

**HDI Consumer Advisory Council
Hybrid meeting
Monday, June 2, 2025 10:30AM – 1:30PM**

In attendance today...CAC Members

Jake Cruz
Joshua Seigle
Bobby Begley
Kristen Beach
Skylar Pash
Karen Ritchie

Cathy Lerza
Camille Collins
Kayla Harmon
Bithinny McKee
Walt Bower
Katie Looney

Presenters: Johnny Collett, Kate Dean, Christine Hausman, Jaz Brown, Teresa Belluscio

1) Welcome & Introductions Joshua Seigle

Joshua opened the meeting at 10:30 AM. The members in attendance introduced themselves.

2) Review and Approval of March minutes Joshua Seigle

Joshua asked for members to review the March minutes. Joshua made a motion to approve the minutes, and Skylar seconded. March meeting minutes were approved.

3) AUCD update – Council on Leadership in Advocacy (COLA) Joshua Seigle

Joshua led the COLA update by sharing that AUCD will not be holding an annual conference this year due to uncertain funding and university travel restrictions. He then discussed an online art museum project by McCartney Hagar, a LEND trainee at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. The project focuses on art, poems, and photography from the southern United States. Joshua also summarized a Medicaid policy presentation, beginning with Sarah Swanson, who explained the proposed Medicaid cuts and FMAP, the different types of waivers available, the presence of waitlists, and how accessing Medicaid services through a state plan can help individuals avoid those waitlists. Sarah also highlighted the variety of home and community-based waiver service groups.

Lillie Heigl, senior policy advisor at the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, followed by discussing the efforts to cut Medicaid and transfer its oversight to the House, Energy, and Commerce Committee. Lillie is currently collecting personal testimonials to share with Congress in hopes of persuading lawmakers of Medicaid's importance. Joshua concluded by stating that although COLA has attempted to implement policy changes, their proposals are still in need of revision and editing. The next COLA meeting is September 8 at 3pm.

- 4) AUCD/Federal update Johnny Collett
-Input and feedback from CAC members

Johnny Collett affirmed the concerns raised by Joshua regarding proposed Medicaid cuts and noted that the House of Representatives has passed a Budget bill by one vote. The Budget bill outlines broad government spending limits but has not yet been approved by the Senate. Johnny emphasized the importance of closely monitoring the legislative process, as it will not be a fast-moving process and ongoing updates will be necessary as more information becomes available. Once the Budget bill passes the Senate, appropriation bills will be passed.

Johnny clarified that while UCEDDs do not take formal positions on legislation, their role is to provide accurate information and context to support understanding. He also provided an update on the HDI Executive Director search, reporting that four candidates will complete campus visits by the end of June.

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| 5) | Early Childhood Employment Initiative
Project update
-Input and feedback from CAC members | Kate Dean |
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Kate Dean shared an update on the Early Childhood Employment Initiative project, which aims to ensure that families and childcare providers understand the principles of being an Employment First state. The project supports individuals with disabilities in reaching their employment goals, with a unique focus on preschool-aged children, encouraging them to begin thinking about future careers at an early age. Funded by the Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities, the initiative is carried out in partnership with Renshaw Early Childhood Center, Easterseals Redwood, and Visually Impaired Preschool Services (VIPS) in Louisville.

- 6) Break (12:00)

- 7) Learn the Signs. Act Early
-Input and feedback from CAC members
- Christine Hausman

Christine introduced the Learn the Signs Act Early project, developed in 2004 by the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities. The project focuses on children from 2 months to 5 years old and aims to improve the early identification of developmental delays and disabilities. It promotes parent-led developmental monitoring by providing free tools and resources, including checklists, a booklet, and a mobile app, to help track developmental milestones and support early intervention efforts.

- 8) LEND Leadership Project:
Kentucky Disability Resource Guide
-Input and feedback from CAC members
- Jaz Brown

Jaz Brown introduced their LEND Leadership project, which involved gathering input from individuals on what they seek in a resource guide. They noted that while the current online Kentucky Disability Resource guide contains valuable information, it lacks clear instructions on how to navigate and use it effectively. Jaz invited meeting members to share feedback and suggestions to make it more accessible. Joshua recommended making the guide available in an audible format for individuals who are visually impaired and suggested creating an advertisement embedded within a YouTube video to enhance outreach and awareness.

- 9) Agency Updates (P & A, DD Council, DDID, OVR)
- Each Agency

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation – Kristen Beach provided an update for OVR. Kristen shared that OVR will be closing certain service categories due to financial constraints and is moving toward an order of selection system. OVR is currently in the process of revising its priority categories, with additional information available on their website.

Division of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities – Walt Bower provided an update on behalf of Cathy Lerza for the DDID, highlighting a mental health promotion newsletter that includes resources and information on various mental health topics, within the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities Opportunities, Activities, and Resources (OAR) report.

Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities - Jake Cruz reported that CCDD had its quarterly meeting May 21. They elected new officers, including the Chair, Vice-Chair, a self-advocacy representative, and a state agency representative. They also welcomed three new members at the CCDD meeting. CCDD participated in the Tri-Agency Network meeting on May 22, 2025.

- 10) HDI's Summer Leadership Experience Teresa Belluscio
Camp

Teresa shared information about HDI's Summer Leadership Experience Camp, which began in 2018, and is offered both virtually and in person. The camp is designed for high school students with disabilities, providing them with opportunities to develop leadership skills and prepare them for the transition to postsecondary education or training. Travis Freeman and Cody Clark were invited speakers at the camp.

- 11) Engaging the CAC by-laws update All
-Input and feedback from CAC members

Walt distributed a copy of the proposed CAC by-laws update prior to the meeting for review; however, due to time constraints, the discussion was tabled and will be revisited at the next CAC meeting.

- 12) New Business and Announcements Joshua Seigle

Walt shared that Kentucky STABLE accounts allow people with disabilities to keep their money without jeopardizing their eligibility for Medicaid or SSI, and to provide that information to those who may need it. A STABLE account is a way to save for qualified expenses, invest for future needs, and keep the benefits you rely on every day. The account can be managed online, so it is easy to access, contribute, or withdraw money; even friends and relatives can add to the account.

Joshua made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Bobby seconded. The meeting adjourned at 1:44pm.

NEXT CAC MEETING: Monday, September 8, 2025, at 10:30 AM – 1:30 PM