



**Brain Injury Advisory Council Meeting  
Online via GoToMeeting  
March 13, 2020**

**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, Tim Burton, Ashley Davis, Tania Diaz, Mark Draper, Dale Johannes, Kristen Larsen, Carla Lasley, Amy Levering, Brooke Murtaugh, Judy Nichelson, Peg Ogea-Ginsburg, Peggy Reisher, Larry Roos, Frank Velinsky

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jerry Bryan, Sarvinoz Kadyrova, Heather Leschinsky, Zoe Olson, Vaishali Phatak,

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

**VISITORS:** Karen Houseman, Andrew Ngochoch, Chris Stewart

*The meeting of the Nebraska Brain Injury Advisory Council commenced at 10:08a.m. Public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education web site.*

**MEETING PROCEDURES**

Attendance roll call was taken. Keri Bennett provided members with tips and instructions how to best utilize this new meeting format.

**APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 6TH MEETING MINUTES**

The minutes from December 6, 2019 were reviewed. Judy Nichelson asked to amend the Network Capacity Building section to correct the network title to (NIBN) Nebraska Injured Brain Network. A motion was made by Emaly Ball and seconded by Mark Draper to approve the December 6, 2019 meeting minutes as amended. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

The agenda for the day was reviewed. Keri Bennett stated she would like to add to the end of the agenda. A motion was made by Emaly Ball and seconded by Dale Johannes 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**

No public comment was shared.

## **INTRODUCTIONS & COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

Keri Bennett reported three new members were approved and joining the council by the membership committee, Sarvinoz (Sara) Kadyrova sharing she is an individual living with an injured brain and is currently a student, Ashley Davis introduced herself from Kearney reporting she is a family member of an individual with a brain injury and explained her professional background in social services and counseling. Tim Burton introduced himself as a new representative from QLI. Larry Roos who will be taking Nancy Coffman's position as a representative for the Coalition of the Blind & Visually Impaired. Karen Houseman visiting from Health & Human Services will be joining as the Medicaid and Long-Term Care representative.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS**

Keri Bennett reviewed the requirement of members to annually declare conflict of interest. Members must annually declare any conflict of interest. Judy Nichelson asked members to make their declarations:

- Tiffany Armstrong declared Madonna Rehabilitation.
- Emaly Ball declared Nebraska Injured Brain Network.
- Tim Burton declared Quality Living Inc.
- Ashley Davis declared Quality Living Inc.
- Mark Draper declared no conflicts of interest.
- Karen Houseman declared DHHS.
- Dale Johannes declared Tabitha.
- Kristen Larsen declared Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities and DHHS.
- Carla Lasley declared no conflicts of interest.
- Brooke Murtaugh declared Madonna Rehabilitation.
- Judy Nichelson declared no conflicts of interest.
- Peggy Reisher declared the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska.
- Frank Velinsky declared no conflicts of interest.

Absent members will be contacted via e-mail for declaration of conflict of interest.

Council members not in attendance at the March 13<sup>th</sup> council meeting reported the following conflicts of interests electronically.

- Jerry Bryan declared no conflicts of interest.
- Tania Diaz declared no conflicts of interest.
- Sarvinoz Kadyrova declared NAPIB, ARC, SOARS, BIA-NE, CCC and Brookdale.
- Heather Leschinsky declared DHHS.
- Amy Levering declared no conflicts of interest.
- Peg Ogea-Ginsburg declared no conflicts of interest.
- Zoe Olson declared no conflicts of interest.
- Vaishali Phatak declared UNMC/NMC.
- Larry Roos declared no conflicts of interest.

## **TBI REGISTRY PRESENTATION**

Keri Bennett introduced Andrew Ngochoch, Health Data Coordinator, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health. Andrew shared the Nebraska Traumatic Brain Injury Registry Annual Report with members. Andrew outlined what a TBI is and which diagnosis codes are used in emergency rooms that are flagged if a TBI was diagnosed to be added to the registry. Andrew shared annual count of TBI cases in Nebraska which average to be approximately 13,000 cases a year. Andrew discussed TBI by admission type reporting the majority are emergency department (ED). Andrew reported TBI related ED visits among infants declined in the past 5 years. Andrew shared that geriatric patients reported the highest inpatient rates. The median age for patients be admitted to the ED is 24 years

