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# **Brain Injury Advisory Council Meeting**

**Nebraska VR Office**

**Lincoln, NE**

**September 20, 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, Emaly Ball, Jerry Bryan, Nancy Coffman, Tania Diaz, Mark Draper, Joni Dulaney (substitute for Kristen Larsen), Brett Hoogeveen, Dale Johannes, Carla Lasley, Heather Leschinsky, Amy Levering, Judy Nichelson, Peg Ogea-Ginsburg, Zoe Olson, Vaishali Phatak, Chris Stewart (substitute for Peggy Reisher), Frank Velinsky

**MEMBERS ABSENT**: Michelle Hawley-Grieser, Brooke Murtaugh

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

**VISITORS:** Chuck Bacus, Kelly Kennedy, Sheila Kennedy, Terry Levering (attendant), Andrew Ngochoch, Davidson Wissing, *via video-conferencing:* Denise Zweiner, Shane Zweiner, Marinna Zweiner, *via teleconference:* John Ferrone

*The meeting of the Nebraska Brain Injury Advisory Council commenced at 10:00a.m. Public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education web site.*

**APPROVAL OF JUNE, 7TH MEETING MINUTES**

The minutes from June 7, 2019 were reviewed. A motion was made by Mark Draper and seconded by Frank Velinsky to approve the June 7, 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 need to move-up the BI Network Capacity Building Project update in the order of the day. A motion was made by Dale Johannes and seconded by Emaly Ball 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**

Chuck Bacus, Executive Director of the Nebraska Stroke Association, shared his association is not funded by any state or federal funds; stating their goal is to support stroke survivors and their caregivers as well as increase awareness. Chuck discussed the NE Stroke Association is partnering with the American Heart Association and placing volunteer “Navigators” that can talk to stroke patients while in the hospital. Chuck discussed that they are also partnering with BIA-NE to try to identify resources in communities.

Judy Nichelson shared with the council the writing of a brain injury survivor which was featured with the “Unmasking Brain Injury” presentation at the Nebraska State Fair.

No additional public comment was shared.

**NEW MEMBERS**

Judy Nichelson welcomed new council members, Emaly Ball and Amy Levering. Amy and Emaly introduced themselves and shared their experience with brain injury with council members. Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

**Network Capacity Building Oversight Committee**

Judy Nichelson shared the Brain Injury Network Capacity-Building update. Judy shared the project is going well and making good progress. Judy shared the committee has created bi-laws, elected a board of directors, and are hoping to incorporate soon. Judy reported the group has chosen the name, Nebraska Association of People with an Injured Brain (NAPIB). Keri Bennett shared directors including the VR Director, Lindy Foley and Department of Education Commissioner, Mark Schultz met with BIA-NE director, Peggy Reisher and BIA-NE board president, Scot Adams and discussed how the organizations can complement each other and not compete. This group agreed to schedule monthly calls to assure there will not be duplication of efforts.

**BI NETWORK CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE**

Sheila Kennedy introduced herself and her husband, Kelly Kennedy who both serve on the board of NAPIB. Sheila discussed she is very pleased with the work of NAPIB being a voice-driven effort discussing her personal experiences living with an injured brain. Denise Zweiner shared her family’s personal experience with brain injury and the need for brain injury services. Denise discussed the isolation they faced following a brain injury. Denise shared she feels strongly about the population having a voice, stating she is excited about what this board can do to create positive change in Nebraska.

John Ferrone discussed when the BIAC was sustainability planning the council described the need for this group of voice-driven individuals. John discussed the voice-generated vision is helping bolster support for brain injury funding and opportunities across the state. John shared he is excited and happy to be working with this group. Mark Draper asked how the monthly calls with BIA-NE will work and how they will collaborate with VR and the BIAC. John shared himself, Keri Bennett, Peggy Reisher, Scott Adams and Sheila Kennedy will have a monthly call focusing on the relationship between the two organizations. John shared he will ask questions and clarify during the calls and the opportunity for NAPIB to assist the BIA-NE with support as well as to utilize NAPIB to assist distribution for things such as surveys. John discussed the collaboration between BIA-NE and NAPIB displaying “Unmasking Brain Injury” at the Nebraska State Fair. Mark asked if NAPIB has applied to be a 501-C3 non-profit status. John shared that yes, the intention is for NAPIB to incorporate and become a 501-C3 non-profit and it is in the process but has not been completed to-date. Dale Johannes shared he believes this group is a good example of collaborative advocacy. John shared the organization can be strong and hold partners accountable while collaborating, and compromising with effective negotiations. Dale discussed clarification of grant funding between organizations. Keri Bennett shared BIA-NE has been invited to submit proposals. John Ferrone discussed federal grants are meant to be seed funding to get things started but then those organizations need to find sustainable funding. Tiffany Armstrong asked how the fees for NAPIB to become a 501-C3 will be funded and asked what type of proposals are currently being worked on. John Ferrone reported grant money is not allowed to be used on incorporation fees and an anonymous donor will be covering application fees. Keri shared Mark Schultz requested the BIA-NE submit a proposal for activities to collaborate, and VR is open to collaborating and reviewing a funding opportunity with BIA-NE.

