

Week of October 18, 2021

NATIONAL, HILL AND DC NEWS:

The Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday took a major step toward bringing down the cost of hearing aids by making them available over the counter.

The freedom to buy hearing aids without a fitting or test by a specialist is likely to make them cheaper and the market more competitive. The cost of hearing aids can run into the thousands. They often are not covered by insurance companies or traditional Medicare, although private Medicare Advantage plans sometimes cover them.

The FDA called the rule a “landmark proposal.” Once finalized, the rule would create a new category of over-the-counter hearing aids targeting people with mild to moderate hearing loss who are less likely to need the help of an audiologist. There will be a 90-day comment period, and the rule faces a 60-day implementation deadline after that.

The rule could face fierce resistance from hearing aid manufacturers and professional societies representing audiologists. The FDA also said it would begin cracking down on hearing aids and other sound amplification devices not under FDA compliance.

Sens. Charles E. Grassley, R-Iowa, and Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., whose bill proposing the change was incorporated into a larger FDA law, praised the announcement. The senators directed a letter calling for more urgent action to the FDA last week.

Over-the-counter hearing aids will have to meet certain specifications, including a cap on the amount of amplification provided, which could limit the use of over-the-counter devices for more severe cases, when audiologists may need to be consulted.

If you are tracking 14c at the state level, Delaware’s bill was signed into law this past week. It is the 5th state to pass legislation phasing out 14c during the 2021 legislative session, and the 10th state overall.

For more details on trends/status of 14c – here’s a link to APSE’s updated resource: https://apse.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/10_20_21-APSE-14c-Update-REV.pdf

The AbilityOne Commission issued a proposed rule Tuesday that would bar federal contractors and subcontractors from paying a “subminimum wage” to workers who are blind or have a physical or mental disability. The proposed rule would require each nonprofit agency participating in the AbilityOne program to certify it will pay its employees

at least minimum wage for all contracts and subcontracts awarded through the program. “Employees with significant disabilities who have been receiving subminimum wages for their work will now receive the federal minimum wage, state minimum wage, or prevailing wage, depending on the applicable law,” the proposed rule states.

The new minimum wage requirement for nonprofits would apply after the final rule goes into effect. Nonprofit agencies would have to comply with the requirement at the time of the extension or renewal of an existing contract.

The commission will accept comments on the proposed rule through Nov. 12, and is specifically seeking comments that clarify whether the new requirements should apply to nonprofits extending or renewing existing contracts, or whether the requirements should only apply to new contracts.

The commission is also asking how much time nonprofit agencies would need to meet the new requirements, or whether the new wage requirements would impact the ability of contracted workers with disabilities to receive federal benefits such as Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), as well as Medicare and Medicaid.

Just for fun if you want to know whether or not you should stay in bed or not, tune into a new phenomena sweeping the country Noodles the Pug. Yes, Noodles is a dog. His owner tries to rouse him every morning. If Noodles stays in bed well you may want to also. If he gets up then enjoy the day. Crazy.

DIRECTOR NEWS:

David Mitchell has retired and the new administrator of Iowa General is Daniel Tallon beginning October 25th, 2021. Welcome and congratulations, Daniel. We look forward to working with you.

CSAVR GRANT NEWS:

CSAVR has been invited to be part of an application for the Workforce System TA Collaborative to be funded by DOL/ETA. Approximately \$3 to 3.5 million in funds authorized by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Dislocated Worker National Reserve funding for technical assistance (TA) and Title I of the Department of Labor Appropriations Act, 2021 is available. This cooperative agreement will establish and operate a Workforce System Technical Assistance (TA) Collaborative over a 3-year (36-month) period of performance from an anticipated start date of February 2022.

CSAVR was also invited to be a partner in an application in response to an RFA for a *Postsecondary Education and Disability Technical Assistance Center (PEDTAC)*. *The Center is to comprehensively examine postsecondary education and transition issues and to offer information and technical support for a wide range of stakeholders, including students with a broad range of disabilities and their families, secondary transition teams, and a range of postsecondary personnel.*

WESTAT has received an SSA awarded the contract to conduct the Exits from Disability Evidence Study. CSAVR is a subcontractor on this award which began on 9/1/21 and runs through 11/30/24.

