

SSA offices may open end of March. Read further for more information in this week's *Washington Weekly*.



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF STATE HEAD INJURY
ADMINISTRATORS**

Washington Weekly!

by the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

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Editor's Note: Have you renewed your NASHIA dues yet or notified NASHIA your intention to do so? Please be sure to renew so that you may continue to receive *Washington Weekly* and other publications, resources, and training. You may renew [here](#).

Administration News

White House May Release FY2023 Budget Proposals in March

It appears that the President's recommendations for federal fiscal year (FY) 2023 budget will be released after he delivers the State of the Union address March 1. The budget is usually delivered after the address. The current budget is being funded through a Continuing Resolution that ends February 18 with agencies receiving level funding, same as the year before (FY2021). The statutory deadline for releasing a budget is the first Monday in February. However, as the final fiscal 2022 appropriations has not been settled, it is unclear exactly when the FY 2023 budget will be ready.

SSA Set to Open Offices

The Social Security Administration (SSA) anticipates staff returning to field offices and resume normal pre-pandemic operations, although the Omicron variant may put that on hold. The SSA and the three unions that work with it plan to return 45,000 employees to physical worksites on March 30. During the pandemic, SSA has turned to options such as online, telephone and video services to conduct its operations, which has been difficult for people in rural areas and those without access to transportation or technology to get help with Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security Disability (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). After being closed for nearly two years, SSA and unions representing the agency's work force have agreed to reopen more than 1,200 offices, depending on changes in the pandemic and further negotiations. Bargaining is set to conclude by March 1.

HHS Secretary Released Statement Following SCOTUS Decision on Vaccine Mandate

Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra released a statement following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision on January 13 to allow implementation of the health care facility vaccination rule. He was pleased that the rule that requires health care facilities require their workers to be vaccinated was upheld and HHS has already begun implementing this rule in some States across the country. However, he did express disappointment that the broader vaccine requirements for businesses have been struck down.

DOL and Treasury Issue Report to Congress on Mental Health Parity Law

The U.S. Departments of Labor (DOL), Health and Human Services and the Treasury have issued their [2022 Report to Congress on the 2022 Report to Congress on the Paul Wellstone](#)

[and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 - PDF](#). The report includes information that suggests health plans and health insurance issuers are failing to deliver parity for mental health and substance-use disorder benefits to those they cover. The report also highlights the departments' recent emphasis on greater MHPAEA enforcement in addition to guidance to correct those failures, and makes recommendations to strengthen MHPAEA's consumer protections and enhance the departments' enforce abilities.

The Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration is taking unprecedented steps to enforce the law and to ensure that the agency is using its full authority to facilitate access to mental health and substance-use disorder treatment. Similarly, HHS through its Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has increased its MHPAEA enforcement activities in the individual and fully insured group markets in States where CMS has enforcement authority and over non-Federal governmental plans in all States. The report outlines the departments' efforts to interpret, implement and enforce the amendments to MHPAEA made by the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021.

CMS Reports Final Open Enrollment Year 9 Numbers

Yesterday, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released its final numbers for Open Enrollment Year 9 (OE9) which ended on January 15 for most States. The [press release](#) from CMS indicates that 14.5 million Americans enrolled in coverage through the healthcare marketplace during OE9 and that number includes 5.8 million people who were not previously covered. CMS also released a [fact sheet](#) with their final enrollment snapshot which includes a State-by-State breakdown.

Reports and Resources

CDC Releases Data Reports

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released reports on recent data. The first report published is the "[Surveillance for Violent Deaths — National Violent Death Reporting System](#)," that summarizes data from CDC's National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) on violent deaths that occurred in 39 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico in 2018.

Today's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (MMWR) includes the article, "[Percentage of Adults Aged ≥18 Years with Diagnosed Diabetes, by Disability Status and Age Group — National Health Interview Survey, United States, 2020](#)." In 2020, 25.7% of adults aged ≥18 years with disability had diagnosed diabetes compared with 7.7% of those without disability. For each age group, those with disability were more likely to have diabetes: adults aged 18–44 years (8.3% versus 2.2%), 45–64 years (25.3% versus 9.9%), and ≥65 years (34.2% versus 17.8%). Regardless of disability status, the percentage of adults with diagnosed diabetes increased with age.

Disability was defined by the reported level of difficulty to questions about six domains of functioning: "Do you have any difficulty... seeing, even if wearing glasses; hearing, even if wearing hearing aids; walking or climbing stairs; communicating, for example understanding or being understood; remembering or concentrating; and self-care, such as washing all over or dressing." Response categories were "no difficulty," "some difficulty," "a lot of difficulty," or "cannot do at all." Adults who responded "a lot of difficulty" or "cannot do at all" to at least one domain were classified with disability. Review the information from the National Health Interview Survey, 2020 [here](#).

