

**Brain Injury Advisory Council Meeting
Nebraska VR Office
Lincoln, NE
September 22, 2017**

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, Shari Bahensky, Tania Diaz, Michelle Hawley-Grieser, Brett Hoogeveen, Dale Johannes, Kristen Larsen, ML Lehman, Brooke Murtaugh, Judy Nichelson, Peggy Reisher, Kathy Scheele (substitute for Heather Leschinsky), Frank Velinsky, Judy Vohland

MEMBERS ABSENT: Michael Chittenden, Deanna Jesse, Kilee Oetjen, Peg Ogea-Ginsburg, Tom Reilly

STAFF PRESENT: Keri Bennett, Ashley Hernandez, Nancy Noha

VISITORS: Tom Brown, John Ferrone, Cathy Wyatt

The meeting of the Nebraska Brain Injury Advisory Council commenced at 10:15 a.m. Public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education web site.

APPROVAL OF JUNE 23, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from June 23, 2017 were reviewed. A motion was made by Frank Velinsky and seconded by Brett Hoogeveen to approve the June 23, 2017 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. A motion was made by Peggy Reisher and seconded by Dale Johannes to approve the agenda as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent**

INTRODUCTIONS

Council members and visitors introduced themselves to the group. Keri Bennett reported new member, Thomas Reilly has joined the council as a family member of a survivor whom will be joining at the December council meeting.

OPEN MEETINGS ACT

Tiffany Armstrong announced that the meeting was an open meeting and the Open Meetings Law was posted on the side table.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tiffany Armstrong shared a thank you card from former council member, Rose Dymacek. No other public comment was shared.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Tiffany Armstrong shared with the council several members' terms will be expiring at the end of September and October. All members with expiring terms shared they wanted to continue serving on the council. An anonymous ballot vote was conducted to determine renewal of council membership for members: Tiffany Armstrong, Dale Johannes, Kristen Larsen, Brooke Murtaugh, Peg Ogea-Ginsburg and Peggy Reisher.

The renewal of council membership for members: Armstrong, Johannes, Larsen, Murtaugh, Ogea-Ginsburg and Reisher was approved by unanimous consent.

COUNCIL MISSION/JOB DESCRIPTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Brett Hoogeveen reported the committee has been working to develop the council mission, vision and job description. The committee provided council members a copy of the proposed mission, vision and job description for member feedback. Brett shared they were hoping to discuss the content of the statements to see if they are on track with all members. Brett shared that adding the word, inspire, was an important addition and change going forward. Michelle Hawley-Grieser stated she feels the statements encompass the goals of this group. ML Lehman asked who the council defines as the brain injury stakeholders. Brett shared this is a very open term and can include anyone who cares about brain injury services including survivors, family members, services providers, or any citizen. John Ferrone noted that the term in the provided document was written to be all inclusive. Cathy Wyatt asked how statewide vision for brain injury policies and services is defined. John stated that eludes to the bigger concept of vision which he is working on throughout the state meeting with individuals and organizations working with brain injury which will serve as the guiding framework for the council. Frank Velinsky shared he agrees with the mission statement but he is wondering how state and public policy will integrate with the vision to achieve the goals and work harmoniously together. John stated the mission is broad, but that is intentional and those words will continue to be defined throughout the council's work. John discussed that the advisory council does not hold authority but is the convener or forum of stakeholders. John discussed how the council will determine big picture goals and develop task forces to utilize the mission to achieve those goals. Members discussed the liaison role of the council and increasing engagement of additional brain injury stakeholders throughout the state. Cultivating and building rapport with stakeholders was discussed.