Appreciate all the work that especially John and Theresa do on negotiating these grants and getting all the paperwork submitted as well as selling the value of having CSAVR as a grant partner.

TIP OF THE WEEK:

Read your State Plan and understand the difference between the Unified and Combined State Plan. Under WIOA, the governor of each state may elect to submit either a Unified Plan or Combined Plan to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). The Plan should outline the State's four-year strategy for its workforce development system.

- A Unified Plan includes the six WIOA core programs.
- A Combined Plan includes the six WIOA core programs and at least one Combined State Plan partner program.
- WIOA State Plan Portal

NET UPDATE:

Amazon – As the VR-NET continues to build a national partnership with Amazon, Kathy and Inger want to extend a special thank you to Danielle Hackworth in California and Ken Pierson in Nevada for their rapid response to Amazon's request for support in recruiting in Oakland, Fresno and Las Vegas. As the holidays approach Amazon is increasing their staffing levels as well as their base pay, signing bonuses and other benefits. Kathy is working with the Senior Program Manager in Workforce Acquisition for People with Disabilities to connect the NET points of contact to their regional leads in key areas. You will have the opportunity to learn more at the CSAVR conference!

UnitedHealth Group – The Director, Enterprise Disability Inclusion Programs from UHG shared that their Disability Inclusion Internship Program continues to grow in partnership with the NET. In 2020 they had 16 interns (11-MN; 4- TX; 1 – WI) and 11 interns were hired into full time positions with UHG. In 2021 there are 35 interns (14-MN; 7 – CT; 6 – DC; 5 – CA; 2 - WI; 1 – MO) currently working in 6 onsite roles, 8 hybrid positions and 21 are telecommuting. You'll learn more about this partnership at the CSAVR conference!

VR&E NDEAM Panel – The VR&E Employment Team is offering workshops every Thursday during NDEAM. This week they featured four speakers with a disability sharing their experience with those who attended the session. This included a wide range of individuals in terms of age, gender, race, disability and Veteran status. Our own Bill Robinson joined the panel and shared his journey after acquiring his disability, his experiences and career journey. He shared an insightful perspective as he described

how important it was to “consider each experience as a strength.” Thank you for representing CSAVR and the public VR program!

Wells Fargo Virtual Job Fair on TAP on *October 27th*

Pacific time: 10:00 a.m. – noon

Mountain time: 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Central time: 12:00 noon – 2:00 p.m.

Eastern time: 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Travel Unity Summit - The Travel Unity team has invited the NET to join and present at their national conference on October 28th. Details about the virtual conference will be going out to the NET on Monday.

TAP Training Report Month of October 18-21, 2021 - Wells Fargo Candidate training was held on October 18th & 20th with a total of 14 candidates attending. Wells Fargo Recruiter training has been set for October 25th.

TAP reports on candidates are applying thru the system as of October 21, 2021, we have 55 applications the majority are from Michigan (G) 9, CA 7, Oregon 6, & FLA (B) 4.

Top states that added new candidates this month are Michigan 39, Texas (G) 35, CA 24, New Hampshire 8, & FLA (B) 8.

As of October 21, 2021

504,032 Jobs Posted

14,807 Jobs Viewed

55 Job Applications

New Candidates for the Month of October

As of October 21, 2021

Alabama	2 New Candidates	
Alaska	0 New Candidates	
Arkansas (B)	0 New Candidates	
California	24 New Candidates	*7 apply clicks
Colorado	2 New Candidates	
District of Columbia	4 New Candidates	*2 apply clicks
Florida (B)	8 New Candidates	*4 apply clicks
Florida (G)	1 New Candidates	
Georgia	3 New Candidates	