**STATE PLAN FOR BRAIN INJURY SERVICES**

Council members were provided a copy of the Annual Living with Brain Injury State Plan 2019-2020 Public Meeting Draft minutes and Plan Comments chart for review and discussion. Keri Bennett shared she was very pleased with the participation at the public meeting with a range of participants from across the state. Mark Draper shared he also feels there was great participation with a lot of variety of participants and locations utilizing video-conferencing across the state. Judy Nichelson stated there were at least 31 participants. Keri Bennett reported no additional public comment has been received as of today but input will still be accepted through the end of September. Keri shared comments can be emailed to vr.infobiac@nebraska.gov. Zoe Olson discussed she was contacted by an individual who participated in the state plan meeting with resource questions. Chris Stewart discussed the journey of living with an injured brain and that there is not a one-size fits all approach to resources and services. Members discussed grief affecting those with an injured brain and their family members. Members discussed the challenges navigating the systems and the need to simplify or streamline processes.

Keri Bennett reported the public comments will be published as well as the video recording of the public meeting will be distributed and posted. Keri asked if any revisions to the plan are recommended by the council. Keri stated the next step for the council is to establish a committee to develop a timeline and action-steps to achieve the state plan. Keri shared they have been discussing creating web-access to council members for committee pages in order to better share information. Keri discussed which committees would tackle the different goals of the state plan. Keri shared for example the advocacy and outreach committee could work on, Access to Services, goals one and two. Keri shared she can send out these ideas to members, stating she feels each committee has a role to fill in meeting these goals. Keri stated the committees do not have to be made up of strictly council members stating individuals interested in assisting with committees outside of the council can contact her. Judy Nichelson shared committee members will be utilizing GoToMeeting in order to serve on committees from different areas of the state. Keri reviewed that the Network Capacity Building Committee is currently working on goals related to, Building the Voice. Keri discussed there were concerns at the public meeting regarding executing the state plan and she wants to make sure the council is setup to utilize and fulfill the work of the plan. Keri discussed the master work plan done with Beth Morrissette was utilized and rolled into this state plan. Keri stated she sees utilizing the workplan until everything is met and then address new components of the state plan. Keri shared she prefers to work from the state plan as all of the components of the original work plan were rolled into the current state plan. Tiffany Armstrong asked if council meeting time will be used to address and work on action steps of the state plan instead of just the meetings being informational sharing sessions, or if all state plan work would be done at other times by committees. Members discussed their support to utilize part of council meetings to work on state plan action steps. Keri shared Tresa Christensen will be available to help committees initially form and meet but then after committees are established it would be beneficial if they would coordinate their committee meetings. Keri shared she would be a liaison on the initial meetings of the committees in order to assist determining first steps and committee membership rolls. Amy Levering stated if each committee had a chairman, they could run their committee, establishing meeting times and setting their agendas, etc. Members agreed that the committees would take on the work of creating action steps and timelines for the goals of the state plan. Keri shared as soon as all members are confirmed for their committee choices Doodle Polls scheduling the first committee meetings will be sent out approximately October 1st. Members discussed time commitments of committee work. Brett Hoogeveen shared he feels it would be helpful if the state plan goals were divided up and assigned to the committees to get things started in the most effective way possible. Keri stated she will send out her ideas on goal committee assignments and if committees disagree or have different ideas conversation and changes will be welcome. Chris Stewart discussed concerns that committees will be formed but not a lot of action will occur to meet the goals. Mark Draper shared the benefit of utilizing part of council meeting time to conduct committee work is that it will create accountability to assure progress is being made on the state plan. Chris shared concerns regarding making sure individuals are accommodated and provided the space they need to work effectively. Keri shared additional rooms can be reserved for committee work. Keri shared updating and addressing the initial work plan can be agenda item number one for each committee to assure that all of those goals are addressed. Keri shared in her opinion the goals of the state plan will not change a lot over the next few years as the majority of the goals are large but some objectives may change over time. Emaly Ball asked if a basic outline can be made with some rough due dates for objectives in order to see that progress is being made in a timely manner. Members discussed utilizing the quarterly BIAC meetings as a check-in for committees will work well to guide and keep committees on task. Frank Velinsky discussed that often when committee work begins there can be misinterpretation of goals and intentions of the plan, sharing reviewing those objectives with the council will be necessary. Keri discussed some goals are moving targets and committees need to be flexible to team-up with opportunities that come up that can be addressed with collaboration. Keri reported she will send out the list of committees and assign state plan goals to those committees.

