



**Brain Injury Advisory Council Meeting
Nebraska VR Office
Lincoln, NE
June 7, 2019**

MEETING MINUTES

Public notice of upcoming meetings will be available on the Department of Education website under "conferences & meetings" at least 10 days prior to each meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tiffany Armstrong, Tim Burton (substitute for Brett Hoogeveen), Nancy Coffman, Tania Diaz, Mark Draper, Dale Johannes, Jason Kerkman (substitute for Peg Ogea-Ginsburg), Kristen Larsen, Carla Lasley, Brooke Murtaugh, Judy Nichelson, Zoe Olson, Peggy Reisher, Kathy Scheele, Frank Velinsky

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jerry Bryan, Michelle Hawley-Grieser, Vaishali Phatak

STAFF PRESENT: Keri Bennett, Ashley Hernandez, Nancy Noha

VISITORS: Andrew Ngochoch, DHHS

The meeting of the Nebraska Brain Injury Advisory Council commenced at 10:09a.m. Public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education web site.

APPROVAL OF MARCH, 8TH MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from March 8, 2019 were reviewed. A motion was made by Nancy Coffman and seconded by Mark Draper to approve the March 8, 2019 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

AGENDA APPROVAL

The agenda for the day was reviewed. Keri Bennett noted the Summit evaluation results would be added to the agenda as well as resuming at 1:00 after lunch. A motion was made by Zoe Olson and seconded by Nancy Coffman to approve the agenda as amended. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent**

OPEN MEETINGS ACT

Judy Nichelson stated that the meeting was an open meeting and the Open Meetings Law was posted on the side table.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kristen Larsen congratulated the Brain Injury Trust Fund legislation being approved.

No additional public comment was shared.

TRUST FUND BILL UPDATE

Peggy Reisher shared the trust fund bill was passed. Peggy reported currently they are determining what the next steps will be. Peggy reported there will be a twelve-person committee overseeing the use of the trust fund. Peggy shared that they have been working on establishing Brain Injury Trust Fund legislation for ten years stating a lot of individuals have contributed and worked hard to get this accomplished. Jason Kerkman asked if there are concerns regarding the possibility of a helmet repeal law now that a trust fund is in place. Peggy stated she does not think it will occur but they will continue sharing information.

STATE PLAN FOR BRAIN INJURY SERVICES

Keri Bennett reviewed with members the minutes and plan table from the state planning meeting held on May 30th. Members discussed creating a rubric to determine priorities of the state plan. Keri noted measurable outcomes are needed for grant reporting. Keri reported the meeting facilitator, Mary O'Hare, suggested creating small focus groups or committees to work on strategies when priorities are established. Members discussed some of the barriers noted in the plan call for very long-term goals but there are also some pieces that can be worked on now. Frank Velinsky suggested a short-term and long-term priority list. Keri shared with council members a proposed list of criteria that could be used to determine the priority level of the state plan solutions and strategies via email; members discussed some of these suggested criteria. Mark Draper shared he is struck by the possible benefits of a state-wide public awareness campaign could have as many individuals are not aware of the services and organizations working with brain injury. Peggy Reisher shared in her experience overall there is not awareness and understanding of brain injury and how prevalent it is in the community. Kristen Larsen discussed work another council is doing to create awareness and educate the general public and how useful creating messaging could be for the BIAC. Nancy Coffman discussed possibly training volunteers and utilizing speakers' bureaus across the state to help share brain injury information. Peggy Reisher shared in her experience it takes relationships and time to transfer the information. Members discussed utilizing partners in order to share awareness and education with connected universal messaging. Mark Draper shared meeting outside the quarterly meetings in work groups is needed to move these initiatives forward. Keri stated one option to help prioritize the objectives could be seeing how well they fit within the council mission to, *engage, integrate and inspire brain injury stakeholders to help achieve the Statewide Vision for Brain Injury Policies and Services*. Jason Kerkman discussed outreach and awareness materials that can be created and used to develop and share a consistent message highlighting social media influence. Nancy Coffman discussed having a well-connected website serving as a hub of information, education and resources. Mark Draper discussed the possibility of a forum to link deliverables and become aware of what options are out there. Kristen Larsen suggested linking and cataloging related resources and information could be a function of the council. Brooke Murtaugh discussed there are groups nationally and internationally working to create a hub of brain injury information via sending out surveys to a large database of contacts that is being compiled. Members discussed not re-creating the wheel and how to contribute to or utilize those groups and existing resources effectively. Brooke stated the first step is reaching out as we do not know what is available and then determining what resources are in-line with the council mission and then how to disseminate the information. Nancy shared concerns of overwhelming individuals with too much information and how to get the right information to the right people. Members discussed the possibility of bringing on a facilitator or consultant to assist with gathering information and resources. Keri stated the council needs to pick areas of priority in order for small work-groups to begin work on in addition to education and awareness. Members discussed the priority of housing and how it can be work on within the Olmstead Plan. Priorities can be tied into other current initiatives in the state. Brooke asked if Nebraska has a Housing First Initiative through the National Alliance to End Homelessness. Brooke discussed the initiative works to first find stable housing and security before other services and challenges can be addressed, members reported Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach has a program as part of the initiative. Peggy shared several needs under Education & Awareness are being worked on by the BIA-NE, but stated they are very grant specific. Keri discussed some objectives are tied to the grant but discussed several items do not require a lot of funding. Members discussed multiple state