Hawaii	2 New Candidates	
Illinois	6 New Candidates	*3 apply clicks
Iowa (G)	4 New Candidates	*2 apply clicks
Maryland	1 New Candidates	*2 apply clicks
Michigan (B)	4 Candidates	
Michigan (G)	39 New Candidates	*9 apply clicks
Missouri (G)	0 New Candidates	*2 apply clicks
NENA	1 New Candidates	*4 apply clicks
New Hampshire	8 New Candidates	
New Jersey (B)	2 New Candidates	*2 apply clicks
New Mexico (B)	0 New Candidates	
New Mexico (G)	5 New Candidates	
North Carolina (B)	0 New Candidate	
North Carolina (G)	1 New Candidates	
Ohio	0 New Candidates	
Oklahoma	5 New Candidates	*3 Apply clicks
Oregon (B)	1 New Candidate	
Oregon	2 New Candidates	*6 Apply Clicks
Pennsylvania	4 New Candidates	*1 Apply Click
Tennessee	No New Candidates	
Texas (G)	35 New candidates	*4 apply clicks
Utah	0 New Candidates	
VA VR&E	1 New Candidate	
Virginia (B)	1 New Candidates	
Virginia (G)	0 New Candidates	
West Virginia	0 New Candidates	
Wisconsin	0 New Candidate	
Wyoming	1 New Candidates	

RSA UPDATE:

RSA is part of a new work group that is working with DOL to discuss partnership with their newly advertised TA Center.

There was a study from GAO on employer relationships from VR Agencies GAO report 18-58-177 specifically looking at the issue of employers as part of the dual customer – if the TACs have any info from states about updated employer services they should share that information with GAO.

GAO study on Employer Services by SVRAs (2018) [GAO-18-577] <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-18-577.pdf>

RSA awarded 1.1 million supplement for a 3 year period of time to VRTAC-QM to increase the capacity of the center to serve VR Agencies. The money is already spoken for.

SSA NEWS:

Our friends at SSA asked John per urging from OIG to share OIG's report on beneficiaries receiving VR services with the VR community. Here is the report: [Beneficiaries Who Received Vocational Rehabilitation Services \(oversight.gov\)](#)

It is a short report and has data especially reinforcing the importance of the role of the counselor in providing counselling and guidance and job placement being part of IPE from Day 1. Also, it reinforces notion that sooner beneficiaries are engaged in VR and return to work focus before their disability impedes return, the better the results will be. At least these were some of my key takeaways.

We understand that SSA has some concerns about the report and is sharing those with the OIG and RSA.

NCRTM UPDATE:

Heather Servais is the new National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials (NCRTM) project Director. Heather comes to NCRTM from Florida General VR, as the assistance chief of field services and is excited to get to know folks better and work closely with everyone. She has worked for community rehabilitation providers, as well as various roles within the VR and disability field making her a great fit.

Phone: 703.356.8035 ext. 107

hservais@neweditions.net

NCRTM is migrating to Drupal and so given this migration that is a pretty extensive lift, with anticipating for a year process, and hopeful next week that first stage development is initiated.

TAC AND CENTER NEWS:

Innovative Training Center has entered 3rd Year of the project, and met with Karin Grandon as their new project officer. In the first 2 years of the project developed 22 webinars which can be accessed <https://gwcrcre.org/cit-vr/webinars/>. They plan to do a follow up survey related to the rehab counseling academic program survey. Did a national survey focused on faculty and students and now will do a second survey focused on recent graduates to learn what their take is on what holes may exist in the curriculum.

NTACT:C has a Youth Engagement Transition Initiative (YETI) and they have been meeting and we'll update folks on what that group of Young Adults decide to do as part of this initiative. Have a handout on Levels of TA available from NTACT:C: <https://transitionta.org/ntactc-levels-ta/> Have several COPs including Blind agencies and Pre-ETS COP, Students with Multiple Complex Support Needs COP. Website is coming along <https://transitionta.org/>

QE has trainings underway with OK, WY and South Carolina Blind. Arkansas Blind and Idaho Blind and have also reached out along with Northern Mariana Islands and Michigan General. At least three of them came from referrals from QM.

QM has a few webinars to be launched in the next few weeks. First up is Sticks and Stones may break bones and words will hurt me conflict resolution webinar on 10/21, the following Thursday will be a webinar on Non-delegable functions and Organizational Structure and lastly there will be a webinar series in December on history, role and resources of the State Rehabilitation Council. In the performance area still developing the credential attainment webinar, also doing training around IPE.

QM just signed unique ITA with agency to do among other things a deep dive into their data around the ways in which they use providers to help them make data driven decisions around services and outcomes. Will also do an analysis of their case management system and whether it is tracking and reporting in the ways they think it is working and want to use that data to also support how they provide services.

