



**Brain Injury Advisory Council Meeting  
Online via ZOOM  
December 10, 2021**

**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, Emaly Ball, Jerry Bryan, Penny Clark, Ashley Davis, Tania Diaz, Joni Dulaney, Jo Gunderson, Karen Houseman, Randall Jones, Carla Lasley, Judy Nichelson, Peg Ogea-Ginsburg, Zoe Olson, Michelle Ploeger, Peggy Reisher, Tamara Snider, Shawna Thompson

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Rhonda Alcorn, Cindy Hoffschneider, Dale Johannes, Sarvinoz Kadyrova, Amy Levering, Brooke Murtaugh

**STAFF PRESENT:** Keri Bennett, Ashley Hernandez, Nancy Noha, Victoria Rasmussen

**VISITORS:** Laura Fisher, Chris Stewart, Elizabeth Troyer-Miller

*The meeting of the Nebraska Brain Injury Advisory Council commenced at 10:02a.m. Public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education website.*

**ATTENDANCE**

Council roll call was conducted, and introductions were made

**APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES**

The minutes from September 10, 2021, were reviewed. A motion was made by Zoe Olson and seconded by Joni Dulaney to approve the September 10, 2021, 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 Bennet noted she had additional information she would like to share during her time on the agenda. Ashley Davis asked if a portion of the meeting could ever be used to discuss new available programs for individuals with brain injury. Keri Bennett proposed adding this discussion of new resources to the new business section of the agenda as a recurring meeting discussion. Jerry Bryan shared the Hotline for Disability as a resource at [www.cap.nebraska.gov](http://www.cap.nebraska.gov), 1-800-742-7594. A motion was made by Peggy Reisher and seconded by Shawna Thompson 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.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Tiffany Armstrong asked regarding a patient that was seen they reported they need SSDI in order to utilize medicare waiver programs and asked members if they had heard this. Karen Houseman shared this is a medicare eligibility questions but stated she could look into this if she emails her the details. Peggy Reisher shared contacting the League of Human Dignity may also be useful.

No additional public comment was shared.

## **QUARTERLY MEETING DATES**

Keri Bennett shared the proposed meeting dates of:

- March 11, 2022
- June 10, 2022
- September 9, 2022
- December 9, 2022

Keri shared they do not know if these meetings would be able to be in person or held virtually but stated it would be nice to have some meetings in person. Zoe Olson shared she would like to see the Zoom component of meetings remain as it is a statewide council and does assist those at further distance to participate.

Karen Houseman moved to accept the proposed dates for 2022, Carla Lasley seconded the motion. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

## **NEBRASKA'S TBI STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM WORKGROUPS**

Keri Bennett discussed the workgroup assignments she had requested to participate it. Keri reported Nebraska was assigned to the Using Data to Connect People to Services workgroup and to the Transition and Employment workgroup. Keri shared they were not assigned to the Under-Served Populations workgroup as they requested but stated it has been opened up that any state that wishes to may participate in additional workgroups. Keri shared the workgroup descriptions and asked if any council members would like to participate. Keri invited any council volunteers to join and shared if no volunteers present she may reach out to those members she feels would be a great fit based on their backgrounds. Jerry Bryan volunteered for the data group. Peggy Reisher asked if the other workgroups beyond the assignments could be shared with members as she has found these very useful in the past. Keri shared she will share a full list with descriptions to members.

## **AT EASE USA**

Laura Fischer presented on the At Ease USA program and Facing PTSD Together. Laura Fischer shared a PowerPoint presentation with council members detailing what the agency does. At Ease USA supports active military, veterans and their families and loved ones with confidential, research-supported, cost-effective treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Laura shared her number for additional information or referrals, she can be reached at 531-247-4040 x2.

## **BIAC STRENGTHING & DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY**

Keri Bennett shared that herself and Nebraska VR are very committed to partnering with the BIAC to assist in achieving the council's mission and statewide vision. Keri stated that recent events have negatively affected the partnership and the council's ability to effectively pursue its mission, so they have invited consultation from Elizabeth and the Central Mediation Center. Elizabeth Troyer-Miller of the Central Mediation Center introduced herself and shared this portion of the meeting is about process and functioning for the council. Peggy Reisher discussed other consultants that have worked with the council

in the past and asked how this consultant would work either the same or different than those situations. Keri discussed this is more in terms of how the council works as a group versus pursuing a project or contract for the council. Elizabeth discussed it is about the council relationships. Randy Jones asked for a scope of services to define the outcomes they are looking for. Elizabeth stated in part the Mediation Center became involved following the June council meeting that maybe inhibiting the councils functionality stating her first step will be if members are willing to meet with her individually to discuss each member's concerns and thoughts. Elizabeth stated following initial meetings she would make recommendations to help the council to achieve the goals of the state plan. Peggy asked what is the time frame for this work? Elizabeth stated its up to the needs and wants of the council sharing if the council is supportive questions would be sent to members and meetings would take place in January and February with each meeting approximately 45min to an hour. Chris Stewart asked if as a visitor if she would be able to communicate with Elizabeth. Keri Bennett shared she would take that question back to administration and get back to her. Karen Houseman shared she thinks this is a great idea to bring in Elizabeth to review the competing views etc. Peggy asked how the recommendations and report following the initial meetings would be shared. Elizabeth shared the results of individuals would be very confidential and if issues are between specific individuals those would be worked on directly and then the overall report would be shared with the entire group. Elizabeth said she is accountable to all members of the Brain Injury Advisory Council. Keri shared a Google Form will be sent out to members via email with questions regarding this topic following the meeting. Elizabeth can be reached at 574-304-6548 or melizabethm24@gmail.com

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Karen Houseman offered updates from DHHS. Karen discussed DHHS released a business plan outlining division goals. Karen discussed some of the highlights of the plan including the division of developmental disabilities. Karen shared the Age and Disabled Waiver is having a vendor review and the TBI waiver will be due for renewal in October 2023.

<https://dhhs.ne.gov/Documents/DHHS-Business-Plan-2021-2022.pdf#search=dhhs%20business%20plan>  
<https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/DD-Public-Comment.aspx>

Peggy Reisher shared they have hired four additional resource facilitators across the state and stated members could learn more about them and how to reach them at the BIA-NE website. Peggy discussed the support group list and stated if anyone has updates or changes to please reach out.

No additional new business was presented.

#### **ADJOURN**

The next meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2022. The meeting adjourned at 11:40a.m. with a motion made by Zoe Olson and seconded by Peggy Reisher. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**