

**HDI Consumer Advisory Council
Online meeting in Zoom
Monday December 5, 2022 10:30AM – 1:30PM**

In attendance today... CAC Members

Skylar Koehler
Jake Cruz
Walt Bower
Vivian Lasley
Cathy Lerza
Joe Cowan
Julie Pfeiffer

Presenters: Bev Harp, Shirley Kron, Tara Eversole, John Hill, Laura Butler, Patti Singleton

1) Welcome & Introductions Joe Cowan

Joe opened the meeting. All members introduced themselves.

2) Review and Approval of September Minutes Joe Cowan

Joe asked for members to review the September minutes. Jake made a motion to approve the minutes, and Vivian seconded.

3) AUCD update – Council on Leadership in Advocacy (COLA) Joe Cowan

Joe attended the COLA meeting in Washington, DC on November 13. Joe discussed how the meeting was organized including presentations, breakout discussions, and completing directory applications. COLA is divided into three regions: Eastern, Central, and Western. Kentucky is in the Central region. Attendees included persons with disabilities, family members, and AUCD staff members, echoing the make-up of the CAC.

4) Innovative Supports for Autistic Workers (ISAW) update Bev Harp
-Input and feedback from CAC members

Bev provided an overview and update on Innovative Supports for Autistic Workers (ISAW). One of the guiding principles of ISAW is that everyone on the autism spectrum who wishes to work should have the opportunity to do so. All ISAW work is done by autistic staff. The main responsibility of ISAW is to perform in-person trainings for employers discussing characteristics of autism and supports for the hiring process and on the job. ISAW also performs consultations and conducts site visits to help identify barriers to employment for autistic workers.

For Fall of 2022, ISAW has focused on accommodations by developing an infographic on service animals, conducting seven consultant interviews, and providing several presentations regarding accommodations for autistic workers. Bev identified the greatest barrier for participation in ISAW is employer awareness of the program and asked for assistance from the CAC members to help make connections with hiring managers at Kentucky businesses.

- 5) RETAIN presentation update Shirley Kron
-Input and feedback from CAC members

Shirley provided an update on the Retaining Employment and Talent after Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN). The goal of the RETAIN project is to increase employment retention by working with employees, employers, and healthcare providers to address issues related to successful return-to-work and stay-at-work for injured or ill employees. The project is currently in Phase 2 in which direct services are provided to employees with non-occupational illnesses and injuries including enduring implications of COVID-19. Services are provided at no cost to the employee.

Return-to-work coordinators help the employee identify goals, create an individualized return-to-work plan, and assist with referrals to needed resources. Individuals can self-refer to the program by emailing RETAIN@uky.edu or calling (859) 562-325. Shirley asked for ideas to disseminate this information across the Commonwealth to help get individuals connected to services and CAC members provided suggestions.

- 6) Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) Week update Tara Eversole
-Input and feedback from CAC members

Tara provided an update on the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) Week which occurred in October and happens each year. ECC Week is hosted by the Kentucky DeafBlind Project (KDBP) project. Six high school students with varying degrees

of DeafBlindness from across Kentucky participated in ECC week this year. Participants developed skills in job exploration, independent living, socialization, and promotion of complete autonomy. Tara provided the schedule of activities for the week which included attending a Lexington Legends game, visiting a climbing gym, and cooking dinner for family members. Tara then provided images from ECC Week that showed the students participating in the various activities and highlighted the communication strategies used.

- 7) Bluegrass Mountain Biking Accessibility Initiative project update
-Input and feedback from CAC members
- John Hill
Laura Butler

John introduced the Bluegrass Mountain Biking Accessibility Initiative project. The Bluegrass Mountain Biking Accessibility Initiative project's goal is to build a mile long adaptive trail at Falling Springs in Versailles, KY. The project is currently in Phase 1, which includes a walkthrough with Woodford Country Parks, an inspection with Trail Builder, and flagging with Youth Corps. The trail will be built during Phase 2, which will occur from December through February. Phase 3, which is expected to occur from March to April of 2023, will include a ride and mapping. Phase 4 will focus on promotion and growth. Vivian provided a contact for John and Laura in the Bell County area.