NARIC Notes Recent Research

In this week's [Research In Focus](#), published by NARIC, rehabilitation physicians and rehabilitation counselors discussed the long-term effects of COVID-19 and the experiences of "long-haulers" as they return to work. Also highlighted, is the NIDILRR-funded [Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Community Living and Participation](#) has published [Frontline Initiative: DSPs Respond to COVID-19](#). Frontline Initiative covers issues important

to direct support professionals (DSPs) and supervisors who support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and other disabilities in a variety of community settings. This issue shares stories by and for DSPs covering the challenges they've experienced during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Frontline Initiative is produced in collaboration with the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP).

NASHIA Offers SUD Resources

The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) is pleased that two new resources are now available:

- 1) ***Client Workbook: Substance Use and Brain Injury*** which can accompany the Brain Injury and Addictions Toolkit that was released last fall. While the Toolkit is focused on behavioral health providers, this new Workbook is meant for individuals with brain injury who are going through the recovery process. The Workbook was created by Drs. Carolyn Lemsky and Tim Godden with support from the NASHIA team and funded by State partners in AL, MA, NH OH, and VA.
- 2) Also just released, and created by NASHIA staff with funds from SAMHSA's Region 7 ATTC, is the Tip Card for Behavioral Health providers, ***What Providers Need to Know: Behavioral Health and Brain Injury***, intended to support identification and resource referral for clients with brain injury.

DETAC Offers ACL TBI Grantees Opportunities for Improving Employment Outcomes

The Disability Employment TA Center (DETAC) has announced several opportunities for Administration for Community Living's (ACL) Administration on Disabilities (AoD) grantees, including TBI State Partnership Program grantees, for improving employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. DETAC is offering grantee organizations an opportunity to obtain assistance for in supporting people with disabilities to access the vital assistive technology that is needed for daily living or competitive, integrated employment (CIE). If a grantee organization is experiencing some challenges with the lack of assistive technology resources, knowledge, or partnerships to support the advancement of assistive technology for people with disabilities in your State, then RISE Peer e-Learning Community in Assistive Technology and Employment may help.

The RISE Peer e-Learning Community in Assistive Technology and Employment will be comprised of ten (10) sessions, Feb. 24 -- May 5th (no session March 24th), from 3:00-4:30pm (ET). Interested grantees should complete the [application](#). Registration is required by 11:59pm (ET) on February 11, 2022.

DETAC hosts monthly national webinars on the second Tuesday of every month from 3:00-4:30pm (ET). "Office Hours with the Experts" are held on the 2nd Friday of every month from 12:00 noon -- 1:30pm (ET). The Office Hours are an opportunity for AoD grantees to further engage directly with subject-matter experts who participated in the last monthly national webinar to seek advice on specific projects, troubleshoot challenges that have arisen with employment systems-change work, and brainstorm to get feedback on new ideas that are contemplating. AoD's grantee network and DETAC's national Community of Practice to take advantage of monthly webinars and the subsequent office hours to help inform ongoing work to improve CIE outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Agencies Offer New Resources that Support People Experiencing Homelessness

A [new tool](#) seeks to help State and local leaders identify and access federal non-emergency health and social service programs so they can use multiple streams of funding for holistic supportive services that meet the short- and long-term needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The new tool lists the relevant programs in the Veterans Affairs (VA) Department and the Health and Human Services (HHS) agencies.

OSERS Releases Annual Report to Congress on IDEA

The U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) has released the [43rd Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities](#)

[Education Act, 2021](#). The report focuses on children with disabilities being served under IDEA, Part B and Part C, nationally and at the State level.

NASHIA Releases Galveston Brain Injury Conference Report and Update of Workgroups

NASHIA has released a paper on the 21-year conference partnership between Moody Neurorehabilitation Institute (Moody Neuro) and University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB). Read the Galveston Brain Injury Conference 2000-2021 Report [here](#). Susan Vaughn authored this paper which provides a comprehensive look at GBIC through the years.

The 2019-2021 conferees focused on the CDC's "Report to Congress on the Management of Traumatic Brain Injury in Children" and broke into work groups to make recommendations in keeping with the CDC report. The mild TBI (mTBI) subgroup of the RECOGNIZE group has since drafted two tools for your feedback: The [Head Injury Incident Form](#) and the [Hospital Discharge Checklist for Pediatric TBI](#). The subgroup would like feedback by COB on Thursday, February 10th. Please consider taking part in this input opportunity.

[Link here](#) to provide input on the *Head Incident Form*

[Link here](#) to provide input on the *Hospital Discharge Checklist for Pediatric TBI*.

The Care Coordination subgroup of CARE is pleased to share that three articles were published in 2021:

- Davies, S.C., Lundine, J.P., Justice, A.F. Care Coordination for Children with Special Health Care Needs: A Scoping Review to Inform Strategies for Students with Traumatic Brain Injuries. [Journal of School Health](#).
- Shook, B., Palusak, C., Davies, S.C., & Lundine, J.P. A scoping review to inform strategies for youth with traumatic brain injuries: Care Coordination tools. *International Journal of Care Coordination*.
- Palusak, C., Shook, B., Davies, S.C., & Lundine, J.P. A scoping review to inform strategies for youth with traumatic brain injuries: Care coordination personnel. *International Journal of Care Coordination*.

Upcoming Webinars and Conferences

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](#).

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

[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.

