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DISABILITY INCLUSION
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INNOVATION

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

CSAVR National News Brief

January 28, 2024

CSAVR *National News Brief* is a regular series covering legislative activity, media stories, research initiatives, webinars, reports, conferences, and national advocacy activities of interest to member state VR agencies.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Be watching for announcement this week that the draft agenda AND a Call for Proposals for the Spring 2024 CSAVR conference has been posted on our website.

HIGHLIGHTS:

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NATIONAL NEWS

Is our health care system ready to serve older individuals with disabilities as we baby boomers enter our 70s, 80s, and 90s? Do most health care providers understand their responsibilities under the ADA? The following article provides some insights into these questions and possibly raises issues our programs need to consider in terms of awareness and outreach. Graham, Judith. "America's Health System Isn't Ready for the Surge of Seniors with Disabilities." KFF Health News.

Does your state have an American Indian VR Services (AIVRS) program, which is also known as the Section 121 Program? Public Law 102-477, which is not new, may have an impact on these programs in your state. This 477 action allows Tribes to consolidate various federal funded programs such as employment assistance, higher education and or general assistance. There are some Tribal Programs that have or may be contemplating including their Tribal VR dollars with other workforce dollars per 477. There appear to be various opinions as to what would be the impact on 121 programs and their customers if a Tribal program would elect to co-mingle the AIVRS dollars per 477.

This just came on our radar at CSAVR and we would appreciate hearing any thoughts you may have on this and thanks.

DIRECTOR UPDATE

Congratulations to Meredith Dressel who has been named as the new WI-C Administrator following Delora Newton who retired at the end of 2023. Meredith has been with the agency for several years and active in CSAVR. Welcome to the Director ranks, Meredith.

CSAVR WORK

CSAVR has signed off on a letter in partnership with the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) and the National Association of State Directors of Adult Education (NASDAE) urging the speedy re-establishment of the Federal Employment Data Exchange System, or FEDES. We understand several Federal agencies are partnering to re-establish FEDES and wish to encourage their work. FEDES was suspended in early 2018. We are supporting this because we understand that a re-established FEDES will help VR agencies supplement State UI and

SWIS data as these sources do not include Federal employment or USPS employment.

TIP OF THE EDITION

Are you keeping your back up audit documentation handy? You may want to do that through your next 107 Monitoring cycle. In the current 2024 Monitoring cycle one of the RSA review teams asked an agency to not only provide proof from their auditor that they made a needed correction and also the agency's supporting documentation as to the correction.

CSAVR YES/LMS WEBINARS

We hope you enjoyed the series of three free webinars that CSAVR partnered with YES/LMS to offer in 2023. These webinars are recorded, will be captioned, ASL interpreters, and housed on the CSAVR Yes/LMS page for others to view and receive CRC credits. Want to thank all the presenters and all of you who tuned in for these webinars. We had over 1,800 register for these sessions. While the evaluations from the final webinar have not been tabulated yet, an average of 96% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the webinars were helpful.

In partnership again with Yes/LMS we hope to offer another series of webinars. Stay tuned for more information.

OSERS & RSA UPDATE

DOE has published an Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking \[federalregister.gov\]](https://www.federalregister.gov) (NPRM) in the Federal Register. Comments regarding the NPRM must be submitted electronically via the Federal eRulemaking Portal at [www.regulations.gov \[regulations.gov\]](https://www.regulations.gov). However, if you require an accommodation or cannot otherwise submit your comments via [http://www.regulations.gov \[regulations.gov\]](http://www.regulations.gov), please contact Kelly Terpak, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Room 4C212, Washington, DC 20202. Telephone: (202) 245-6776. Email: EDGAR@ed.gov. *The comment period closes on February 26, 2024.* The Department will not accept comments submitted after the comment period closes.

The last major update to EDGAR was in 2013. Given that EDGAR serves as a foundational set of regulations, the Department reviewed EDGAR, evaluated it for provisions that, over time, have become outdated, unnecessary, or inconsistent with other Department regulations, and identified ways in which EDGAR could be updated, streamlined, and otherwise improved. Specifically, the Department proposes to amend parts 75, 76, 77, 79, and 299 of [title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations \[ecfr.gov\]](#).