resource hubs that are not currently updated or easily accessible or utilized. Members discussed the challenges regarding the necessity for “a no wrong door” resource contact in the state.

Keri summarized three common priorities discussed today:

1. Advocacy and education increasing council visibility.
2. Increasing the voice in advocacy efforts.
3. Public awareness around brain injury and decreasing stigma.

Peggy discussed the need to establish clarity on where to send individuals between the BIA-NE and BIAC websites possibly causing confusion and loss of information.

Keri shared she will pull together some notes regarding today’s conversation in an outline to provide the council for feedback. After this is established work groups can be established to begin work before the next quarterly meeting. Keri shared herself and Judy will divide up groups and send out scheduling options.

REVISED OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Keri Bennett reported the revised operational procedures have been shared with the VR director and the NDE attorney. Keri shared there have been good conversations regarding strengthening and improving the procedures. Keri stated once the revisions are received from legal the previous committee will review and work on the procedures prior to the September council meeting. Tania Diaz moved to table the operational procedures until the September meeting, Dale Johannes seconded the motion. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

NEBRASKA VR RFP CONTRACTING PROCESS

Keri reported she contacted VR Director, Lindy Foley, and Amy Rhone from Special Education for discussion regarding RFPs and contracting processes. Keri discussed the State Rehabilitation Council and how they have not always been involved in evaluation processes and contracting but have provided feedback in hiring. Keri shared she has been investigating policies and is working on developing a procedure to involve stakeholders in the process to the greatest extent possible without creating any conflicts of interest. Members thanked Keri for the work and research and discussed the challenges in coordination of state department regulation. Keri shared the council could propose something that would develop consistency throughout advisory councils within the state.

BIAC MASTER PLAN WORK STATUS

Keri reviewed the current Master Plan updates that were provided electronically. Keri discussed the plan is behind in some areas but there is progress being made. Tiffany Armstrong stated 1A. is listed as completed but shared the group did not complete a full questionnaire as they had discussed previously and was not detailed in a matrix. Keri shared Tresa did complete further surveys but was delayed due to late returns which could be shared. Members discussed establishing a membership committee once bi-laws are approved. Members requested a list of what standing committees are and their membership to help council members determine what committees they would like to be on. Keri shared she will send out committee descriptions for members again.

SUMMIT EVALUATION

Keri Bennett reviewed the summit evaluation results. Keri shared there were a lot of positive comments and some negative feedback which will be taken to heart in organization for next year. Members discussed comments from the evaluation. Judy Nicholson shared she thought it was important to note people thought four hours without a break was a lot for individuals with brain injury. Frank Velinsky discussed he appreciated the comments regarding participants with vision issues as well as the summit’s informational impact for individuals newly experiencing brain injury. Peggy Reisher shared during the Summit there was discussion regarding individual difficulties in completing the survey inquiring what the

status is of revisions being made to the survey. Keri reported they are in the process of negotiating a new contract for data collection and part of that scope of work includes updating processes to improve the survey.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee

Judy Nichelson reviewed the work of the executive committee over the last quarter including reviewing four membership applications. Judy reported the executive committee discussed the applications and made recommendations to Nebraska VR for member appointments to the Council. Judy stated since the executive committee met, the decision was made by VR to delay membership decisions until the Council's Operational Procedures are finalized, so that new members can be brought in with clear and consistent expectations.

