

ACL sets date for virtual TBI Stakeholder Day. 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

January 21, 2022

### Administration News

#### ACL Announces Virtual TBI Stakeholder Day

The U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL) announced that a virtual TBI Stakeholder Day will be held on Tuesday, March 8, 2022 from 12:00pm – 4:30pm (ET) in observance of Brain Injury Awareness Month. Sessions will feature Survivor Engagement Strategies, Domestic Violence and the Effect on Children, Effective Partnerships with Behavioral Health with a Focus on Suicide, and Effective Strategies for Using and Leveraging Data. Issues of equity and intersectionality will be woven into each session. Additionally, participants will also hear from leaders at ACL, and other federal partners. ACL is in the process of finalizing the agenda. There is no cost to attend.

The webinar will be live-captioned and ASL-interpreted. If you require additional accommodations to participate or if you have any questions about the sessions, please contact [tbitarc@hsri.org](mailto:tbitarc@hsri.org). [Register for the event here](#).

#### Administration Makes COVID-19 Tests, Face Masks and Vaccines Available

The federal government has announced a number of options for obtaining COVID-19 testing kits, N95 facemasks, vaccines and other assistance, particularly for individuals with disabilities. On Wednesday, the federal government launched a [website](#) for individuals to request free home COVID-19 testing kits. Free tests (four per home) are available and may be requested by going to the website, [COVIDTests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov), or you may call 1-800-232-0233 or TTY: 1-888-720-7489.

The federal government is planning to send N95 masks across the country soon to community health centers and pharmacies. Some places will have them available late next week, with the roll-out expected to be completed by February. To learn more about effective masks and respirators, go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) [website](#).

In addition, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) maintains the Disability Information and Access Line (DIAL) to help people with disabilities to:

- Help find local vaccination locations.
- Assist with making vaccination appointments.
- Help connect to available testing options, including help with ordering [free at-home test kits](#).
- Connect callers to local services – such as accessible transportation – to overcome barriers to vaccination and testing.

The hotline also can provide information and resources to answer questions and address concerns about the vaccines and can connect callers to information and services that promote independent living and address fundamental needs, such as food, housing, and transportation. For assistance, access the:

- Hotline: 888-677-1199 (Mon.-Fri.; 9am-8pm/ET)
- Deaf and hard-of-hearing people can reach DIAL using the 711/Video Relay Service (VRS). To use this free service, simply dial 711 and you will be connected with a communications assistant with whom you can text.
- Email: [DIAL@usaginganddisability.org](mailto:DIAL@usaginganddisability.org)

The DIAL information specialists are trained to work with people of various communications abilities, including spending as much time as needed to understand what they are saying. For people who do not communicate through speech, sign language or VRS, email is the best option to communicate with DIAL.

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched a program to directly allocate COVID-19 vaccine to HRSA-supported health centers. This assistance includes the [Health Center COVID-19 Vaccine Program](#), has begun incrementally at select HRSA-funded health centers that specialize in caring for hard-to-reach and disproportionately affected populations. The goal is to address health equity in vaccine delivery by providing a direct supply of COVID-19 vaccines to health centers who serve these populations. You may click on a map on the [HRSA website](#) to find participating health centers in your State.

### **HRSA Awards Funding to Reduce Burnout and Promote Mental Health and Wellness Among Health Care Workers**

Yesterday, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), announced \$103 million in American Rescue Plan funding awards to improve the retention of health care workers and help respond to the nation's critical staffing needs by reducing burnout and promoting mental health and wellness among the health care workforce. These multi-year awards will fund evidence-informed programs, practices and training, with a specific focus on providers in underserved and rural communities.

HRSA is making these awards through three programs:

- [Promoting Resilience and Mental Health Among Health Professional Workforce](#) – HRSA is awarding \$28.6 million to 10 grantees to help health care organizations establish, improve, or expand evidence-informed programs and practices to promote mental health and well-being among the health workforce, including their employees.
- [Health and Public Safety Workforce Resiliency Training Program](#) – HRSA is awarding \$68.2 million to 34 grantees to support tailored evidence-informed training development within health profession and nursing training activities. This curriculum will help reduce burnout and promote resilience among health care students, residents, health care professionals, paraprofessionals, trainees and public safety officers, such as firefighters, law enforcement officers, and ambulance crew members.
- [Health and Public Safety Workforce Resiliency Technical Assistance Center](#) – HRSA is awarding \$6 million to George Washington University to provide tailored training and technical assistance to the awardees.

See a list of the award recipients [here](#).

### **RSA Publishes FY 2022 MTAG and Announces State Reviews**

On January 10, 2022, the U.S. Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) published the [FY 2022 Monitoring and Technical Assistance Guide \(MTAG\)](#). The [MTAG](#) is intended to serve as a resource and planning guide for VR agencies and RSA to assist in the preparation for and conduct of monitoring and technical assistance activities in both program and fiscal performance focus areas with a goal of continuous improvement, taking into account the unique circumstances and needs of each VR agency.