old. Andrew reported 48% of TBI Inpatient payments were Medicare. 91% of patients who had a TBI related ED visit were discharged home or self-care. 49% of TBI Inpatients were discharged home of self-care. Andrew discussed rates of TBI based by district health departments. From 2014-2018 Panhandle Public Health District reported the highest TBI rates. Andrew reviewed causes of accidental TBI. Andrew reported 72% of injury site data is missing or the wrong code was documented. Intentional injuries accounted for approximately 5% of TBI cases. 39% of TBI inpatients were diagnosed with intracranial injuries 54% of these patients were 65 or older. Concussion were highest in the 15-24 years age group. Andrew summarized his report stating nearly 70,000 TBI cases were reported between 2014-2018. The majority of TBI patients were admitted as emergency department patients. Andrew discussed improvements in collection of race and ethnicity data as well as complete/accurate documentation can be made. Andrew reviewed the TBI prevention tips provided by the CDC.

Keri Bennett asked what entities report to the registry and how the data is collected. Andrew shared any patient who is treated in a hospital or clinic is required by law to report to the registry. Andrew noted the majority of the data is from hospitals via the Nebraska Hospital Association. Andrew shared there is sometimes a slight delay in receiving data from hospital billing departments. Keri reviewed that Nebraska state statute requires medical providers to report to the registry and allows a one-time contact with those patients on the registry. Andrew shared every month data is received and the TBI cases are flagged and this list is provided to Nancy Noha who sends the mailing packet of brain injury resources to the individuals. Nancy shared the letters are printed and a brochure is included in the mailing based on their region in the state as well as by age-group out of 9 different brochure options. Nancy noted they also track undeliverable letters. Peggy Reisher discussed encouragement to receive data from other sources outside the hospital association such as urgent cares and independent providers to meet the state statute. Peggy asked in regards to the gap of reported cases versus those who had delivered letters what causes the large discrepancy. Keri shared the dates utilized would create some of the differences between the two different reports and Andrew noted that if an individual makes another visit, they will be recorded but cannot be contacted more than once. Judy Nichelson asked if clients who experience a new or re-injury if they cannot be sent a letter for each injury. Andrew shared each individual can only be contacted one time no matter the number of injury incidents over the years. Members discussed the need of a potential update to statute to allow contact for new injuries to existing registry participants; members stated the council could advocate for this in the future. Kristen Larsen asked regarding the missing injury site data what effort is occurring to improve this data. Andrew discussed they need to return to those in the hospital who are coding and improve training for the coders. Andrew noted he believes the hospitals would likely be the responsible parties for improving the coding training. Judy asked since brain injuries are cumulative shouldn't each injury receive a letter; members discussed this is a problem with statute language that could be improved through change. Frank Velinsky asked regarding the statistics showing higher rates of TBI in the West/Central regions of the state what is causing the higher rates there versus more populated areas in the eastern portion of the state. Judy shared the increased rates may be due to more farming equipment, machinery and longer distance driving in the western portion of the state as well as increased weather difficulties. Emaly Ball asked if Andrew would be willing to assist and provide information with the Advocacy and Education Resources Committee, Andrew stated he would be willing to work with the committee. Members thanked Andrew for his time and information shared.

### **BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH**

Judy Nichelson reported March is Brain Injury Awareness month and yesterday was Brain Injury Awareness Day in Lincoln. Peggy Reisher shared there was a small but mighty crowd that attended the Brain Injury Awareness Day at the State Capitol in Lincoln. Peggy shared an award was given to Senator McDonnell for his work last year on the TBI trust fund passage as well as time was spent discussing projects and priorities for 2020 in regards to brain injury. Peggy reported LB786 is of concern this year, requiring Department of Corrections to screen for brain injury sharing it is not currently prioritized but they are hoping to include it as the session moves forward. Peggy reported attendees met with their

senators and discussed brain injury in the state. Peggy shared overall she was pleased with the day and good conversations were had especially due to the current state of events. Peggy Reisher shared given closures and Corona Virus concerns they have discussed canceling or postponing the annual conference. They have decided to postpone the conference to sometime late summer or early fall paying attention to how things change and coordination of participants. Peggy shared there is still a lot of unknowns and all options are being considered including the possibility of a virtual Zoom meeting noting their preference is to get together in person rescheduling; noting people will be updated.