**PRESENTATION – DRUG OVERDOSE PREVENTION, DAVIDSON WISSING**

Davidson Wissing, Drug Overdose Prevention Coordinator with the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, introduced himself to the council and overviewed the grant he is currently working on. Davidson shared he does not currently have data on the brain injury population but stated he will be gathering more specific data in the near future. Davidson discussed drug use rates in Nebraska sharing the largest concerns in the state are methamphetamines, prescription drugs and heroin. Davidson shared as part of the grant funding they fund drug testing if suspected in a coroner’s examination. Davidson discussed the correlation of drug use with brain injury as drug use increases the risk of a brain injury as well as the risks of medication negative effects for those with brain injury. Nebraska’s drug overdose death rate has increased over the last decade – 9.8 overdose deaths for every 100,000 people in 2017 up from 3.6 in 2004. Vaishali Phatak asked if NE is pairing with any other states with higher drug use rates to compare and determine what things NE is doing well to deter drug use. Davidson replied they are not at this time but stated that would be a great opportunity for the future. Davidson reviewed that the drug overdose fatalities show most cases are unintentional overdose. Davidson discussed Naloxone which rapidly reverses opioid overdoses and making it available. First responders do all have naloxone, but the medication does have a relatively short shelf-life of about 2 years. Davidson shared there is very little risk in using Naloxone on an individual mistakenly who may not be experiencing an opioid overdose. Frank Velinsky asked in relation to long-term brain damage caused from drug use and those who are currently living in nursing facilities and how this will impact facilities without training or resources to care for these individuals. Terry Levering asked in regards to overdoses that do not result in death if there is additional data showing those rates. Davidson stated they are currently working on gathering more of this data. Davidson reported almost all pharmacies in the state of Nebraska stock Naloxone as there is a standing order that individuals can get Naloxone at the pharmacy without a prescription. Davidson shared that after the Naloxone is administered, 911 needs to be called and the individual needs to seek medical attention as Naloxone is only effective about 20-30 minutes and there is risk of the individuals overdosing again as the Naloxone wears off. Davidson discussed the Good Samaritan Law and its protection for individuals who stay at the scene assisting someone with a potential opioid overdose. The OpiRescue Free Phone App will be released very soon and will include easy step-by-step instructions for rescue. Nancy Coffman asked if the app has been checked for Section 8 compliance sharing a person with visual or hearing difficulties may not be able to use the app effectively. Davidson reviewed the Nebraska MEDS Coalition and their providing of drug take back boxes at pharmacies statewide. Davidson reviewed the statewide Healthcare Professionals’ Survey Responses. Davidson discussed the prescription drug management system in Nebraska which is beneficial for tracking opioids and benzos as well as helping eliminate negative drug interactions from prescriptions from different physicians. Davidson shared that due to new legislation Nebraska will be able to link with surrounding states’ drug monitoring systems in the future. Davidson report 49 out 50 states have PDMPs but Nebraska is the only PDMP that requires all prescribed medications be listed not only controlled substances. Davidson reviewed how they are working to improve data quality and availability in the state.

Andrew Ngochoch answered questions regarding what information can be accessed from hospital discharge information for brain injury outreach. Andrew shared data is collected without personal information and shared individuals with traumatic brain injury can be contacted only once through the brain injury registry due to state statute. Davidson summarized work that is being done for prescriber and public health education reviewing the Nebraska Area Health Education Center Program which is developing training activities to support opioid use disorder diagnosis, prevention and treatment. Davidson stated he will provide his presentation slides with the council via e-mail. He can be contacted at Davidson.wissing@nebraska.gov. Keri Bennett discussed that one of the grant requirements is to identify and create strategies to assist those with brain injury and opioid use which will be forming a committee soon and will welcome Davidson’s assistance.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**BIAC Mentor/ New Member Orientation Toolkit Committee**

Keri Bennett shared the committee consists of Tiffany Armstrong, Tresa Christensen, Mark Smith, Nancy Noha, Judy Nichelson and Kristen Larsen. Keri discussed the committee met on July 22nd sharing with Mark Smith information and ideas of things that need to be included in the Toolkit. Keri shared a request for proposal was sent to UNMC/Munroe-Meyer and Mark Smith has the proposed scope of work. Keri reported another meeting is set for October 15th, sharing that after that session they will hopefully have a proposal in hand and be able to move forward with a contract for the work.

**BIAC OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**

Keri Bennett reported the BIAC Operational Procedure were revised and posted on the council website as well as provided to members today in hard copy form for review. Keri shared that the Department of Education legal department reviewed the operational procedures.