Council members reviewed the general role of BIAC (Brain Injury Advisory Council) Members. Brett summarized and discussed the ten expectations of BIAC members. John noted that these roles were created from the current BIAC member handbook. Peggy Reisher noted a goal of these expectation is to increase engagement of members. John discussed the relationships between the three key entities relating to brain injury: BIAC, Nebraska VR and the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska (BIA-NE). John shared his experiences meeting with the BIA-NE board providing feedback from brain injury support groups throughout the state and his opinions on their potential role serving and uniting individuals with brain injury moving forward. Peggy shared there has been a lot discussion to dive into what it means to be "the voice" as well as the need of resources. John stated establishing the voice of brain injury comes down to a matter of pronouns: when individual survival stories go from their stories to our stories. Michelle Hawley-Grieser shared her excitement and passion regarding joining BIA-NE. John discussed the

potential outreach and feedback capable with a powerful voice of brain injury. Members discussed potential membership compositions of the council to represent the stakeholders but determined that composition would need to continue to be assessed and is not in the current scope of work regarding the mission statement. Members discussed the unification of “the voice”.

Tom Brown asked, why does the BIAC need to exist? Members discussed the foundations of the group and ways in which it has changed and morphed separate from funding. Members also discussed how the BIA-NE was created through a need determined by the council. The different roles of advisory councils and advocates were discussed. Key differences of BIAC and BIA-NE were discussed including a neutral forum within the BIAC and additional roles. Tom shared examples of brain injury services and council work in his experience in the state of Iowa. Roles of hard data versus heart data and personal testimonials were discussed. John noted that this is a slice in time and the potential of changes in the future. Brett Hoogeveen stated he feels at this point and time the council is headed in the correct direction. Members determined they were prepared to vote on the proposed mission statement: *The mission of the BIAC is to engage, integrate and inspire brain injury stakeholders to help achieve the Statewide Vision for Brain Injury Policies and Services.*

Dale Johannes made a motion to accept the mission statement and job description as proposed, ML Lehman seconded the motion.

VOTE:

Aye – Armstrong, Bahensky, Diaz, Hawley-Grieser, Hoogeveen, Johannes, Larsen, Lehman, Murtaugh, Nichelson, Reisher, Velinsky, Vohland

Nay – none

Abstain – none

Absent – Chittenden, Jesse, Leschinsky, Oetjen, Ogea-Ginsburg, Reilly, Vohland

The motion carried.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

John Ferrone of Ferrone Associates Technical Assistance and Consulting led the council in a strategic planning session.

John reviewed current issues, challenges and barriers that need attention, current opportunities, BIAC capacity initiatives by committee task force and topics that require attention soon than later. Council members broke into small groups to discuss and determine current flash points in the realm of brain injury. Groups shared their issues. Peggy Reisher shared one issue is education such as ACA and distribution of information. Michelle Hawley-Grieser shared lack of knowledge of brain injury in providers and the lack of service delivery systems. Michelle also shared a huge barrier for individuals living with brain injury is isolation. Brett Hoogeveen shared utilizing data in a useful way has been challenging. Kristen Larsen discussed the challenge of not having a collaborative voice to express concern. Cathy Wyatt discussed the challenges of federal changes, shifting regulations and the reduction of funding; as well as lacking resources in rural areas. Cathy also shared her small group discussed the challenges of not knowing what we don’t know or who we should know and the lack of education and awareness of brain injury in other systems such as correction. Keri Bennet shared there are challenges in housing and lacking education in the medical community as well as the lack of proper screening for individuals with BI in different setting. Keri also shared the need to expand statewide specialized

programs. John Ferrone discussed how many of these challenges can be flipped into opportunities. Members discussed prioritizing these challenges by determining which are the most threatening to brain injury services. Members discussed the issue of Managed Care Organizations (MCO's) not paying in a timely manner causing providers to not take on new Medicaid patients and potential work the council could do about this issue. Members discussed the uniqueness of the BIAC having state agency representatives on the council for information and discussion versus advocacy organizations who do not have that resource or membership. Members discussed that a process is needed for the council to act on issues. Keri Bennett discussed the quarterly meeting schedule of the council is also challenging in addressing all the needs as they arise. Council members discussed the issue of isolation among individuals with brain injury and how the BIAC could address this challenge or if the council's role is simply to raise awareness to the topic and bring stakeholders together for them to address.