### **CONGRESSIONAL BI AWARENESS DAY, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Judy Nichelson shared herself, Peggy Reisher, Keri Bennett and Tim Burton participated in the Congressional Brain Injury Awareness Day in Washington D.C. Peggy shared herself and Tim were able to meet with Representative Bacon and discussed the possibility of identifying concussion through blood markers sharing funding is going to that work. Peggy stated she met with Congressman Fortenberry's Chief of Staff sharing they discussed public health noting they had difference of opinions in regards to brain injury prevention. Peggy shared she met with Senator Sasse's office and continued sharing with his office the importance of brain injury awareness and their interest in falls in the elderly and concussion awareness. Tim Burton shared he was very happy for the opportunity to attend and he felt Representative Bacon's office was encouraging. Keri Bennett shared she was pleased they were able to arrange all the appointments as well as the ability to meet with Senator Fisher in person although it was brief. Keri shared she felt the meetings went well and shared Judy did an excellent job sharing the perspective of what a person living with brain injury goes through. Keri shared she was pleased to attend the briefing which included information from Mark Schultz and others. Judy Nichelson shared it was a great opportunity to network with other states. Judy shared she was pleased to have a unified message from Nebraska to share the ideas and needs with representatives and senators. Judy discussed living with an injured brain and the changes that occur after the outer wounds are healed. Judy shared she was pleased to see the number of people come together with a passion for helping individuals who have an injured brain. Judy discussed there was a lot of interest in NIBN from other states. Peggy Reisher discussed Safe State is similar to NASHIA but its focus is on injury prevention and violence prevention, stating there is a lot of intersection with brain injury.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Advocacy and Education Committee**

Emaly Ball reported the committee has met a few times and they are working on Goal 1: Improvements to Nebraska's system of care and community-based services for people with brain injury will be driven by the collection and analysis of meaningful data. Mark Draper shared they will discuss the needs survey that was done 10 years ago being replicated so there will be data to compare for progress which will be discussed in their committee report later. Emaly shared the BIA-NE will meet with their groups to gain feedback and the BIA will distribute and promote the needs survey. Emaly discussed Objective 2: to advocate for amendments to the TBI Registry follow-up statute to allow for multiple contacts with individuals placed on the Registry, and other improvements to connect them with appropriate services for their recovery, using data from the BIA-NE's Resources Facilitation program and other sources. Emaly shared Peggy has provided some data and they will be reaching out to Andrew for additional work on this objective. Peggy shared they do have six training sessions scheduled but stated due to coronavirus it is likely some will have to be rescheduled or held electronically. Peggy shared if members have organizations or contacts in which to provide these trainings to please contact her.

#### **Membership Committee**

Carla Lasley shared the committee has been meeting monthly. Carla reported they have interviewed and approved the three new members discussed at the beginning of the meeting. Carla also shared they have also reviewed two new applications from individuals in the North Platte area that are awaiting the

interview process. Carla noted they are still pursuing individuals from different parts of the state as well as working towards the goal of council membership to be made up of 50% individuals with an injured brain. Carla shared they have been working to get the word out through NIBN to other areas of the state. Peggy Reisher shared if the committee puts together information about the BIAC recruitment they would be happy to share it in the Brain Injury Alliance Newsletter.

### **BI Network Capacity Building Committee**

Judy Nicholson shared they have been meeting monthly. Judy reported Emaly Ball is the new president of NIBN. Judy reported the NIBN website is being created with VR and they hope it will be available as of April 1<sup>st</sup>. Judy shared there are currently chapters in North Platte, Kearney, Grand Island, Ogallala and Hastings. Judy reported they plan is for late fall to begin reaching out for chapters in the Eastern part of the state. Judy reported in North Platte the mayor signed a proclamation for Brain Injury Awareness Day with their NIBN chapter sharing the great media coverage and participation. Judy shared individuals in the NIBN support group are sharing positive feedback. Judy shared NIBN has four meetings a month, with the fourth of the month being a time to just get together and do crafts and activities. Keri Bennett reviewed the committee's goals and objectives. Peggy Reisher stated any interested parties in joining the speaker's bureau to contact Chris Stewart.

### **Public Policy Committee**

Tiffany Armstrong provided members with a current list of the bills and committee position regarding brain injury. Tiffany reviewed the new bill action which was taken by the committee. Tiffany reported LB 147 which is a student discipline act was opposed with a letter by the committee. Tiffany reported they supported LB 786 regarding Department of Corrections reporting with a letter. Tiffany stated they also supported LB998 with a letter and proposed several changes to the bill. LB 1204 was supported with a letter. Tiffany reviewed other bills which are currently being monitored but are not expected to come out of committee as well as some carryover bills the committee is neutral on with no current action.

