



**NCCDD Executive Director  
Chris Egan**

## A Message from the Executive Director

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) and it is a time during which we make extra efforts to recognize, celebrate and promote the importance of

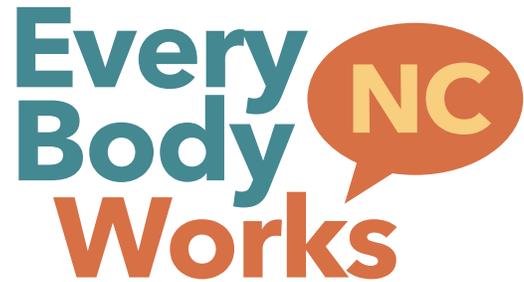
learning about and achieving employment for individuals with intellectual or other developmental disabilities (I/DD). Why is this so important? Because this is one very clear way of promoting capabilities, involvement, contribution and the unique skills and talents of each person. Including people with disabilities in the employee mix has a positive impact for the employee along with their fellow coworkers and the employer - individual examples, coupled with the data, proves this fact.

And, while we recognize the value of local and national attention each October during NDEAM, we have an opportunity to keep this momentum going all year long. People with I/DD remain an untapped and valuable workforce! As such, the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities launched the EveryBody Works NC (EWNC) campaign during the NC Business Leadership Network (NC BLN) Conference in Charlotte, NC.

In collaboration with NC BLN and the North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation (NCVR), the EWNC campaign aims to reduce the employment gap of working-age people with disabilities. The campaign intends to foster the important collaboration between the business community; an important and available workforce, and the supports available through North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation (NCVR) and other partners to support success.

The campaign is a call to action for businesses to join this important and worthy effort! We are very optimistic about the impact of the campaign by raising awareness, supporting strong collaborations and keeping a focus on this important outcome.

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## EveryBody Works NC Launches Across the State

In a collaborative effort to close the 45-percentage point employment gap between working-aged people with disabilities and their counterparts, agency and business leaders kicked off EveryBody Works NC today at the NC Business Leaders Network (NC BLN) Conference in Charlotte, NC. With approximately 1.6 million people with disabilities who are eligible to work in North Carolina, the campaign calls on businesses to realize that people with disabilities are proven to be good additions to the workforce; while encouraging potential employees with disabilities to learn and seek out resources that will help them join or rejoin the workforce. Everybody Works NC Logo

EveryBody Works NC is being led by the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD), North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NCVR) and NC BLN.

“We are calling on teachers, educators, and healthcare professionals to encourage families and young adults to prepare themselves for the workforce, attain job skills, perhaps go to college and build a career,” said Alex McArthur, chair of the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD). “The alternative is too often poverty, boredom and isolation and people with disabilities deserve and should strive for independence and financial security through employment.”

As part of the campaign, NCVR is expanding its outreach efforts to better serve the disability community throughout the State. They have programs and resources to help employers recruiting diverse workforces and provide accessible, welcoming environments for employees with disabilities.

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## Initiative Recap: Rethinking Guardianship

Guardianship is the most restrictive option of legal substitute decision making and continues to increase, specifically for younger adults with disabilities in North Carolina. Of more than 5,000 adults served by a public guardian in North Carolina, nearly 3,000 are younger adults ages 18-59, the majority of whom have a primary diagnosis of intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD) or mental illness.

NCCDD's Rethinking Guardianship: Building a Case for Less Restrictive Alternatives initiative enjoyed an active and productive year with workgroup meetings occurring in May and September. Additionally, Linda Kendall Fields of the Jordan Institute for Families at UNC-Chapel Hill co-presented about the initiative at a plenary session at the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) Conference in Salt Lake City in July.

Through its workgroup, the initiative aims to build a sustainable infrastructure to effect long-term changes in North Carolina's guardianship system that respects the rights of individuals in guardianship and individuals facing guardianship. Less restrictive alternatives exist. The initiative aims to educate family members and clerks of court of the range of alternatives available to allow capable individuals to maintain certain rights and freedoms that a full guardianship would take away. The workgroup's Legislative Subcommittee is working toward comprehensive reform of NC General Statute 35A during the 2019 legislative session.

Meanwhile, the Education, Awareness and Training Subcommittee

has developed an Understanding Guardianship video designed to educate the general public on guardianship and its alternatives. The video is currently being finalized and should be available along with other communications on the initiative's website: <http://ssw.unc.edu/rethinking/home>

Other accomplishments include North Carolina being recognized by the American Bar Association as a Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders (WINGS) state and the introduction of Restoration to Competency forms through the Administrative Office of the Courts in May 2017, which may be used by individuals in court proceedings.

The initiative could not be successful without the participation of its many stakeholders that include staff from NCCDD's network partners, Disability Rights North Carolina (DRNC) and the Carolina Institute on Developmental Disabilities (CIDD), as well as the active involvement of clerks of court and family members of individuals with I/DD.