- 8) The State of HDI Podcast Series
-Input and feedback from CAC members
- Patti Singleton

Patti provided an update on the State of HDI Podcast Series. The State of HDI is a podcast exploring initiatives and projects at HDI and is part of ongoing work to bring together the efforts of HDI and the ever changing state and national landscape of important issues. Patti and the team record the podcasts in a story telling recording studio in the Mineral Industries Building. The podcast can be streamed through iHeartRadio, Apple Podcast, and Amazon music.

- 9) Agency Updates (P & A, DD Council, DDID, OCSHN, OVR)
- Each Agency

Division of Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities – Cathy Lerza reported that the annual risk management meeting was held last month in which incident data is reviewed for people with intellectual disabilities. The data reviewed was for calendar year 2021 and included people who receive

services through state general funds, in Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs), and through the Supports for Community Living and Michelle P waivers. Critical incidents are defined as anything that poses immediate risk to health, safety, or welfare:

<https://www.chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dms/dca/Documents/irinstructionalguide.pdf>

Medical Director, Dr. Brenzel, shared information about a research [study](#) that showed having an intellectual disability was the strongest independent risk factor for getting a COVID-19 diagnosis and the strongest risk factor other than age for dying of COVID-19. In looking at the COVID-19 mortality rate throughout Kentucky and comparing it with the COVID-19 mortality rate of Kentuckians with an intellectual disability, there was not a statistically significant difference. That showed that the strong efforts to keep people with intellectual disabilities safe were beneficial. Links to additional information about intellectual disability and COVID-19:

[COVID was deadlier for those with intellectual disabilities, according to new research.](#)

[The terrible toll of COVID-19 on people with intellectual disabilities](#)

[U.S. adults with intellectual disabilities face a higher-than-average risk of death from COVID-19](#)

[Study with information regarding COVID-19 diagnosis disparities in the disability community](#)

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation - Walt read an update provided by Jonathan White. OVR is in the process of updating their Case Management System with a projected date for roll-out of November 2023. OVR has been able to address staff retention and recruitment issues. Fewer staff are leaving the agency and more high-quality applicants are applying for open positions. OVR recently received their report from Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). The report showed a need for increased focus on consumer engagement and internal controls. The Program Policy and Support Branch has hired many new staff members to address the need for additional internal controls. A consumer engagement team was assembled to help establish appropriate caseload sizes and to provide expectations for rapid and continuous engagement for consumers.

10) Election of New CAC members

All

The CAC nominating committee met last Thursday and recommended Joshua Seigle and Karen Ritchie as new members to the CAC. Jake made a motion to

accept the nominees as members of the CAC and Vivian seconded. The CAC members voted, and the motion passed.

- 11) Election of New CAC Vice-Chair, Chair and Setting of 2023 Meeting Dates All

Skylar Koehler, the current Vice Chair, will become Chair. Jake was nominated and accepted the nomination of Vice Chair. Cathy made a motion to elect Jake as the Vice Chair, and Jake seconded. The motion passed. Walt announced the CAC meeting dates for the 2023 calendar year will be held on March 6, June 5, September 11, and December 4.

- 12) New Business and Announcements Joe Cowan

Joe provided an announcement about his participation at the AUCD Annual Conference. Joe presented a poster at the conference, along with Walt and Julie, that discussed air travel for people who use wheelchairs. Joe spoke with several AUCD attendees about their experiences flying as wheelchair users.

Walt announced that Kathy Shephard-Jones authored an op-ed piece in the Kentucky Herald-Leader on November 11, 2022. The piece is entitled “It’s time for Kentuckians to change our thinking about people and disabilities” and can be found [here](#).

Jake made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Cathy seconded. The meeting adjourned at 1:36pm.

NEXT CAC MEETING: Monday, March 6, 2023, at 10:30 AM – 1:30 PM