

FEDERAL AGENCY WATCH

Federal Agency Watch is a synthesis of Federal agency news and activities related to traumatic brain injury. Federal Agency Watch is sent on a quarterly basis to keep those involved with traumatic brain injury informed on the Federal level.

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Department of Education (ED) - ED Announces \$2.4 Million in Grants to 20 Institutions to Improve Special Education Teacher Training Programs

The Department of Education announced the award of \$2.4 million in grants to 20 institutions in 15 States to help train highly qualified teachers of students with high incidence disabilities, such as learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, and mental retardation.

The awards, made under the Special Education Pre-service Training Improvement Grants Program, are meant to improve the quality of special education teacher preparation programs and ensure that graduates meet the highly qualified teacher requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The grants cover the first year of what's expected to be five-year projects overseen by the Education Department's Office of Special Education Programs. During the first year, the grant recipients will begin upgrading their teacher preparation programs with research-proven strategies designed to improve outcomes for children with high incidence disabilities.

They will also coordinate their efforts with the National Center to Enhance the Professional Development of School Personnel by using the center's Web-based training modules.

In addition, the money is to be used to:

- Address the specialized needs of children with high incidence disabilities from diverse cultural and language backgrounds, including those with limited English proficiency.
- Provide extended clinical learning opportunities, field experiences and mentoring opportunities in local schools. And,
- Use field-based training opportunities in high-poverty communities and in schools not making adequate yearly progress under the No Child Left Behind Act.

Following is a list of the grant recipients. For more information, see <http://www.ed.gov/programs/osepprep/index.html>.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs
Special Education Pre-service Training Improvement Grants
AL—Birmingham—University of Alabama-Birmingham, Renitta Goldman, \$100,000.
CA—Chico—California State University, Chico, Teresa Davis, \$146,661.
CA—Los Angeles—Loyola Marymount University, Teresa Jimenez, \$122,265.
CO—Greeley—University of Northern Colorado, Harvey Rude, \$99,932.
FL—Orlando—University of Central Florida, Mary Little, \$110,744.
GA—Valdosta—Valdosta State University, Karla Hull, \$142,875.
ID—Boise—Boise State University, Keith Allred, \$149,990.
IL—Joliet—University of St. Francis, Srimani Chakravarthi, \$100,832.
KS—Lawrence—University of Kansas Center for Research, Sean Smith, \$117,904.
ME—Gorham—University of Southern Maine, Catherine Fallona, \$127,543.
MD—College Park—University of Maryland, Phillip Burke, \$113,176.
NC—Greensboro—North Carolina A&T University, Cathy Kea, \$100,000.
NV—Las Vegas—University of Nevada, Kristin Sayeski, \$149,253.
OH—Dayton—Wright State University, Catherine Keener, \$100,000.
OH—New Concord—Muskingum College, Linda Morrow, \$111,718.
TX—Odessa—University of Texas of the Permian Basin, Karen Smith, \$139,102.
VA—Fairfax—George Mason University, Kelley Regan, \$136,635.
VA—Harrisonburg—James Madison University, Cheryl Beverly, \$119,759.
VA—Radford—Radford University, Elizabeth Altieri, \$149,958.
VA—Richmond—Virginia Commonwealth University, Colleen Thoma, \$109,810.
Total—\$2,448,157.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – “Keeping Quiet Can Keep You Out of the Game”

To help spread important messages about concussion, CDC recently developed a 2 minute concussion video that features a teen athlete who sustained a concussion as a high

school basketball player. The video is now posted online on YouTube and on CDC's Concussion in Youth Sports webpage <<http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports>>.

If the YouTube links below do not work, please go to <<http://www.YouTube.com>> and search by "Keeping Quiet Can Keep You Out of the Game."

<<http://www.youtube.com/user/CDCStreamingHealth>>

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIqZDbk3M40>> - non-captioned

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoYmHUxu1KU>> - open captioned

Also, check out CDC's concussion in youth sports e-cards developed for coaches, parents, and athletes online at: <<http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports>>.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) - Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) – Medicare Enhances Consumer Information on Hospital Care

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced important additions to the "Hospital Compare" consumer Web site (<http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov/>) that will give consumers even better insight into the quality of care provided by their local hospitals.

The improvements include the addition of a mortality measure for pneumonia and, for the first time on Hospital Compare, publicly reported measures for hospital care of children. Previously, Hospital Compare had provided only quality information based on hospitalizations of adult patients.

In addition to new information about pneumonia mortality, CMS is releasing new information to the Hospital Compare Web site that will allow consumers and hospitals to drill down beyond the categorical information of the mortality measures for each hospital -- whether the hospital's mortality rate is "Better than," "No different from," or "Worse than" the U.S. national rate.

Through the "Hospital Compare" Web site, CMS is working to implement the principles of a value-based system in the Medicare program. The enhancements to the site further empower consumer choice and create incentives by motivating providers to provide better care for less money. To help hospitals use the 30-day mortality data as a quality improvement tool, CMS provided detailed reports to each hospital listed on the Web site. CMS believes that all hospitals, regardless of their mortality rates, should use the data available in these free, detailed reports to find ways to continually improve the care they deliver.