### **BI Peer Support Committee**

Peggy Reisher reported the group has been meeting monthly. Peggy shared BIA-NE has created a report on at least 50 past TBI Registry mailing recipients who have contacted BIA which will be shared with the committee soon. Nancy Noha shared the customized brochures for recipients in three age groups and three regions have been created and those on the registry will all begin receiving the new brochures in the next mailing. Peggy noted those agencies listed on the brochures that receive calls from the registry letters will be recording that data in SurveyMonkey which Will Schmeekle will be compiling for council and committee use. Peggy shared they continue to provide resource facilitation to those contacting BIA-NE. Peggy discussed the language of the goals and mission of the committee have been updated. Questions and comments regarding the proposed language amendments was opened up to the council for discussion. Keri shared she would like the request for proposals to go out before the end of May. Ashley Davis stated the language changes are an improvement, making it clearer and more understandable. No additional questions or concerns regarding the language change.

Members proposed to amend the document by removing the words "*Resource Navigators*" replacing the phrase with Peer Support and Resource Facilitation programs. As well as amendments to Goal 2 editing it to say, "People with brain injury will have access to trained Peer Support mentors." The objectives of Goal 2 were amended removing the words, "*resource navigation*" from the first bullet point and adding, "The demonstration pilot will prioritize underserved, rural areas of the state." Objective two of goal two was amended to state, "Define the Peer Support mentor role to complement existing brain injury programs and supports such as the BIA-NE's Resource Facilitation program to maximize collaboration and minimize duplication of effort. The third objective was removed due to redundancy.

Peggy Reisher moved to approve the changes to the description, Mark Draper second the motion. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

### **Opioid Committee**

Keri Bennett reported the committee has met a few times and is working on the action steps to 1. Identify and become acquainted with key state, county and local level contacts. 2. Share donated Opioid awareness items from the Division of Behavioral Health, at the Annual BI Conference BIAC booth with conference participants 3. Add questions about Opioid use to the Annual Living with Brain Injury Needs Survey in 2020 revisions to inform a draft education plan.

### **BI & Co-occurring mental health**

Emaly Ball discussed the committee's goal: People with brain injury and co-occurring serious mental illness will receive effective treatment. Currently identified the action steps: 1. Create partnerships 2. create lists page of (a) practitioners and (b) conferences 3. Subcommittee formed looking at Needs Survey Update Suggestions. Emaly shared they are working to create a questionnaire for mental health practitioners on what they would like to see and what would be useful in the needs survey. A Google Doc was created to draft the questionnaire. Input and feedback in creating the questionnaire was requested from the council. Frank Velinsky shared the goal and action steps make a lot of sense, sharing mental health issues create a lot of barriers for in-home health services for some individuals. Chris Stewart shared in her experience it is about awareness and education of co-occurring mental health issues. Peggy Reisher shared she would like to see questions added regarding youth outreach sharing BIA would be willing to collaborate on creating the questionnaire. Emaly shared if there is any additional feedback on the questionnaire to please reach out to her as soon as possible.

### **BIAC COMMITTEE OPERATIONS & LOGISTICS**

Keri Bennett proposed due to time constraints herself and Tresa can create a survey to share feedback on the committee. There were no objections.

### **BIAC WEBSITE UPDATES**

Keri Bennett asked council members if they have had a chance to visit the website. Carla Lasley shared she visited the website and found it easy to navigate. Emaly Ball shared there is some concern when logged in if there could be a calendar showing all committee meetings in one place. Keri Bennett shared there is a primary calendar on the home page that shows council meetings and public brain injury events. Nancy Noha shared she has worked to continually update committee dates but is not able at this time to create another master committee calendar due to time constraints.

### **NEBRASKA VR TBI GRANT UPDATE**

Keri Bennett reported the new council membership application is posted on the website. Keri reported she has worked out a procedure for procurement with the VR Director, Lindy Foley. Keri shared she has discussed the procedure with the executive committee reporting there was not any opposition. Keri shared the evaluation team will always be composed of individuals outside of the council. Keri discussed Nebraska VR is on three workgroups at the federal level sharing these groups are going well. Keri reported they have developed a set of core competencies for VR counselors. Keri reported the using data group is working on a TBI registry point paper outlining best practices from different states. NASHIA has a site proposal request due April 15<sup>th</sup> to host the NASHIA conference in 2021. Keri asked for council members interested to assist with Omaha developing the proposal if there is still interest. Frank Velinsky, Mark Draper, Judy Nichelson and Tiffany Armstrong volunteered to assist.

### **ADJOURN**

The next meeting is scheduled for, June 19, 2020, in Lincoln. The meeting adjourned at 2:16p.m. with a motion made by Frank Velinsky and seconded by Mark Draper. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**