On December 6, 2021, RSA announced the selection of twelve VR agencies for on-site monitoring and off-site reviews during federal FY 2022. The following VR agencies will be monitored on-site: Oregon Blind; Vermont General; Wyoming Combined; and Washington General. The following agencies will receive off-site reviews: Oregon General; Guam Combined; Maryland Combined; and Washington Blind. In addition, focused off-site reviews related to follow-up of corrective action plans will be conducted for: Florida Blind; Virgin Islands Combined; New Jersey General; and Maine General/Blind.

### **NHTSA Awards State Highway Safety Grants**

Last month, the Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announced the release of nearly [\\$260 million in highway safety grants](#). These grants, part of the funding included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, were distributed to Highway Safety Offices in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, United States Territories, and the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs. The funds will help States and Territories support a broad array of traffic safety priorities. When full-year distributions are completed, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will increase the funding available for these vital life-saving programs by 31% over the previous fiscal year's levels.

The \$133.3 million in State and Community Highway Safety Program (Section 402) funds will enhance highway safety by supporting data-driven traffic safety programs in the States, such as high-visibility enforcement campaigns and other safe driving campaigns, as well as enforcement of and education about State laws on seat belt use and risky driving. In addition, the funding will help improve traffic records and support programs on the proper use of child safety seats, including inspection stations where caregivers can confirm the proper installation of their child safety seats.

NHTSA is providing an additional \$123.4 million to States and eligible Territories through the National Priority Incentive Programs (Section 405). These funds include nearly \$70 million for impaired driving countermeasures; \$19 million for State traffic safety information systems to help States build databases related to crashes; more than \$17 million for occupant protection including seat belt education and enforcement; more than \$9 million for distracted driving prevention; \$6.6 million for pedestrian and bicyclist safety programs; and \$2 million for motorcyclist safety.

This funding is part of over \$13 billion in funding for roadway safety programs in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, including a \$6 billion new Safe Streets for All discretionary grant program. The Department will release its first ever National Roadway Safety Strategy this month to lay out policies and issue a call to action to officials at all levels of government and stakeholders across sectors to help reduce traffic fatalities and injuries.

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## **Federal Grants**

### **CDC Offers Three New Notice of Funding Opportunities, Includes Implementing mTBI Guideline**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC), Division of Injury Prevention has announced three new notice of funding opportunities:

- [RFA-CE-22-006](#) -- Research Grants to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Physical Therapy-based Exercises and Movements Used to Reduce Older Adults Falls. NCIPC intends support up to two (2) recipients for 3 years at up to \$350,000 per award per year. Application Due Date: March 1, 2022.
- [RFA-CE-22-007](#) -- Reduce Health Disparities and Improve Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Related Outcomes Through the Implementation of CDC's Pediatric Mild TBI Guideline. NCIPC intends support up to one (1) recipient for 4 years at up to \$550,000 per year. Application Due Date: February 22, 2022.

- [RFA-CE-22-008](#) -- Using Data Linkage to Understand Suicide Attempts, Self-Harm and Unintentional Drowning Deaths. NCIPC intends support up to two (2) recipients for 3 years at up to \$350,000 per award per year. Application Due Date: March 8, 2022.

### **HHS Announces Funding to Increase Behavioral Health Care Access in Rural Communities**

On Tuesday, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), announced the availability of \$13 million in funding to increase access to behavioral health care services and address health inequities in rural America, including through evidence-based, trauma-informed treatment for substance use disorder.

HRSA's Federal Office of Rural Health Policy will make awards through the [Rural Communities Opioid Response Program \(RCORP\) - Behavioral Health Care Support](#). Eligible applicants include entities such as Rural Health Clinics, federally recognized tribes, tribal organizations, and community- and faith-based organizations. Applicants can begin the RCORP-Behavioral Health Care Support application process on Grants.gov and must apply by Tuesday, April 19, 2022 at 11:59pm (ET). Visit the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for more information.

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## **Federal Rules and Regulations**

### **HHS Releases RFI for Electronic Prior Authorization Standards**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) today released a Request for Information (RFI) seeking input from the public on electronic prior authorization standards, implementation specifications and certification criteria that could be adopted within the ONC Health IT Certification Program (Certification Program). Responses to this RFI may be used to inform potential future rulemaking to better enable providers to interact with health care plans and other payers for the automated, electronic completion of prior authorization tasks.

Prior authorization requirements are established by payers to help control costs and ensure payment accuracy by verifying that an item or service is medically necessary, meets coverage criteria, and is consistent with standards of care. However, stakeholders have frequently noted that the processes associated with satisfying these requirements result in administrative burden for patients, health care providers, and payers. Diverse payer policies, workflow challenges, and technical barriers around prior authorization processes contribute to health care provider burnout, patient frustration and can even pose a health risk to patients when it delays their care.

