

**HDI Consumer Advisory Council  
Coldstream Training Room  
Monday March 4, 2019 9AM – 1 PM**

**In attendance today...CAC members**

Jennifer Hicks  
Kathy Sheppard-Jones  
Cathy Lerza (for Claudia Johnson)  
Donna Littrell  
Vivian Lasley  
Walt Bower  
Lee Gordon  
David Merdian  
James Roethler  
Joe Cowan  
Cathy Edwards  
Morgan Crawford  
Sherece Cole  
Jay Tyner-Wilson  
Camille Collins

**Guest:** Allison Messenger

**Presenter:** Maria Kemplin

**Technical and other assistance:** provided by Maurice Dawson and Judy Johns

1) Welcome & Introductions Joe Cowan

Joe Cowan began the meeting. All members introduced themselves.

2) Review and Approval of December minutes Joe Cowan

The CAC reviewed the December minutes. There was one correction made to the December minutes. In the DDID agency report, waiver forms was changed to waiver reform. Jennifer Hicks made a motion to approve the minutes and Vivian Lasley seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted with the correction noted to the minutes.

3) AUCD update – Council on Leadership in Sherece Cole  
Advocacy (COLA)

Sherece Cole is currently in the process of adding her name and email address to the COLA listserv. She did not have any new updates and will provide us with COLA updates at the next meeting.

4) RETAINing Kentucky's Workforce Grant

Kathy Sheppard-Jones

Kathy Sheppard-Jones shared that there are several different initiatives in relation to employment efforts happening in Kentucky that are connected with one another. The employment initiatives began as a result of the National Work Matters Report and Kathy's participation in the National Return to Work and Stay at Work (RTW/SAW) leadership team. The initiatives are efforts to assist people with disabilities with employment opportunities in the workforce. Despite the low unemployment rates, employers are having difficulty filling available slots.

Kathy reported there are 4 million work related injuries and illnesses each year. Additionally, there are 14 million non-work injuries and illnesses and many of those injured do not return to workforce. Kathy also shared that employees who leave the workforce experience decreases in economic stability and quality of life. There is evidence that had there been a return to work strategy in place, many of those injured would have successfully returned to employment.

Kentucky was one of 8 states to receive funding for a Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) grant. California, Connecticut, Minnesota, Vermont, Washington, Kansas and Ohio were also chosen by RETAIN to receive grants. The 18 month intervention includes assistive technology, peer supports, and universal design and training.

The primary goals of the RETAIN grant are: (1) Increasing employment retention and labor force participation of individuals who acquire, and/or are at risk of developing disabilities; and (2) Reducing long-term work disability among project participants, including the need for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

The target population are workers experiencing musculoskeletal injury or illness, either on or off the job, with an emphasis on workers with substance use disorders that are co-existing or that develop after injury/illness. Workers must be currently in the labor force or seeking employment. Workers must also not have applied for, or be receiving, federal disability benefits.

5) Employment First Council

Kathy Sheppard-Jones

Kathy Sheppard-Jones shared Kentucky's road to Employment First. On May 15, 2018, Kentucky's Governor Matt Bevin signed an executive order making Kentucky an Employment First state. The signing of the executive order was important in the effort to make employment for people with disabilities a top priority in Kentucky.

An Employment First Council was established as a result of the executive order. The 27 member group is comprised of people with disabilities, family members, employers, state agency representatives, and provider agencies. HDI is administering Kentucky's new Employment First Council and the Council has met twice.

In January 2018, an executive order established the KentuckyWorks Collaborative. The KentuckyWorks Collaborative is comprised of 18 members representing state and federal agencies, local workforce boards, and employers. Each member represents an agency that

provides job training, counseling, career development, and technical assistance services to Kentucky employers or job seekers.

The goals of the KentuckyWorks Collaborative are: Actively increase employer engagement, increase educational attainment and completion to provide lifelong learning opportunities, increase Kentucky's workforce participation rate, and align partner resources using data to constantly improve.

The CAC members divided into small groups to provide input on innovative employment programs or initiatives in Kentucky that should be considered as the Employment First Council and KentuckyWorks Collaborative do their work. One CAC member commented that communication is key as there are many different levels to these initiatives. Another CAC member stated not to keep the ideas at the high levels, but discuss them with people on a surface level so they know the policies.

CAC members also discussed mentorship opportunities so people can get the job skills they need to apply for the open jobs. One CAC member stated that if we want people with disabilities to work more hours, than the workplace should be universally designed. For example, make sure water fountains and bathrooms are accessible. CAC members discussed work opportunities and employer tax benefits for these programs and contacting and connecting with students that are graduating and educating them on the ways they can be involved.