Council members broke into small groups to discuss and determine some capacity initiatives the BIAC needs to live up to its new job description. Members shared their small group discussions with the council. Michelle reported regarding stakeholder cultivation and engagement the council needs to use existing communication facilities to reach out to stakeholders. Michelle reported the council should increase the frequency of meeting to a minimum of bi-monthly but possibly in a shorter format. Tania Diaz stated that individuals and support groups in Western Nebraska need to be visited and involved. Tania stated the council should utilize the existing video conferencing technology to reach a more statewide group. Keri shared her group discussed increasing meeting frequency possibly utilizing technology for meetings as well as having council members prepared prior to meetings. Tiffany shared the possibility of having different meeting lengths, perhaps small group meetings monthly and then larger full council meetings bi-monthly. Keri shared that in another state the survivor and family member voice meet prior to the large council meeting to assure they have a strong united voice within the advisory council. Kristen shared her group discussed the need of possible additional staff support and what that support would entail as well as means to collect and manage data needed by the council. Peggy Reisher reported her group discussed increasing communication amongst the council and increasing awareness through council member connections. Keri shared the need to have a set of presentations and educational materials any council members can access and share has been discussed. Members discussed the time consumption of project coordination. Members discussed the potential level and scope of council work and the capacity of members to fulfill those duties. ML Lehman discussed brain injury school teams and the need for them to strengthen.

John summarized and shared with the council what he has learned while visiting brain injury support groups throughout the state. John stated support groups want to be able to advocate for themselves but are not familiar with the BIA-NE, or its programs. John shared support group members are lacking resources and are disconnected. John stated support group members feel alone and unheard but are wanting to tell their story and become powerful and engaged in leadership in developing a brain injury statewide vision.

John shared he has been thinking about the term brain injury since he began working with the council. John discussed the different terms and words individuals use to describe brain injury and how they may be perceived. Members discussed the term brain injury (a noun phrase) versus injured brain (a descriptor phrase). John discussed his opinion that there is a branding issue regarding brain injury.

John reviewed the next steps for the council and asked for a group from the council to review and process the vision before the December council meeting. Tiffany suggested the current committee which worked on the mission and vision carry on with the vision work and report to the December council meeting.

FEDERAL TBI PROGRAM UPDATE

Keri Bennett reported she attended the NASHIA conference last week with large attendance by federal representatives. Keri shared there will be 30-60 days to write the grant once drafted by the Agency for Community Living. Keri shared there will likely be some tiered funding involved with the grants. Keri reported new outcome measures are being worked on now and will hopefully be out soon in the federal register for public comment. ACL is working with NASHIA to elevate and integrate programs making relationships reciprocal. Keri reported there is level funding for 2018 thus far. The ACL is planning to hold more stakeholder calls and Keri will inform the council as they are released.

JUVENILE JUSTICE & COGNITIVE DISABILITIES TASK FORCE

Kristen Larsen reported that John Ferrone was hired to work with the task force including Nebraska VR, BIA-NE, probation services as well as the DD council. They are currently focusing their efforts on a Lincoln based task force which will be meeting for the first time in a few weeks. Kristen reported it is a collaborative effort and all are invited to the table. Kristen stated they have been able to blend efforts and funding in order to work on combined interests. Kristen shared one of the main goals of the task force will be to collect additional data.

NEW BUSINESS

Keri Bennett shared the BIAC received an application for the council and discussed the potential new member. Keri shared that there is not currently an open position for a service provider on the council but perhaps the council could consider the possibility further as this applicant could be a great addition to the council.

Kathy Scheele reported they applied for an IAP on housing and Nebraska was chosen as one of the eight states. The individual in charge of the program would be interested in working with anyone from the council if they are interested in the program and she will provide members the contact information.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- Friday, December 15

ADJOURN

The next meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2017, in Lincoln. The meeting adjourned at 2:47p.m. with a motion made by Dale Johannes and seconded by Judy Vohland. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**