*Linda Kendall Fields gives a presentation at the 2017 NACDD Conference.*

## EveryBody Works NC *(continued from page 1)*

"We want to reach and encourage people with disabilities who are discouraged, facing long-term unemployment or have never worked to improve their employability through training and support services offered by VR," said Tara Myers, division director.

NCVR offers pre-employment screening and placement services, on-the-job training, assistive technologies and ongoing support to help people with disabilities of all kinds succeed in the workplace. Additionally, the campaign partners with business leaders to tap into the pool of talent that has statistically proven to be valuable team members for companies and organizations. In fact, one in three employers have

reported that people with disabilities stay in the job longer and are rated equally or more productive than coworkers.

"The NC Business Leaders Network helps companies develop a pathway or plan to effectively recruit and accommodate people with disabilities who offer unbelievable talent," said Beth Butler, executive director of NC BLN and a disability and inclusion consultant. "We are excited to partner and launch EveryBody Works NC because businesses thrive with a diverse workforce, and that includes people with disabilities."

For more information on EveryBody Works NC and how you can get involved, visit [www.everybodyworksnc.com](http://www.everybodyworksnc.com)

## Public Policy Update

### STATE UPDATE

The legislature is currently adjourned but were in session in October where most of their actions were overrides of Governor Roy Cooper's vetoes. The bill we have been following, HB 403, was not taken up. This bill is the vehicle to support the NC Department of Health and Human Resources (NC DHHS) proposed Medicaid transformation. The legislature will reconvene in January and the issue of Medicaid transformation will be likely be addressed in this session. In order for the State to submit its proposed plan, there are statutory changes that will be needed during the next legislative session.

In the meantime, NC DHHS continues to receive feedback on the proposal and is working to add more detail to the plan.

### FEDERAL UPDATE

**Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI):** The Social Security Administration announced a 2% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase to Social Security and SSI in 2018. Find additional information here.

**The Affordable Care Act (ACA):** President Donald Trump made two key announcements related to the ACA on October 12th. First, he issued an executive order directing federal agencies to explore ways to increase availability of insurance plans, which don't meet the same consumer protections and benefit standards as ACA plans. While the executive order does not implement or require changes, it begins the process to make changes and will be something to watch. Industry experts and consumer advocates fear creating two types of coverage will destabilize the market, drive up costs and negatively impact people with pre-existing conditions.

Additionally, The White House announced its intention to implement something more immediate with significant consequences: to end Cost Sharing Reduction (CSR) payments to insurance companies. The ACA requires the federal government to reimburse insurance companies for lowering deductibles, copayments and other out-of-pocket costs (known as cost sharing reductions (CSRs)) for enrollees between 100-250% of poverty. If the Trump Administration implemented this change, individuals would still qualify for the discount, but insurance companies wouldn't be compensated. Again, health experts fear these changes will increase market destabilization, raise premiums and add to the deficit by \$6 billion in 2018 alone. Currently the courts are upholding the decision to end payments.

A bipartisan effort led by Senators Alexander (R-TN) and Murray (D-WA), who head the Senate's Health, Education, Labor and Pension (HELP) Committee, introduced the Bipartisan Health Care Stabilization Act of 2017, aimed at increasing market stability, with a number of bipartisan co-signers. Specifically, this legislation, informed by committee hearings with states, insurance experts, and other stakeholders, seeks to maintain the CSR payments for two years and introduce some additional flexibility to states. The Congressional Budget Office gave this bipartisan legislation a favorable score noting it would reducing the federal deficit by \$4 Billion over 10 years.

### **Federal Budget and Appropriations**

The US Senate and House passed a Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Budget Resolution, each by a narrow margin. A budget resolution is not a law, and is not signed by the President. While typically just a blueprint, this budget resolution includes reconciliation instructions, a vehicle to fast track legislation, limit debate, and pass qualifying legislation by 51 votes in the Senate. The budget resolution also directs specific committees to develop legislation to increase the deficit by \$1.5 Trillion and assumes over \$5 trillion in program cuts across mandatory programs (like Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security) and discretionary programs (like education, transportation, housing and more). This blueprint is embedded with reconciliation instructions, a procedural shift to fast track legislation, limit debate, and pass qualifying legislation by 51 votes in the Senate.

This sets the stage for legislation to cut taxes offset by significant cuts to programs, and could pass with only 51 votes. An analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities outlines how this approach could specifically impact the disability community.

The NC Council on Developmental Disabilities is working with many state and federal partners to monitor this development and keep the Council and other stakeholders aware of next steps and ways you can educate and inform moving forward.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** On October 20th, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

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## Council Member Spotlight - Aldea LaParr



**Aldea LaParr**

Arriving in North Carolina with experience from having served on the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, Aldea LaParr gladly accepted the Governor's appointment to the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD). "I loved the work we did there (in New York) and wanted to be involved here," LaParr says.