Individuals seeking more information about the RFI or how to provide written or electronic comments to ONC should visit the [Federal Register](#) to learn more. Please note that comments must be submitted by March 25, 2022 in order to be considered.

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## **Reports and Resources**

### **NPR Features Program on Domestic Violence and Brain Injury**

This week, NPR's *OnPoint* featured Rachel Ramirez, who discussed her work with domestic violence survivors who suffered brain injuries. Rachel is a licensed social worker and founder and director of the Center on Partner-Inflicted Brain Injury, a project run by the Ohio Domestic Violence Network. She also co-authored "[Trauma-Informed Approaches](#)." To view the broadcast and other information, go [here](#).

### **NIDILRR Project Focuses on Falls Risk and Aging in Place**

Research on falls risk and aging in place from the NIDILRR-funded project [Building Capacity to Improve Community Participation for People Aging with Long-Term Disability Through Evidence-Based Strategies](#), was featured in a news story, [Best Life: Ways to keep aging loved ones safe at home](#), on Action News 5 in Memphis, TN. Principal Investigator Susan Stark, PhD,

and Emily Somerville discussed the risks of falling for older adults and some of the common areas that can present opportunities to improve safety in the home.

### **Advancing States Releases New Resource on Future Planning**

On, January 14, 2022, ADvancing States published a new resource focused on future planning. Future planning is a way for individuals to plan for how they want to live, highlight and share their values, and specify choices that are important to them, in many domains of their lives. This new resource details various aspects of future planning, such as:

- An overview of future planning,
- How states are involved in the process,
- State-by-State resource page,
- National resources to help consumers, and
- A glossary of terms.

This resource is intended to offer States access to information and best practices that can support the future planning needs of older adults and people with disabilities. Click [here](#) to view the webpage.

### **ACL Updates Covid-19 Vaccine Cheat Sheet**

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has summarized the CDC's latest COVID-19 vaccination and booster recommendations on their resources page. The webpage includes a section of resources for the Aging and Disability Networks and guidance for people who are immunocompromised. View the update [here](#).

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## **Upcoming Webinars and Conferences**

### **ACL and CMS to Host HCBS Webinar on Settings Regulation**

On Thursday, January 27, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will hold a webinar in their Promising Practices Series: The “Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Settings Regulation: Where Are We Now and Where Are We Going” which will be held from 4:00pm – 5:30pm (ET). [Register for the webinar for the webinar.](#)

The requirements of the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Settings Rule provide an opportunity to enhance the quality of HCBS and provide additional protections to individuals that receive services. With the transition period coming to a close on March 17, 2023, it's important to understand both the current state of the transition and what will be needed going forward to ensure continued compliance.

### **DETAC Offers Webinar on Advancing Competitive Integrated Employment**

The Administration on Disability (AoD) Disability Employment TA Center's National Community of Practice (CoP) webinar, "[Advancing Competitive Integrated Employment through Managed Long-Term Services & Supports & Value-Based Payment Methodologies by Creating and Sustaining Partnerships with Medicaid, Managed Care Organizations and Other Stakeholders](#)", will be held Tuesday, February 8, 2022, from 3:00-4:30pm (ET).

The webinar will focus on the use and benefits of value, performance, and outcome-based payment methodologies to advance competitive integrated employment (CIE) within managed long-term services and supports (MLTSS) programs. Webinar participants will learn how and why AoD grantees are advocating for the creation of sustainable partnerships to design and implement value, performance, and outcome-based payment methodologies to advance CIE for individuals with disabilities.

### **National Academy Offers Webinar on State Policies to Improve Direct Care Workforce**

Funded by The John A. Hartford Foundation and the RRF Foundation for Aging, the National Academy for State Health Policy's RAISE Family Caregiver Resource and Dissemination Center is

hosting a webinar on February 8, 2022, 1:00 – 2:00pm (EST) to discuss State policies to improve the quality and supply of the direct care workforce, which are featured in its RAISE State Policy Roadmap for Family Caregivers. The webinar will provide an overview of these policies and will feature a national leader as well as leaders from Arizona and Colorado who will share their policies and innovations to strengthen the home and community-based services workforce. For more information and to register, visit the [website](#).

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This update was prepared by:

**Susan L. Vaughn**, Director of Public Policy  
[publicpolicy@nashia.org](mailto:publicpolicy@nashia.org)

**Jennifer Braun**, Chair, NASHIA Public Policy Committee  
[jennifer.braun@health.mo.gov](mailto:jennifer.braun@health.mo.gov)

**Rebecca Wolfkiel**, Executive Director  
[execdirector@nashia.org](mailto:execdirector@nashia.org)

**Zaida Ricker**, Governmental Relations Consultant  
[zricker@ridgepolicygroup.com](mailto: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.**

