority. Justice Sonia Sotomayor was the only dissenter in the case, known as *United States v. Vaello Madero*.

The SSI program was signed into law by President Richard Nixon in 1972 to provide monthly payments to older Americans and people with disabilities or blindness. The Justice Department has said that President Biden supports legislation extending SSI benefits to Puerto Rico residents.

Federal Proposed Rules

CMS Proposes Medicare Inpatient & Long-Term Care Hospitals & SNF Prospective Payment Systems

On April 18, 2022, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued the fiscal year (FY) 2023 Medicare Hospital Inpatient Prospective Payment System (IPPS) and Long-Term Care Hospital (LTCH) Prospective Payment System (PPS) proposed rule. The proposed rule would update Medicare fee-for-service payment rates and policies for inpatient hospitals and LTCHs for fiscal year (FY) 2023. CMS is publishing this proposed rule to meet the legal requirements to update Medicare payment policies for IPPS hospitals and LTCHs on an annual basis. This [fact sheet](#) discusses major provisions of the proposed rule, which can be downloaded from the [Federal Register](#).

Last week, on April 11, 2022, CMS issued a proposed rule that would update Medicare payment policies and rates for skilled nursing facilities under the Skilled Nursing Facility Prospective Payment System (SNF PPS) for fiscal year (FY) 2023. In addition, the proposed rule includes proposals for the SNF Quality Reporting Program (QRP) and the SNF Value-Based Program (VBP) for FY 2023 and future years. CMS is publishing this proposed rule consistent with the legal requirements to update Medicare payment policies for nursing homes on an annual basis. This [fact sheet](#) discusses the major provisions of the proposed rule.

Federal Funding Opportunities

NIDILRR Publishes Funding Opportunities for Three New Equity Center RRTCs

The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) has published its funding opportunities for this fiscal year to [Grants.gov](#). These new opportunities are listed below.

- **NEW!** Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living -- Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTC): Equity Center in the Health and Function Domain Synopsis. For more information go [here](#).
 - **NEW!** Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living -- Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTC): Equity Center in the Employment Domain Synopsis 1 For more information go [here](#).
 - **NEW!** Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living -- Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTC): Equity Center in the Community Living and Participation Domain Synopsis 1. For more information go [here](#).
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Reports and Resources

NNJTBI Releases Podcast: Reclaiming Yourself After Brain Injury

The NIDILRR-funded [Northern New Jersey Traumatic Brain Injury System \(NNJT BIS\)](#) has released a podcast, [Reclaiming Yourself After Brain Injury: Hope for a "New, New" Self](#). The podcast features Tara Buggie, a brain injury survivor and advocate, who shares her story and her view on reclaiming one's self after a TBI. Ms. Buggie discusses what "self" means and the impact that a TBI can have on that concept.

HHS Releases Report on Supportive Housing for Youth Formerly in Foster Care

A recent evaluation funded by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sought to learn about permanent supportive housing (PSH) programs specifically for youth formerly in foster care. The [study report](#) describes results from a nationwide scan of housing programs that follow the PSH model, which focuses on providing low-barrier affordable housing and supportive services for an indefinite period of time to youth at risk of homelessness. Read the [report](#) to learn more.

Upcoming Webinars and Conferences

NCAPPS Offers Webinar on Person-Centered Healthcare Delivery

On April 27, 2022, the National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems (NCAPPS) is offering the webinar, "Person-Centered Healthcare Delivery: Centering Patient Experience in Accessing Care from Home," from 3:30pm – 5:00pm (ET). In this webinar, people with lived experience of disability will interview a panel of physicians on the most person-centered ways of delivering healthcare to people with disabilities. The webinar will include tips for patients, their families, and healthcare providers on how to make the best of telehealth or home visit opportunities where they exist. Panelists will share examples from existing programs, reflect on their experiences and challenges, outline best practices, and identify strategies to ensure culturally responsive practices and equitable opportunities for access to person-centered healthcare through telehealth or home visits. Register [here](#).