Armed with a bachelor's degree in technical theatre from the State University of New York, LaParr has built her own small business, Dee's Desktop, offering design and website creation, as well as assisting businesses with their online needs. A Princeton, NC resident, LaParr operates her business out of Goldsboro, NC.

She also serves on the Wayne County Advisory Council for the Eastern Carolina Council Area Agency on Aging. She is an ombudsman for assisted living facilities and helps take care of children with special needs while their parents attend services at The Bridge Church.

LaParr previously worked as a disabilities service coordinator where she found her experience of living with cerebral palsy helped her succeed on the job. "As an individual living with a disability, I understand the challenges. I want to share what I have learned working in the field as well as my life experience," she adds.

"My major challenge has been breaking funding barriers when it comes to being creative with supports," LaParr says. She currently lives independently in the community with no paid supports.

"I believe the Council should continue their work on community supports. As an individual in the community without paid supports, I have had to find these supports which in turn has helped me establish relationships in my community," she explains.

Her life motto of "there is always a back door", coupled with her life experiences, have contributed to her success.

"I have been successful because I dared to try things that others may not have recommended for me. I am a mother of three and a grandmother. I spend a lot of time looking for the back doors when the front ones appear to be closed," LaParr says.

## Transition into Adulthood Conference in Asheville

The 7th Annual WNC Regional Transition into Adulthood Conference will take place on November 18, 2017 in Asheville, NC. The primary purpose of this conference is to expand the capacity of schools, agencies and communities, in partnership with youth, young adults and families, in promoting the successful transition of youth/young adults with disabilities to post-school outcomes of employment, post-secondary education and training, community participation and healthy lifestyles.

Participants will have the opportunity to learn about effective practices to assist youth/young adults with disabilities to explore possibilities, take advantage of their opportunities, and actively advocate for their future.



The conference will feature:

- Keynote and feature presentations
- Breakout sessions
- Sessions and activities designed for youth and young adults
- Family engaging sessions and networking opportunities
- Accommodations and Supports Expo, assistive technology exhibits, resource vendor displays

The keynote speaker will be Kiel Baumbach, an Independent Living Specialist at Disability Partners in Asheville, North Carolina since January 2016. In 2016, Kiel was recognized for his hard work and achievements by receiving the "Employee of The Year" certificate. When Kiel is not helping his peers; he enjoys his free time with his fiancée Shanna, her two daughters and their pets. He is currently working with consumers on their goals and helping them strive to live independently.

Download the program and schedule for the WNC Regional Transition into Adulthood Conference at: [https://nccdd.org/images/blog/Highlights/September\\_2017/2017\\_Transition\\_Conference\\_Brochure\\_Final-CC.pdf](https://nccdd.org/images/blog/Highlights/September_2017/2017_Transition_Conference_Brochure_Final-CC.pdf)

## Public Policy Update *(continued from page 2)*

(OSERS) announced the rescission of 72 guidance documents because they were “outdated, unnecessary or ineffective.” A full list of the rescinded documents can be found at [https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/copaa.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/docs/accessible\\_2017/OSERS\\_list\\_of\\_rescinded\\_guid.pdf](https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/copaa.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/docs/accessible_2017/OSERS_list_of_rescinded_guid.pdf). Many policy experts are reviewing documents to fully understand what impact there may be. Some initial analysis of these revisions can be found at [https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/copaa.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/docs/accessible\\_2017/OSERS\\_Rescinded\\_Guidance\\_cha.pdf](https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/copaa.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/docs/accessible_2017/OSERS_Rescinded_Guidance_cha.pdf). OSERS articulated that these documents were the first wave of rescissions. They referenced President Trump’s Executive Order from February of this year directing agencies to “alleviate regulatory burden” by a number of criteria including when regulations “impose costs that exceed the benefits.” In a nationwide call hosted by OSERS, advocates requested more transparency and offered to work with OSERS moving forward to better understand families’ perspectives and how this stakeholder group may utilize and rely guidance differently than professionals in the field.

Late on Friday October 27th, the Department of Education announced it would rescind a total of 600 documents, including the 72 documents from OSERS referenced above. Education experts will be reviewing this closely, and we will update you as we know more.

## Executive Director *(continued from page 1)*

As you read through this October 2017 edition of Highlights and Hot Topics, you will find more about NDEAM, EWNC and how you can participate in the campaign. This issue also includes a robust public policy update, a Council member spotlight and a highlight of the NCCDD Rethinking Guardianship initiative. Thank you for your interest to learn more and collaborate with us!

As always, we love hearing from the community about your thoughts, events and even your ideas (<https://nccdd.org/we-want-your-ideas>) on what can make your community a more inclusive place to for people with I/DD to live, work and play. Contact us at <https://nccdd.org/contact-us.html>.



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