



Washington Weekly!

November 4, 2022

Administration

Administration Announces Increased LIHEAP Funds

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), announced \$4.5 billion in assistance this week to help lower heating costs for low-income American families this winter, including those who are or have members who are elderly, with a disability, and/or a young child. The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (**LIHEAP**) funds – distributed by ACF’s Office of Community Services – will go to States, territories, and tribes. In addition to subsidizing home heating costs this winter and covering unpaid utility bills, the federal program will help families make cost-effective home energy repairs to lower their heating and cooling bills.

The funds announced are a combination of regular appropriations by Congress, \$100 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and additional emergency funding Congress included in the September continuing resolution. Individuals interested in applying for energy assistance can visit energyhelp.us or call the National Energy Assistance Referral (NEAR) hotline toll-free at: 1-866-674-6327.

CMS to Expand Behavioral Health and Wellness through Medicare Program

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through its Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), is expanding access to behavioral health care, cancer screening coverage, and dental care for Medicare beneficiaries. The Calendar Year 2023 Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) final rule announced on Tuesday also promotes innovation and coordinated care in the Medicare program through Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs). CMS is making it easier for Medicare beneficiaries to get behavioral health services, by allowing behavioral health clinicians such as licensed professional counselors and marriage and family therapists to offer services under general (rather than direct) supervision of the Medicare practitioner.

Medicare will also pay Opioid Treatment Programs that use telecommunications with patients to initiate treatment with buprenorphine. CMS is also clarifying that Opioid Treatment Programs can bill for opioid use disorder treatment services provided through mobile units, such as vans, in accordance with Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) guidance. These policies may increase access in rural and other underserved areas.

CMS is also finalizing policies to pay for clinical psychologists and licensed clinical social workers to furnish integrated behavioral health care as part of a primary care team. Finally, Medicare will provide a new monthly payment for comprehensive treatment and management services for patients with chronic pain. These new services offer a whole-person approach to care.

The following fact sheets are available:

- [**2023 Physician Fee Schedule Final Rule**](#)

- [Final changes to the Calendar Year \(CY\) 2023 Quality Payment Program](#) (zip file)
- [Final changes to the Medicare Shared Savings Program](#)
- [CY 2023 Physician Fee Schedule and Quality Payment Program final rule](#)

HHS to Hold Call on Bivalent Vaccination of Older Adults and People with Disabilities

On Tuesday, November 8, at 12:00 (noon) – 1:00pm (ET), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs (IEA) and the Administration for Community Living (ACL) is hosting a webinar with U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy and other subject matter experts on to accelerate vaccination of people with disabilities, older adults, and others who are at greatest risk of serious illness from COVID-19. Dr. Murthy will share the latest information about COVID-19 and what people need to know about staying up to date with their vaccines to protect themselves from serious illness. Register [here](#).

HHS Approves Arkansas' Medicaid Waiver to Provide Medically Necessary Housing and Supports

This week, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), approved an amendment to Arkansas' Medicaid section 1115 demonstration that will test innovative interventions to address housing and food insecurity, as well as other critical health-related social needs, similar to recently approved section 1115 demonstration initiatives in [Arizona](#), [Massachusetts](#), and [Oregon](#), the amendment to the Arkansas Health and Opportunity for Me (ARHOME) demonstration will drive better health and well-being outcomes for beneficiaries in crisis by providing medically necessary support services, particularly for young people, pregnant and postpartum women, and those dealing with mental illness and substance use diagnoses.

The approved amendment will address various health-related social needs among targeted populations through coverage of intensive care coordination and other person-centered supports provided by "Life360 HOMEs." Life360 HOMEs are designed to connect people to necessary health services and community supports while actively engaging participants in promoting their own health. Arkansas will work with local hospitals and community partners to support individuals with serious mental illness and/or substance use diagnoses who live in rural areas; individuals with high-risk pregnancies up to two years postpartum; and young adults (ages 19-24) at high-risk for long-term poverty and poor health outcomes due to prior incarceration, involvement with the foster care system, or involvement with the juvenile justice system, as well as veterans ages 19-30 who are at high risk of homelessness.

CMS is also authorizing Arkansas to provide or increase coverage for certain other services that address health-related social needs for Life 360 HOME beneficiaries. These include critical nutritional services, case management, outreach, and education. For additional information about the ARHOME section 1115 demonstration, please visit [Medicaid.gov](#).