**BRAIN INJURY REGIONAL SCHOOL SUPPORT TEAM**

Mark Draper provided a Brain Injury Regional School Support Team (BIRSST) update. Mark shared there is an event on Monday, October 21st at ESU 10 in Kearney to bring people together across the state. Mark shared there are five regional BIRSST teams sponsored by their area’s ESU. Mark shared there are 100 slots for the even October 21st and there will be approximately 25 open spots for interested members of the public. Mark stated he would like members to think about if there are families or individuals who should be targeted to fill those slots. Mark shared this is being advertised through the Department of Education and ESUs and they need to work on networking to be sure stakeholders are being invited to the event. Mark reported the keynote speaker will be Karen McAvoy. Mark discussed the majority of the training with be focused on the “Building Blocks of Brain Development”. Mark reviewed the model created by the Colorado Department of Education, *The Building Blocks of Brain Development;* discussing the anchor needs being: processing speed, memory, attention, inhibition and sensory motor. Next level processing being: language, learning and visual spatial. Next level: social emotional competency and executive function, to the highest tier of achievement, cognitive ability and reasoning. Mark discussed the collection of data regarding success of interventions in school. Mark shared if individuals have an interest in attending, he would like to have them in attendance particularly having representation from Madonna, UNMC and QLI. Members discussed questions regarding the processing categories and clarification of those categories. Amy Levering shared she feels as many teachers and educators as possible should be invited to this and receive training. Mark discussed the BIRSST teams are not well known and they are hoping this event will increase awareness. Mark stated he will send the link for registration to members and to please contact him with any interest. Emaly Ball asked if in the future the training could be made available through a webinar type layout. Emaly asked if universities have been contacted and reached out to at the higher education level. Mark shared he will reach out to higher education contacts. Mark shared the intent of this group is to utilize webinars that have already been created that could be shared and hosted by different BIRSST teams. Terry Levering asked if teachers and educators can access a database of resources they could utilize for help. Mark shared the function of the BIRSST teams is to be a resource hub for educators but they are working on increasing their awareness and create collaboration between teachers. Frank Velinsky discussed if liability is an issue for BIRSST review. Mark discussed recertification requirements of educators in Nebraska. Emaly Ball discussed the usefulness of online training information available to teachers. Peg Ogea-Ginsburg discussed the addition of “Return to Learn” to legislation which will be bringing a short online training to teachers throughout the state. Mark discussed a potential pilot that is being worked on in order to reach out to teachers and collect information on intervention.

**TBI GRANT UPDATE**

Keri Bennett reviewed the June 2019 Performance Report which was provided to council members via email. Keri stated this report is submitted every six months. Keri asked if there were any questions from council members regarding the report. Keri shared there is typically a review call scheduled with ACL after each report. Chris Stewart shared she is interested in seeing additional information showing how BIA-NE has assisted within the report. Tiffany Armstrong referenced the statewide assessment tool on page 14 with respondents reporting they do not feel heard. Tiffany shared she feels this report under-represents what herself and other council members are doing in outreach to individuals and creating a Voice. Amy Levering stated she thinks there is a vast population in rural areas in particular who are so isolated they are not even aware of any resources or organizations regarding brain injury; stating there is a large population not even aware there would be a survey they could take. Tiffany discussed individuals focusing on survival and recovery has to be done first before they can even think about connecting to a Voice. Tiffany stated this does not show a full picture of the work that is being done but does show there is still a lot of work to be done. Chris Stewart discussed creating opportunities for people when they are ready for them sharing, we should not be looking at the report as a success or failure. Brett Hoogeveen shared he was surprised by some of the statistics from the report showing there is still work to be done, stating there is room to go up. Brett discussed the goal mentioning we have a baseline network of 13 people and the goal is to increase that by 20% each year. Brett stated he hopes there is a more ambitious target establishing a larger voice of brain injury in the state than 22 individuals. Keri stated the outcome measure estimates were originally based on having access to all the support groups across the state and will need to be revised. Members discussed there were some support groups who were not contacted yet in regards to participation. Judy shared the two groups participating are doing great and are fired-up, supporting each other. Chris Stewart stated support groups did not understand what they were being asked to do by John Ferrone. Judy stated it is not what John is asking them to do, instead it is what the group wants and John is just a catalyst.

**OLMSTEAD PLAN UPDATE**

The Nebraska Olmstead Plan Initiative Update was provided to council members for review. Carla Lasley shared the aim of the Olmstead plan is to ensure that individuals have access to community-based services for all persons with disabilities. Frank Velinsky shared his concerns with eligibility requirements causing many individuals to be denied. Joni Dulaney shared she did not have any additional information regarding the Nebraska Olmstead Plan Initiative outside of the provided written report, but stated Kristen Larsen could be contacted with any questions.

**ADJOURN**The next meeting is scheduled for, December 6, 2019, in Lincoln. The meeting adjourned at 3:07p.m. with a motion made by Frank Velinsky and seconded by Emaly Ball. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent**.