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Programs(OSERS) will host the second session for the 2023-2024 Symposium Series, [Beyond the IDEA and WIOA requirements: Knowing what to expect when it matters! \[air-org.zoomgov.com\]](#) virtually on **February 28, 2024, from 1:00 – 2:30 pm Eastern!** [Register Here \[air-org.zoomgov.com\]](#)

TAC PRODUCTS & OPPORTUNITIES

Please go to this link <https://cop.vrtac-qm.org/login/index.php> [\[cop.vrtac-qm.org\]](#) and sign up for the Fiscal Management Community of Practice. You will then be on our mailing list.

VRTAC-QM Manager Minute: How to Make VR Thrive! Building a Culture That Withstands the Test of Time at Vermont General

Diane Dalmasse, Director of HireAbility Vermont, is in the studio today. Diane is the longest-serving director nationally in the VR program and has a lot to say about culture in the workplace and the changes Vermont made to retain and attract employees from across the nation. Learn about how hiring an organizational consultant back in the 90s continues to prove its worth today. [Listen Here \[managerminutevrtac-qw.libsyn.com\]](#)

On another note, over the past few years, there has been a significant turnover in the SVRA Director ranks. At the same time, many longer-serving Directors continue to maintain their posts while dealing with the impact of probably the most complicated reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act, WIOA. VRTAC-QM and CSAVR are partnering to reach out during February to conduct interviews with current and former Directors to understand better why many are staying and others are leaving.

We would like to identify any supports, services, training, etc., that can be made available to ease the burden on current Directors and enable new Directors to adapt to the job more readily. A team of Carol Pankow, Chaz

Compton, and John Walsh from VRTAC-QM, as well as John Connelly and Ron Vessell from CSAVR, will be conducting the interviews. If you are contacted as part of this study, you can take the time to share your experiences and ideas. Thanks in advance for your participation.

NCRTM NEWSLETTER

The January issue of the NCRTM Newsletter Issue #84 is out. Among other news there is a new NCRTM curated list video tutorial and braille training.

REPORTS, TRAINING, NEWSLETTERS AND CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITIES

The University of Memphis Institute on Disability invites you to the first of four webinar sessions on vocational rehabilitation counselor's study. This webinar will present a Crisis and Trauma Counseling and Invention training module. The webinar will be on Tuesday, January 30th, from 4:00 PM until 5:00 PM CST. Please register at the link below:

<https://memphis.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwvde6ppj0qE9eKRRicjIAH-K5FA6mSaHUr> [memphis.zoom.us]

The [Rehabilitation Research and Training Center \(RRTC\) on Improving Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities](#) [click.icptrack.com] will host a webinar, [Benefits and Challenges of Employment for Individuals Diagnosed with Mental Illness: Qualitative Findings and Ongoing Research](#) [click.icptrack.com], January 31st, 12 - 1 pm ET. Presenters will share qualitative findings from interviews with working professionals who self-identified as having a mental illness, highlighting the benefits and challenges of being employed and having a mental illness on the job and explore the policy implications of the findings as well as preview their ongoing related research. Registration is free and required.

The [Northwest ADA Regional Center](#) [click.icptrack.com], in association with the Oregon Health Authority, is offering a four-part series on the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) and Healthcare](#) [click.icptrack.com], January 24th, February 27th, March 27th, and April (date TBD), 3 - 4 pm ET. The series begins with an introduction to disability identity and culture, explains key legal requirements, and concludes with an interactive discussion about bias in the healthcare setting. The series will also cover three basic legal requirements: facility and telehealth access; effective communication with

patients with disabilities; and the modification of programs, policies, and procedures. Registration is free and required for each part of the series.

The [Southeast ADA Regional Center \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) will host the first webinar in the 4th Thursday ADA Talks 2024 series, [Food Allergies, Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\), and Employment \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), January 25th, 10 - 11 am ET. Presenters will discuss food allergies as a disability under the ADA, how to accommodate a person with food allergies in the workplace, and resources to help employers and employees to address this issue in the workplace. Registration is free and required for each webinar in the series.