Federal Agencies Remind Authorities of Special Education Obligations After COVID-19

Last month, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Head Start (OHS) sent a joint letter to State Directors of Special Education, Local Educational Agency (LEA) Special Education Directors, Part B Section 619 Coordinators, Part C Coordinators, and Head Start Grant Recipients to remind them of IDEA requirements to ensure special education and related services are provided to both eligible preschool-aged children and school aged children with disabilities. The letter also emphasized the importance of ongoing collaboration between the State educational agency (SEA), LEAs, and their Head Start program partners to effectively meet IDEA requirements and ensure the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities.

The letter emphasized responsibilities under Child Find; IEPs; least restrictive environment; and resolving disagreements between parents and IEP Teams. The letter also provided resources that may be helpful under both Parts B and C of the IDEA, as well as Head Start to assist in implementing high-quality early childhood programs for all children.

Since the pandemic, both OSEP and OHS have quantitative data and other information that indicate—

- Initial evaluations to determine eligibility of children suspected of having a disability are being delayed;
- Special education and related services included in IEPs are not being provided timely, or IEPs are not being fully implemented; and
- Educational placement decisions for children with disabilities are not being made in accordance with IDEA's LRE requirements.

SEAs, LEAs, and Head Start programs all have responsibilities for implementing IDEA:

- SEAs are responsible for establishing and enforcing policies and procedures to ensure full implementation of child find and other IDEA requirements to ensure that FAPE is made available to all eligible children with disabilities in the State;
- LEAs are responsible for identifying, locating, and evaluating children suspected of having disabilities in a timely fashion and developing and implementing IEPs for eligible children with disabilities in accordance with the applicable IDEA requirements; and
- Head Start programs are responsible for referring children and families for IDEA evaluations as well as supporting implementation of children's IEPs.

Read the letter [here](#).

Reports and Resources

Caregiver Action Network Organizes National Family Caregivers Month

As November is [National Family Caregivers Month](#), the Caregiver Action Network (CAN) is recognizing those who provide essential care and medical assistance to a family member or friend with a disability. CAN has promoted the theme for the month as [#CaregivingHappens](#) to acknowledge the reality that family caregiving is not always convenient or expected. In honor of National Family Caregivers Month, the White House issued a [Proclamation](#). The Administration for Community Living (ACL) reminds us that National Family Caregivers Month offers an opportunity to raise awareness of caregiving issues, educate communities, and increase support for caregivers. To help promote the [2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers](#), the following materials are available:

- [Presidential Proclamation](#)
- [Social Media Kit from CAN](#)
- [Promo Materials for the National Family Caregiver Strategy](#)

National Women's Law Publishes Report on ARP Child Care Funds

The National Women's Law Center has published the report, [Child Care Rescue: How States Are Using Their American Rescue Plan Act Child Care Funds](#). The report focuses on how States are using their supplemental discretionary Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds provided through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and includes some State data on ARPA child care stabilization grants. The report shows that States have used their ARPA child care funds for innovative and important strategies and activities to increase families' access to affordable, high-quality care and to improve child care workers' compensation and job condition -- yet States will not be able to address remaining gaps in our child care system, or even sustain progress made thus far, without significant new long-term federal and State investments.

Research Center for Parents with Disabilities Publishes Compendium of Data Sources

The NIDILRR-funded [National Research Center for Parents with Disabilities](#) released the updated [Compendium of Data Sources for Parents with Disabilities in the United States |2022](#). The compendium shares national data sets with indicators of both disability and parental status. The data sets come from various national studies and surveys. The introduction discusses the types of information still needed, including data from parents with disabilities from Black and brown communities, and the whole lives of parents with disabilities, among others. The compendium is also [available in Spanish](#) (PDF).

RSA Partners with ACF's Peer Technical Assistance Network

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has announced various partners with federal partners for the purpose of improving competitive integrated employment and economic outcomes for individuals with an array of abilities. RSA has informed its stakeholders of a resource funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF), which funds the Office of Family Assistance's (OFA's) Peer Technical Assistance (TA) network and [website](#).

The goal of Peer TA is to establish linkages among Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) agencies and their partners serving TANF and low-income families at the State, county, local, and tribal level. The Peer TA website acts as a dissemination and communications vehicle, supporting the Peer TA Network in the provision of technical assistance, facilitating a dialogue among organizations serving TANF and low-income families, and helping organizations learn about innovative programs and the latest research around effective strategies to successfully support TANF and low-income families on a path to self-sufficiency.

Peer TA shares information and resources useful to State vocational rehabilitation agencies through its [OFA Peer TA newsletter](#), [Resource Library](#), [OFA Peer TA Webinars](#), and [Learning Center with Training Modules](#).