Public Policy Committee

Tiffany Armstrong provided members with a document summarizing the legislative bills from 2019, which the committee was following. Members thanked Tiffany and members of the public policy committee for the helpful document and great work during the legislative session.

Network Capacity Building Oversight Committee

Judy Nichelson reported the Brain Injury Network Capacity-Building contract began with John Ferrone February 12, 2019 noting weather and set-backs delayed the progress. Judy shared only two support groups, North Platte and Kearney were interested in participating. The Kearney group had the original idea of creating a voice-driven Association of people who have an injured brain and their family members, so the effort to start an Association is beginning there. In North Platte, a Chapter will be formed by the people of the Support Group. The Kearney Planning Group consists of twelve participants in the planning phase. The North Platte Support Group is exploring what it could mean to be a Chapter. The Kearney Planning Group hopes to have a plan completed by the end of the summer so that it can pursue incorporation and a 501c3 status for the Association in the Fall. Judy shared the Association and its chapters will form infrastructure for networking, these will not replace existing support groups. An oversight committee including BIAC members, Carla Lasley, Judy Nichelson, Dale Johannes, and Frank Velinsky has been formed and will continue working with John in the process. Judy shared the planning members are excited and enthusiastic for the capacity-building work and look forward to collaborating with the BIAC, BIA-NE and stakeholders. Judy stated John Ferrone will attend the September council meeting to further update the Association's progress. Judy shared she is excited for the individuals outside the large cities of the state that will have a network, support and have their voices heard from this work. Peggy Reisher shared collaboration could possibly be increased if the BIA-NE was on the committee. Judy commented if we can all work together, we can further cover and serve the entire state particularly the unserved rural areas.

ACL REORGANIZATION

Keri Bennett reported the Administration for Community Living is reorganizing. Keri stated according to NASHIA they will now be in the office of Disability Services Innovation. Keri reported NASHIA stated there will be no staff lost and a new office is being established to allow for greater coordination. Zoe Olson shared she has been notified that all regional offices will be closed effective August 1st and working instead out of Washington DC. Members discussed these were administrative decisions and there was no stakeholder input. Keri shared for TBI programs as of now there are not large concerns but more information will become available as time goes on.

FEDERAL WORKGROUPS & YEAR ONE TBI GRANT UPDATES

Keri Bennett shared with council members a list summarizing work group products and reviewed work Nebraska contributed to. Keri shared a lot of good work is going on between Mentor/Partner states.

Keri shared year-one TBI grant progress highlights with the council. Keri shared there is good work occurring regarding bi-law updates, and an ADRC representative was added to the council. Keri reported a webinar was held, and VR marketing was teamed with to work on the council webpage and marketing. Keri stated a contract is still in the works for Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data with DHHS. Keri reported all eleven questions related to brain injury will be included in the survey. Keri shared the Brain Injury Needs Survey was completed and results will be distributed via ConstantContact. Keri discussed the First Annual Summit was completed and a new contract was established for the Brain Injury Registry. Keri reported the Annual Report will be submitted on or by June 30th and then shared with the council.

NEW BUSINESS

TBI Waiver Update

Kathy Scheele reported the TBI waiver has been renewed for an additional five years. Kathy shared her long-term goal is to get services into additional assisted living facilities and in the homes of individuals with TBI. Kathy shared currently QLI is the only provider interested in the specialized service in the brain injury waiver. Tim Burton reported QLI has 40 waiver spots available and 20 are currently filled. Kathy shared there is no cap within the TBI Waiver at this point. Kathy shared she would like to bring her DHHS nurses to the September BIAC meeting as she needs their assistance and wants to provide them the expertise and understanding of brain injury from council members. Frank Velinsky discussed many individuals with TBI being served under an A&D waiver and not TBI. Kathy shared they are currently working on the possibility of amending the TBI waiver to accommodate in-home care. Kathy reported the level of care criteria is being optimized to better determine waiver qualification. Keri Bennett stated Kathy can be added to the September agenda and possibly create a small work-group following the meeting.