The [Great Lakes ADA Regional Center \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), through funding from the [U.S. Access Board \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), will host a webinar, [Highlights from the New Government-Wide Section 508 Assessment \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), on January 30th, 1 - 2:30 pm ET. Presenters will discuss the results of a 2023 survey of Section 508 programs in federal agencies focusing on new Section 508 Assessment Criteria. Presenters will review recommendations to improve 508 implementation across the government, which were included in the report submitted to Congress in December 2023. Registration is free and required. Continuing education credits are available upon request.

Join a group of leaders in HIV advocacy and research from across the country on February 2 at 9am for a virtual institute, "**Addressing Career Counseling and Employment Needs: Prioritizing the Physical, Mental, and Economic Health and Well-being of People Living with HIV: Part II**," presented by North Carolina Central University and the National Working Positive Coalition! Panelists discuss "The Role of Employment and Employment Services in the Journey of People Living with HIV". Registration without CEU certificate is free; registration with 4 CRC credit units certificate is free; registration with a 4 contact hour NBCC CEU certificate is \$15 for students and \$25 for professional: [bit.ly/5thcareerinstitute \[bit.ly\]](https://bit.ly/5thcareerinstitute)

VISIONS 2024, the global conference of the Foundation Fighting Blindness is scheduled for Chicago on June 21 and 22.

The [Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee \(IACC\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) seeks [public comments to assist the committee in identifying priorities related to physical health, mental health, and other](#)

[related conditions that commonly co-occur with autism spectrum disorders \(ASD\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#). The IACC also seeks public comments on the impact of these co-occurring conditions, as well as research, services, and policy needs that may be helpful to consider in addressing related issues. All comments must be submitted online via the web form by or before February 14th and only one comment per email address will be accepted. Questions may be directed to Ana Cappuccio at [301/402-4837](tel:3014024837) or iaccpublicinquiries@mail.nih.gov

The [Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center \(RERC\) on Augmentative and Alternative Communication \(The RERC on AAC\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) seeks participants who use AAC for a [study on their experiences using AAC in direct personal care \[click.icptrack.com\]](#). Participants will complete four short surveys and an optional zoom interview. Eligible participants will receive \$75 Amazon gift card for their time. To volunteer, complete the [request to participate form \[click.icptrack.com\]](#).

The [Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center \(MSKTC\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) published a factsheet, [Nutrition and Spinal Cord Injury \[click.icptrack.com\]](#). The factsheet defines nutrition and why it is important, how nutrition affects health after spinal cord injury, how to talk to a healthcare provider about one's diet, and making changes for health and wellness. The factsheet also includes a chart of nutritional needs to promote overall health and address issues with bowel, bladder, skin, bone, and muscle. The factsheet is available in English and [Spanish \[click.icptrack.com\]](#).

The [Administration for Community Living \(ACL\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) announced the [release of its plan to expand public access requirements for peer-reviewed scholarly publications and scientific data arising from research funded in whole or part by ACL \[click.icptrack.com\]](#). The plan expands on the current Public Access Plan, first published in 2016 and revised in 2017. ACL's expansion of public access requirements will be described in a new ACL Public Access Policy, which will be released by December 31, 2024, and implemented by December 31, 2025. The ACL Public Access Plan is [available in PDF \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) and [HTML formats \[click.icptrack.com\]](#).

The [Rehabilitation Research and Training Center \(RRTC\) on Community Living and Participation Among People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) released a new series of briefs, [Data Bytes](#)

[\[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com), summarizing data from the long-running Residential Information Systems Project (RISP). Each Data Byte is a brief, graphical summary of one RISP research finding, and includes background information on the topic, key research findings, and public policy recommendations.

The [Mount Sinai Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training \(ARRT\) in Brain Injury and Rehabilitation Research \[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com) (PDF) is accepting applications for a two-year post-doctoral fellowship in brain injury and rehabilitation research. Fellows engage in collaborative, mentored research and receive training in community engagement, implementation science and policy change, and knowledge translation. Candidates will have completed a doctoral or equivalent degree in a clinical or quantitative field, demonstrated potential for independent research, and have foundational skills in data analysis. Additional information and application details are [available in a PDF \[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com)

RECENT ARTICLES

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