DETAC Announces New TA Publications

The Disability Employment TA Center, funded through a federal contract awarded to the Lewin Group and TASH by the Administration on Disabilities (AOD), has announced the following new publications:

- **[Building Capacity for Financial Wellbeing](#)** -- This brief is a supplement to the Disability and Employment Technical Assistance Center's (DETAC) learning module Shared Solutions: Improving Results for Financial Wellbeing. The module consists of three lessons: 1) Building Capacity and Referral Networks, 2) Self-Directed Financial Wellbeing, and 3) Core Planning Components. The purpose of the document is to reinforce financial core planning strategies for people with disabilities through the illustration of three case scenarios of individuals with disabilities.
- **[DETAC SELF-EMPLOYMENT BRIEF](#)** -- This brief focuses on Self-employment as a critical component of any successful approach to employment support for people with disabilities. It contains examples of the benefits of self-employment and includes success stories from entrepreneurs residing in Rhode Island. Key elements of funding and the necessary partnerships needed to support self-employment are also included in the brief.
- **[Engaging Employers: Partnering for Success](#)** -- This publication builds upon a previous brief by thoroughly detailing specific action steps that grantees can take to build relationships with new employers and enhance current partnerships with employers by assessing levels of engagement through the five degrees presented in the brief.

Additional resources that can be accessed [here](#).

The Washington Post Features Article on Concussion and Domestic Violence

The October 31st edition of *The Washington Post* featured an op-ed written by Rachel Ramirez, Center on Partner-Inflicted Brain Injury and The Ohio Domestic Violence Network, that featured

information on concussions and domestic violence. Research at Ohio's domestic violence agencies has shown that **over 80 percent** of survivors accessing services have experienced some type of abuse that could lead to concussion or another type of brain injury. Click [here](#) to read the article.

Other

BIAA Announces New President/CEO Effective December 1

This week, the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) announced the appointment of Rick Willis as the new president/chief executive officer, effective December 1, 2022 upon the retirement of longtime President and CEO Susan H. Connors who will continue to serve through the end of the calendar year. Connors has led the organization for over 17 years and has strengthened the organization and expanded its reach.

Willis brings more than 25 years of leadership experience in voluntary health on a local, national, and international scale. A graduate of the University of Tennessee, Willis began his nonprofit career in 1997 at the Muscular Dystrophy Association and went on to hold leadership roles at the American Diabetes Association, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, and Melbourne, Australia-based Cancer Council Victoria. Most recently, in his role as Senior Vice President of Community Engagement and Revenue Strategy with the Arthritis Foundation, Rick partnered with volunteers and staff to expand the organization's reach and impact, advance programmatic and policy-related objectives, and deliver on a \$54 million fundraising portfolio.

Read more in the [news announcement](#).

Upcoming Webinars and Conferences

WHO Launches Training in Assistive Products

The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) will launch [Training in Assistive Products \(TAP\)](#), an online resource designed to increase the assistive technology workforce with a focus on simple, priority assistive products. TAP is a free, open access online training resource to prepare primary health, community workforce, and other personnel to support people with disabilities in accessing assistive technology, from providing vision and mobility devices to referral for complex products. The launch will include a [webinar and the opening of a massive open online course \(MOOC\)](#), November 10th, 7:00 am (ET). The MOOC will offer a two-week run of the Introduction of Assistive Products module, available in multiple languages.

KTDRR Offers Webcast: Social Media – How to Use Data and Analytics

The NIDILRR-funded [Center on Knowledge Translation for Disability and Rehabilitation Research \(KTDRR\)](#) and the [Center on Knowledge Translation for Employment Research \(CeKTER\)](#) will host a webcast, [Social Media: How to Use Data and Analytics](#), November 16th, 3:00– 4:00pm (ET). Presenters from the National Rehabilitation Information Center (NARIC) and the National Library of Medicine (NLM) at the National Institutes of Health will discuss strategies that can help participants use their social media and web statistics to understand and strengthen their social media impact. Presenters will discuss how these strategies work in different languages and regions of the globe. Registration is free and required.

Applied Self-Direction Offers Webinar on Disabling Ableism on November 10th

On November 10th, the webinar, "Disabling Ableism: Tips for Partnering with Disabled People," will be led by Erica Andres, a Training Consultant at Applied Self-Direction who has over 20 years of experience working in the Health and Human Services field and personal expertise living a self-directed life. While this session is primarily geared towards support brokers and other professionals working with self-direction programs, the key takeaways will be applicable to anyone who is nondisabled and working with people with disabilities. Self-direction is a model

of long-term care that allows people to receive support in their homes and communities, the way they want it. Watch this video to learn more. This webinar will be held on Thursday, November 10, 2022 from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 pm (ET). [Click here](#) to register.



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.