NASHIA Announces New Leading Practice Academy

The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) has announced a new Leading Practices Academy on Behavioral Health and Brain Injury (LPA BH). The LAS BH is designed for States who want to explore, develop, and/or implement protocols and practices to improve outcomes for individuals with co-occurring brain injury and behavioral health challenges. For more information, read further [here](#).

ADvancing States Extends Deadline for HCBS Proposals

ADvancing States has extended the deadline to submit session proposals for the ADvancing States 2022 Home and Community-Based Services Conference to Friday, April 29! [Submit now](#) for the opportunity to share your session about creative approaches, innovative models, and emerging trends at the 'go-to' national conference on home and community-based services. Special consideration will be considered to sessions that feature State participation and seeking thought provoking sessional about challenges, developments, and opportunities for State aging and disabilities agencies. The conference will be held August 14-18, 2022, at the Marriott Marquis Hotel, Washington, D.C. More information can be found [here](#).

RTC/OM Offers Webinar on New HCBS Quality Measures

On May 3, from 3:00pm – 3:00pm (ET), the [Research and Training Center on HCBS Outcome Measurement](#) (RTC/OM) at the University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration is offering a webinar on quality measures for home and community-based services (HCBS). The RTC/OM has developed measures that focus on how well HCBS are helping people with a variety of disabilities live the lives they want. Register [here](#).

Housing Resource Center to Hold Webinar Series on Fair Housing Planning

The [Housing and Services Resource Center](#) is holding a webinar series on “Engaging the Disability Community in Fair Housing Planning.” This two-part series is scheduled for April 27th and April 28th and is a partnership between the Administration for Community Living and Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Office of Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity (FHEO) for individuals with disabilities, their caregivers, other disability stakeholders, HUD grantees, representatives of communities and public housing authorities. The webinars will be held:

- **Part I: Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing for Individuals with Disabilities**, April 27, 2022 at 3:30pm – 4:30pm (EDT)
- **Part II: Best Practices for Engaging the Disability Community in Fair Housing Planning**, April 28, 2022 at 11:30am – 1:00pm (EDT)

Register [here](#).

DDOC and DOL Sponsors Roundtable on Reentering the Workforce

On April 28, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) will host, as part of HIRE, a virtual roundtable entitled *Untapped Potential: Reimagining Equity for Workers with Gaps in Employment History* to discuss challenges workers face when reentering the workforce after periods of unemployment. The roundtable discussion will be held from 1:30pm – 3:00pm (EDT). Speakers will highlight the barriers that caregivers, older workers, people with long-term disabilities, and formerly incarcerated individuals face when reentering the workforce, the strengths these workers offer to employers, and promising practices to attract this untapped talent.

[HIRE, a Hiring Initiative to Reimagine Equity](#) is a multi-year joint initiative that aims to boost diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) efforts in hiring and recruitment practices to advance equal employment opportunity and help provide workers with access to good jobs. Registration is required. Video/Dial-in information will be sent separately upon registration. Register [here](#). A recording will be available on the [EEOC’s YouTube channel](#).

SARTAC Offers Webinar Series 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 provides training and technical assistance on techniques for writing, translation, graphic design and formatting; and other topics related to creating easily understandable materials. The upcoming series are:

- April 25, 2022, [4:00pm – 5:00pm \(ET\)](#), “Overview of Accessible Formats.” Register [here](#).
- May 10, 2022, 4:00pm – 5:00pm (ET), “Plain Language.” Register [here](#).

This update was prepared by:

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

Jennifer Braun, Chair, NASHIA Public Policy Committee
jennifer.braun@health.mo.gov

Rebecca Wolfkiel, Executive Director
execdirector@nashia.org

Zaida Ricker, Governmental Relations Consultant
zricker@ridgepolicygroup.com

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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.



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