VRTAC-QM has released a new Manager Minute: New Employment Initiatives and Practices to Move the Needle with David D'Arcangelo and Natasha Jerde: In episode 6 of Manager Minute, employment and VR take center stage during October's National Disability Awareness Month. David D'Arcangelo, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB), and Natasha Jerde, Director of State Services for the Blind of Minnesota (SSB), join Carol Pankow to talk about the state of employment, today's challenges, and the initiatives and practices they implemented to improve employment for individuals with disabilities. Learn how David and his team at MCB increased their customer base by 25% over the last year and how partnerships and creativity in Minnesota are helping to increase the number of people with disabilities being employed. [Listen Here](#)

OIB-TAC just did a webinar on advocacy as it relates to public transportation and have a webinar scheduled for 11/19 by computers for the blind who provides low cost refurbished computers with blind user software already installed. National Training and Resource Center on Blindness and Low Vision and have one of the NIDLRR centers on improving business development and now have a research based curriculum as asynchronous *Improving Business Development Skills, a training for rehabilitation professionals* <https://nrtc.catalog.instructure.com/courses/improving-skills>

AIVRTAC is newly refunded and a partnership between TVR Institute out of Northwest Indian College and the previous AIVRTAC partners. There will be a new bachelor's degree program that focuses on the AIVRTAC populations and providing services that are culturally appropriate. Merging two colleges as part of this but really exciting new partners as part of this. www.aivrttac.org wayne.dagel@nau.edu

CAPE Youth has a survey out that looks at policies and the way states look at Pre-ETS.

RESEARCH NEWS, REPORTS, WEBINARS, CONFERENCES, ETC.:

On our August Monthly Membership Call Catherine Ipsen with the University of Montana rural Institute discussed their guide for *Increasing Consumer Opportunities for Self-Employment in Vocational Rehabilitation*. They have just put together a factsheet about the VR Self-Employment Guide that describes how it was developed, what it includes, and the possibility for training. To access the factsheet go to: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1045&context=ruralinst_employment

Langston University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center is seeking participation in a Veterans Return to Work Co-Service Support Program. One of the main program goals is to promote the co-services practices of Veterans of color receiving services from State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies (SVRA) and VA VR&E, and Tribal VR Agencies and VA VR&E. Veterans selected to participate will earn a \$2,000 stipend. Any interested VR staff wanting to know more may participate in an open weekly Zoom meeting at 10a central each Thursday:

Topic: Veterans Co-Service Practices Informational Zoom Meeting

Time: Open Weekly Meeting: 10:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/96198722868?pwd=MnBudTVRZEg5TDZBVHFVd2VubFVCZz09>

Meeting ID: 961 9872 2868

Passcode: 16381

Strengthening Employer and Industry Engagement: A Self-Assessment Tool for Youth Apprenticeship Lead: A self-assessment tool designed to help youth apprenticeship program administrators and policymakers determine how effectively a program is engaging employers and industry to meet program development, implementation, and sustainability goals.

The Pacific ADA Regional Center (90DPAD0006) will host a webinar, Learning from Patients to Provide Accessible Healthcare and Effective Communication for Patients who are Blind or have Low Vision, October 28th, 2:30-4 pm ET. Presenters will share the results of focus groups with people who are blind or have low vision who shared their experiences when seeking healthcare. Presenters will identify ways providers can operationalize the Americans with Disabilities Act's (ADA) requirements for healthcare accessibility to provide better care for these patients. Presenters will share techniques for working directly with patients as well as understanding where training and facility design can contribute to high quality, accessible patient care. Registration is free and required.

The Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRP) Program: Research on Healthcare Policy and Disability (90DPGE0014) will co-host a webcast, Complex Rehabilitation Technology Service Delivery and Clinical Assessment Research: What Happens Behind the Curtain?, October 29th, 3-4:00 pm ET. Presenters will provide insight into the research plan, what actually happens, and how the plan changes for research related to service delivery and clinical practice in the complex rehabilitation technology (CRT) field. Presenters will provide an inside look at the trials and tribulations of scoping and systematic reviews and the challenges of developing a seating and mobility assessment index; unveil the mysterious world of CRT research; and identify opportunities for suppliers, industry partners, clinicians, policy experts, and CRT users to participate and influence research in the field. Registration is free and required.

The Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Technologies to Support Aging-in-Place for People with Long-Term Disabilities (RERC TechSAge) (90DPGE0014) seeks participants for a study that explores the everyday activities and challenges of older adults with long-term vision loss (PDF) due to macular degeneration or glaucoma. Participants will complete questionnaires by phone, online, or email, and will participate in an interview by phone or Zoom. Participants must be between 60-80 years old, have a diagnosis of macular degeneration or glaucoma for at least 10 years, and have vision loss that affects their activities of daily living. See study flyer for additional criteria. Participants will be compensated \$45 in Amazon e-codes. For more information contact Elena Remillard, Study Coordinator, at access-study@gatech.edu or 404/385-2564.

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) at the National Institutes of Health is sharing resources to recognize Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Awareness Month. Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder in Children and Teens: What You Need to Know provides information about ADHD, including symptoms and causes, how it is diagnosed in children and teens, treatments and interventions, and helpful

resources. Mental Health Minute: Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder is a short video that introduces the symptoms of ADHD and who to talk to about options for treatment and support to improve one's ability to focus, learn, and work.

Quick Fact: Mental Health, Colleagues, & Confidence: 55% of people reported having no colleagues they feel comfortable confiding in regarding their mental health. Source: The National Institute for Health Care Management (NIHCM) Foundation

The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Community Living and Participation (90RTCP0003) published Policy Research Brief: Predictors of Annual Turnover Among Direct Support Professionals. The brief describes findings from a recent study of organizational- and state-level factors related to turnover among direct support professionals (DSP), using data from the National Core Indicators Staff Stability Survey. Organizational factors, such as offering higher hourly wages and health insurance benefits, were significant predictors of lower annual DSP turnover. State-level factors that predicted lower annual DSP turnover included a higher proportion of people in a given state receiving services in individual settings and very small group homes, plus higher per-capita Medicaid spending.

NIDILRR has released information regarding the 81 new grant and contract awards issued in FY 2021. The new awards include 10 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) National Network Regional Centers and a Knowledge Translation Center; 14 Spinal Cord Injury Model System Centers and a Data Center; 2 Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers; 1 Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center; 6 Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects; 19 Field Initiated Projects; 4 Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Centers; 7 Research Fellowships; 1 Traumatic Brain Injury Model System Data Center; and 14 Phase I and Phase II Small Business Innovation Research grants. These awards span NIDILRR's research priorities and domains of employment outcomes, community participation, health and function, technology, capacity building, and knowledge translation.

Research from the NIDILRR-funded project Risk of Opioid Use Disorder and Related Consequences: A Longitudinal Study of Spinal Cord Injury (90DPHF0009) was featured in Opioids & SCI, TBI & Voting, the latest episode of the RehabCast podcast from the Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. Project investigator Nicole DiPiro, PhD, discussed her recent research examining the opioid epidemic through the lens of the spinal cord injury population.

The NIDILRR-funded Community Living Policy Center (90RTCP0004) will host a screening of 6,000 Waiting – A Film About Disability Advocacy, October 27th, 12-1 pm ET. The film follows three Georgia residents with disabilities as they fight to access Georgia's New Option Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Support (COMP) Waiver Programs, which would help them live life on their own terms. The screening will be followed by a 30-minute discussion with the three individuals with disabilities featured in the film. Registration is free and required.

Practitioners Guide to Supportive Services

Training and Employment Notice Number 12-21 / October 15, 2021: The purpose of this training and employment notice is to provide a resource guide to workforce investment practitioners who assist jobseekers in finding and applying for financial assistance and other supportive services.

https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?docn=9977

nTIDE November Lunch & Learn Webinar Series offered by the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability on November 5, 2021 / Noon – 1:00 PM Eastern Time. To access online registration, please [visit](#).

<https://researchondisability.org/home/ntide>

CMS has launched a new landing page on Medicaid.gov to access information about states' plans to enhance, expand, and strengthen home and community-based services across the country using new Medicaid funding made available by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP). The site allows stakeholders to view states' ARPA programs and activities. The webpage includes states' ARP section 9817 spending plans and narratives, letters issued to states on their spending plans and narratives, and other important information related to the implementation of ARP section 9817. The site can be found at <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/home-community-based-services/guidance/strengthening-and-investing-home-and-community-based-services-for-medicaid-beneficiaries-american-rescue-plan-act-of-2021-section-9817-spending-plans-and-narratives/index.html>.