Concussion Coalition Update

Peggy Reisher shared the coalition has been working on Return to Learn messaging. Peggy said the main areas of focus are learning opportunities for teachers of students of all ages. Mark Draper discussed they are looking at tiered model of needs with materials developed by Karen McAvoy. Mark discussed Karen has created an electronic mechanism to directly inform educators of students identified as concussed. The coalition is also working on getting information to coaches and trainers sharing the message that they are students first, athletes second. Peggy reported a PSA is being developed to share the Return to Learn perspective.

Registry Regulations Updates and Future Public Hearing

Andrew Ngochoch from DHHS reported there are two main changes to codes in the registry regulations. Andrew reported language was also updated in statute but did not change its effectiveness. Keri Bennett shared the registry coding is a one-time coding that establishes if they can be put on the registry or not which is not later reviewed. Members discussed cause of injury codes, diagnosis and the possibility of utilizing that information within HIPPA regulations. Andrew shared currently 2017 is the most current report and the new 2018 report will be released in October. Keri shared the registry staff members discussed possible changes that could allow long-term follow-up. Andrew shared there will be a public hearing date set once the TBI regulations are completed. Keri shared the hearing would be a great opportunity to present changes and updates.

NASHIA Conference Request

Keri Bennett shared they have been considering applying to host the NASHIA conference in Omaha. Keri stated she was contacted by an individual from “Visit Omaha” encouraging hosting the NASHIA Conference in Omaha. Keri shared the Visit Omaha contact has offered to assist with conference coordination as well as a possible interested contact at UNMC. Kristen Larsen shared a conference for administrators and providers is not necessarily in-line with a voice-driven mission. Mark Draper discussed Omaha is becoming a great, competitive conference center. Keri stated this could create opportunities to establish additional voice-centered activities and provide a burst of energy for providers across the state as well as making the BIAC more visible. Keri stated she believes the bulk of the work would entail gathering presenters and speakers highlighting the great work on brain injury in the state. Tim Burton shared he believes QLI would be happy to provide presenters and experts. Keri shared if the council is interested Nebraska VR would be applying to host the 2021 conference. Keri stated as there is a good amount of interest in hosting the conference, she will pursue more information and discuss this again in September.

Orientation Materials for New BIAC Members

Keri Bennett shared she spoke with Mark Smith of Munroe-Meyer Institute regarding some great materials and discussed if they could be customized for brain injury. Keri stated as council members are onboarding it would be great to provide information and mentorship to those new members. Keri shared if there is a council work group interested, they could work with Mark to customize the materials in webinar form that could be utilized for the council. Kristen Larsen shared she thinks this would be worth pursuing and could affect several groups across the state. Peggy Reisher asked if having developed materials would be as effective as council member support and mentorship. Keri shared the materials would need input from council members to specialize and customize them for brain injury and stated it could be a nice effort to have some tools available. Peggy shared she hopes some of the materials being developed by the council are going to continue evolving and not become static. Peggy shared in her opinion having a mentee/mentor personal partnership for new members would be more useful than materials to review. Mark Draper shared he thinks onboarding with consistent information could be very beneficial. Members discussed the benefits of orientation with personalization and not becoming tokenism. Keri discussed there are additional grants that are focused on person centered planning. Keri shared she will share additional information on this topic through email and continue this conversation in September.

Council Committees

Members discussed the current committees of the council, which are:

- Public Policy Committee – headed by Tiffany Armstrong
- Executive Committee
- Network Capacity Building Committee
- Operational Procedures Revisions Committee – a temporary committee which will conclude once the procedures are finalized. Members noted this task could later be overseen by the Executive Committee.

Members discussed there are additional committees written into the grant that have not yet been formed, including:

- Advocacy & Education Resources Committee
- Membership Committee
- TBI Peer Resource Navigator Committee

ADJOURN

The next meeting is scheduled for, September 20, 2019, in Lincoln. The meeting adjourned at 2:42p.m. with a motion made by Frank Velinsky and seconded by Carla Lasley. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**