- 6) Spring Institute in Assistive Technology James Roethler  
Kathy Sheppard-Jones

James Roethler and Kathy Sheppard-Jones reported on the upcoming 2019 Spring Institute in Assistive Technology Conference on March 28 at the University of Kentucky's Gatton Student Center. The conference features speakers Rory Cooper, Rosi Cooper, Phillip Rumrill, and Jarod Giger. Topics include assistive technology for people with disabilities and assistive technology service delivery. The conference is free for students, researchers, faculty, staff, and community members.

- 7) Transportation Initiative – Project Spotlight Maria Kemplin  
And Feedback from our CAC

Maria Kemplin reported on the purpose and current activities of HDI's Transportation Initiative. Employment First Council, HB 144 Employment Subcommittee, and KentuckyWorks have all identified transportation as a significant barrier to employment in Kentucky for people with disabilities, with particular challenges for people with disabilities in rural areas.

Maria shared that over the past year, E3TC has been meeting with constituents in Breathitt County. Maria also presented information about the transportation voucher toolkit, the ITN Bluegrass model, ridesharing (Uber, Lyft), and NEMT reimbursement on-boarding.

The final part of the presentation included a small group activity involving the CAC members answering the following three questions: (1) Which transportation options are you familiar with? (2) What are the obstacles to local transportation options that may not meet the needs of people with disabilities? (3) What ideas do you have to improve transportation for yourself and others?

Four small groups were formed out of the larger group. The following is the report out of the work by each question:

**Discussion 1** – Which transportation options are you familiar with? CAC members identified Uber and Lyft drivers in Murray, Frankfort, and Lexington, Murray Calloway Transit Authority (MCTA), Rural Transit Enterprises Coordinated (RTEC) in Bell, Pulaski, and Wayne counties, Bluegrass Ultra-Transit Service (BUS) in Frankfort, Wheels in Fayette County, the trolley in Somerset, Bath Medical Transportation (BMT) in Morehead, the Transit Authority of River City (TARC) bus and TARC 3 bus in Louisville, Yellowcab, Superior Van and Mobility in Louisville for a fee, Lextran, and Kroger and WalMart delivering groceries.

**Discussion 2** – What are the obstacles to local transportation options that may not meet the needs of people with disabilities? CAC members identified persons with disabilities are on limited incomes that limits which services they can use and impacts their emotional and social needs. Not all transportation services are universally designed so they are not able to support persons with disabilities.

The time and availability of transportation services is also an issue. For example, coverage may not extend to where you need to go at that particular time. If someone needs to go somewhere and they are unable to fit into the time schedule of the only transportation service available, then that service is not useful. One CAC member commented that self-advocates are unable to attend meetings to share their story because of the lack of transportation. One CAC member suggested more funding for Vocational Rehabilitation services for modifications on vehicles.

**Discussion 3** – What ideas do you have to improve transportation for yourself and others? CAC members suggested more accessible vehicles and to collect data to identify what the needs are for people with disabilities. One CAC member commented that there needs to be separate transportation for people with disabilities. Improving medical reimbursement for transportation was identified as an idea to improve transportation. Developing a program to utilize students as volunteer drivers was another suggestion. Another CAC member suggested using economies of scale to develop a transportation network that is accessible for all people.

- 8) Agency Updates (DD Council, DDID, P & A, OCSHN) Each Agency

**Council on Developmental Disabilities** – Jennifer Hicks reported that the Arc Conference went well last week and the Council was one of the sponsors for the Arc Conference. Additionally, she shared they are participating in the 874K rally which takes

place March 6, 2019. Jennifer also announced the newest Exceptional Family Kentucky magazine has been published.

**Division of Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities** – Cathy Lerza reported that Medicaid will release the drafted waivers for public comment this month. There will be a 30 day comment period. Cathy also reported the process has started to transition the operation of Bingham Gardens from ResCare to Bluegrass.

**Protection and Advocacy** – Camille Collins reported Protection and Advocacy is organizing a cleanup event at Frankfort State Hospital and School Cemetery in Frankfort. Camille Collins also reported they have a new grant that includes 95 assignments for representative payees who help individuals with bills.

**Office for Children with Special Health Care Needs** – Lee Gordon reported that the office has a new name – the Office for Children with Special Health Care Needs. The new name is now more aligned with other state offices. Lee also reported there is a Summit on Health in Owensboro.

9) New Business and Announcements Joe Cowan

There was no new business to report.

10) Lunch and Further Discussion about CAC All  
Members' Involvement in HDI Projects

Jennifer Hicks motioned to adjourn the meeting and Vivian Lasley seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 12:17 PM.

NEXT CAC MEETING: Monday, June 3, 2019, Coldstream 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM, followed by a working lunch.