Are you interested in making a policy impact with your research or work? Register for the [Center on Knowledge Translation for Disability and Rehabilitation Research's \(KTDRR\) 2021 Online KT Conference: Research Results for Policy Outcomes](#) on October 25, 27, and 29, 2021 from 1 to 5 pm each day. The conference has been approved for 8.5 CRC credits. Global experts will address a range of policy-relevant topics, including:

Why is it important to engage policy-oriented stakeholders early, and what are good ways to do that?

What are the best ways to share information with policymakers?

What are examples of research-informed policy?

To register for the free 2021 Online KT Conference, please visit

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6298211/Registration-KTDRR-2021-Online-KT-Conference>

Ethical Foundations of Youth Employment Services Webinar Series - Presented by: Wendy Quarles and Kim Osmani

Yang-Tan Institute, Cornell University

REGISTER NOW

Part 1: Authentic Youth Engagement

LIVE: Thursday, November 18, 2021 - 1:00-2:30pm EST

The highest performing youth serving projects and initiatives have a robust plan for attracting, engaging and promoting the voice of the young people they work with. This webinar will focus on learning, un-learning and re-learning strategies for developing successful work focused youth (and family) partnerships.

Part 2: Ethical Considerations for Youth Employment Services

LIVE: Thursday, December 2, 2021 - 1:00-2:30pm EST

So often ethics discussions are held when a problem has occurred and a we are facing a dilemma. Join this session to proactively learn about ethical principles that guide our work with youth and their support teams. Together we will identify how young people bring a new set of ethical considerations to vocational counseling practices

Part 3: Providing Ethically Driven Youth Employment Services

LIVE: Thursday, December 16, 2021 - 1:00-2:30pm EST

How do we balance young peoples right to be self-governing with the potential pressures we are feeling from stakeholders in the process? This session will continue the discussion on ethical principles that guide our work with youth and their families and will un-cover the potential dilemmas that may occur in our practices. Join your colleagues as we navigate the ethical decision-making process and identify ways to conduct personal and programmatic ethics self-checks.

COVID 19 NEWS:

COVID 19: Federal Disability-Specific and Other Related Guidance

The Council of State Governments Disability Employment Policy: Currently, state and local policymakers are adopting and implementing policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This web page summarizes guidance issued by Federal Government agencies that can assist in ensuring state and local policy aligns with our nation's civil rights laws and other disability-related policies.

<https://seed.csg.org/covid-19-federal-disability-specific-and-other-related-guidance/>

SSA Message to federal Contractors:

On September 9, 2021, President Biden announced his Path Out of the Pandemic: COVID-19 Action Plan. As part of that plan, the President signed Executive Order 14042 (E.O.) on Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors that directs Executive departments and agencies, including independent establishments subject to the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act, 40 U.S.C. 102(4)(A), to ensure that contracts and contract-like instruments include a clause that the contractor and any subcontractors (at any tier) shall incorporate into lower-tier subcontracts.

SSA is in the process of implementing the E.O., which will include incorporating a new clause to contracts subject to the E.O. The clause will specify that the contractor or subcontractor shall, for the duration of the contract, comply with all guidance for contractor or subcontractor workplace locations published by the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force. SSA has already begun the process of modifying the clause into its contracts.

Effective 10/25/2021, unless your organization's contract has been modified to incorporate this new clause, contractors are required to adhere to SSA's COVID-19 vaccination and testing requirements, below, for contractor staff working onsite at an SSA facility. Once the new clause has been effectively incorporated into a contract, contractor staff working under that contract will no longer be required to adhere to this attestation/testing requirement.

Personnel assigned to contracts should complete the Certification of Vaccination form and be ready to present the completed form, which will remain in their possession, when working onsite at an SSA occupied facility.

Onsite contractor employees who are not fully vaccinated, who do not complete the attestation form, or who decline to provide their vaccination status are required to be tested not less than weekly and show proof of having received a negative COVID-19 FDA-approved test within the previous 3 days in order to enter an SSA facility. As of that date, contractor personnel are required to show either their *Certification of Vaccination* form attesting to being fully vaccinated or their negative COVID-19 test results (no more than 3 days old) to enter an SSA facility. SSA personnel may inspect this documentation upon entry to the facility and refuse entry to contractor personnel who are non-compliant. Contractors are responsible for identifying suitable testing providers, which must administer an FDA approved test with a dated result.

Contractor personnel must keep a copy of the *Certification of Vaccination* form or proof of a timely negative COVID-19 test on their person while onsite at SSA facilities. SSA staff will not collect or store information on the vaccination status or test results of individual contractor personnel. Contractors are solely responsible for this information and compliance with these requirements.

SSA has established a webpage for *COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions for Contractors and Subcontractors with Employees Working at SSA Facilities*: www.ssa.gov/oag [See Important Alerts tab].

Please direct any questions that you may have to your Contracting Officer or Contract Specialist. Please do not reply back directly to this message.

RECENT ARTICLES:

Aanesen, Fiona, Britt E. Øiestad, Margreth Grotle, Ida Løchting, Rune Solli, Gail Sowden, Gwenllian Wynne-Jones, Kjersti Storheim, and Hedda Eik. “**Implementing a Stratified Vocational Advice Intervention for People on Sick Leave with Musculoskeletal Disorders: A Multimethod Process Evaluation.**” JOURNAL OF OCCUPATIONAL REHABILITATION, 2021.

Aasdahl, Lene, Marius S. Fimland, and Cecilie Røe. “**The Readiness for Return to Work Scale; Does it Help in Evaluation of Return to Work?**” JOURNAL OF OCCUPATIONAL REHABILITATION, 2021.

Allen, Heidi, and Katherine Baicker. “**The Effect of Medicaid on Care and Outcomes for Chronic Conditions: Evidence from the Oregon Health Insurance Experiment.**” National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper Series, no. 29373. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2021.

Chong, Natalie, Ilhom Akobirshoev, Joseph Caldwell, H. Stephen Kaye, and Monika Mitra. “**The Relationship Between Unmet Need for Home and Community-Based Services and Health and Community Living Outcomes.**” DISABILITY AND HEALTH JOURNAL, 2021, p. 101222.

Fyhn, Tonje, Vigdis Sveinsdottir, Silje E. Reme, and Gro M. Sandal. “**A Mixed Methods Study of Employers’ and Employees’ Evaluations of Job Seekers with a Mental Illness, Disability, or of a Cultural Minority.**” WORK, vol. 70, no. 1, 2021, pp. 235–245.

Hoque, K., and N. Bacon. “**Working from Home and Disabled People’s Employment Outcomes.**” BRITISH JOURNAL OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, 2021.

Jones, Weneaka D., Brian N. Phillips, Ellie Hartman, Malachy Bishop, Timothy N. Tansey, and Catherine A. Anderson. “**The Relationship Among Demographic Factors, Transition Services, and Individual Development Account (IDA) Saving Participation Among Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities.**” REHABILITATION COUNSELING BULLETIN, vol. 65, no. 1, 2021, pp. 37–48.

Kingsnorth, S., S. Lindsay, J. Maxwell, Y. Hamdani, A. Colantonio, J. Zhu, M.T. Bayley, and C. Macarthur. “**Bridging Pediatric and Adult Rehabilitation Services for Young Adults with Childhood-Onset Disabilities: Evaluation of the LIFEsan Model of Transitional Care.**” FRONTIERS IN PEDIATRICS, vol. 9, 2021.

Kwan, Chi K. “**Helping People with Disabilities in the Workplace: Mezzo-Level Interventions Targeting Corporate Culture.**” SOCIAL WORK, vol. 66, no. 4, 2021, pp. 339–347.

Lancman, S., J.D.O. Barros, T.D.A. Jardim, C.M. Brunoro, L.I. Sznelwar, and T.N.R. Da Silva. “**Organisational and Relational Factors That Influence Return to Work and Job Retention: The Contribution of Activity Ergonomics.**” WORK, vol. 70, no. 1, 2021, pp. 311–319.

Murphy, Griffin T., Jay Patel, Leslie I. Boden, and Jennifer Wolf. “**Workers’ Compensation Benefits, Costs, and Coverage.**” National Academy of Social Insurance. Washington, DC: National Academy of Social Insurance, 2021.

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