CMS urges consumers not to view any one process or outcome measure on “Hospital Compare” as a tool to “shop” for a hospital. The information contained on “Hospital Compare” is one additional tool for consumers to use in making healthcare decisions, although consumers should gather information from multiple sources when choosing a hospital.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) – SAMHSA Announces Availability of New Sustainability Toolkit for Grassroots Programs

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is announcing the release of “Sustaining Grassroots Community-based Programs: A Toolkit for Community and Faith-based Service Providers.” Grassroots community and faith-based treatment and recovery providers are concerned about continuing critical services for people affected by substance abuse and mental health disorders. This toolkit is designed to help these organizations plan for long-term survival.

Time-limited grant funding and categorical funding put grassroots organizations in the position of searching for funds to cover program expenses. Resources are needed to sustain and support program services over time. Sustainability is about maintaining and continuing program services after a funding period is over and ensuring that the organization has become a permanent part of community resources.

Sustainable community organizations have solid and strong foundations. Organizations need healthy, realistic, and effective organizational structures; sustainable plans or strategies; solid and continuous financial support; adequate and qualified staff; and ongoing effective strategies for marketing and fund development.

Providing helpful information to guide sustainability planning efforts, the toolkit has samples of tools and fill-in-the-blank planning templates and worksheets. It contains six booklets that cover:

- strategic planning
- organizational assessment and readiness
- effective marketing strategies
- financial management
- fund development and fund raising
- results-oriented evaluations

Each component provides strategic, practical, and useful information to begin the sustainability planning process.

The kit is free and available in print and online. To order up to five printed copies, call 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) and request order number SMA08-4340. To access and download the online version of the kit, go to

<http://ncadistore.samhsa.gov/catalog/productDetails.aspx?ProductID=17868>

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) – SAMHSA Launches New Homelessness Resource Center Web Site

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has launched a new Homelessness Resource Center Web site. The Web site is designed to support individuals working to improve the lives of people affected by homelessness who have mental health conditions, substance use disorders, and histories of trauma.

This social networking site is designed to help users network with other providers of homelessness services, such as by sharing knowledge and experiences. Other features include accessing resources from the library, downloading resources and practical tools, rating and commenting on content, posting helpful information, and learning about upcoming events.

Topics, such as how to reach out to the homeless, the transition from homelessness, health care, self care, and housing, are included to promote recovery-oriented and consumer-centered homeless services.

For more information, visit: <http://www.homeless.samhsa.gov>

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) – HUD Secretary Highlights Faith-Based Contributions to Fighting Homelessness

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Steve Preston said Faith-based organizations are making a huge difference in the Bush Administration's efforts to reduce homelessness. Addressing the White House National Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Conference, Preston highlighted the Administration's partnership with faith-based and community organizations and steps being taken to reduce chronic homelessness, especially among veterans.

In 2002, the Administration declared that ending chronic homelessness was a national priority. From 2005 to 2006, communities across the country reported an approximate 12 percent decrease in the number of chronically homeless individuals. This translates into more than 20,000 fewer individuals living on the streets or in emergency shelters. This reduction is directly attributed to the investment HUD and local "continuum of care" are devoting to create more permanent supportive housing units.

Last year, HUD announced grants of \$1.5 billion nationwide to address homelessness. Since 2001, approximately \$10 billion has been provided to support housing and services for the homeless. The President's is seeking \$1.6 billion for HUD's Continuum of Care homeless assistance grant programs in his Fiscal Year 2009 proposed budget.

From 2003-2006, the number of direct nonprofit grantees of HUD's Continuum of Care program grew by nearly 500 organizations. Since 2003, HUD has provided funding for more than 42,000 new, permanent, supportive housing beds, most of which were created

through faith-based and community organizations, who are vital stakeholders in every local community.

In April 2008, HUD announced \$75 million to provide permanent supportive housing for an estimated 10,000 homeless veterans nationwide. HUD's Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH), a joint program between HUD and the Department of Veterans Affairs, provides local public housing agencies with approximately 10,000 rental assistance vouchers specifically targeted to assist homeless veterans in their area. The Bush Administration has requested another \$75 million in the Fiscal Year 2009 budget, which would house and serve an additional 10,000 homeless veterans.

In addition, HUD has also trained more than 40,000 nonprofit leaders in grant writing and other skills and offered almost 300 training seminars, many of which involved faith-based groups.

Department of Labor (DOL) – Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) – NTAR Leadership Center to Promote Employment for Adults with Disabilities Announces Pilot States for State Leaders Innovation Institute

The National Technical Assistance and Research Leadership Center to Promote Employment and Economic Independence for Adults with Disabilities (NTAR Leadership Center) announced that it has selected the States of Connecticut, Maryland, and Minnesota to participate in its first State Leaders Innovation Institute.

The State Leaders Innovation Institute is part of the NTAR Leadership Center's national efforts to improve employment for adults with disabilities by connecting State workforce policies to State and local economic growth and development goals. Several demographic and workforce trends — including the aging of the workforce — reinforce the need for States and employers to develop stronger partnerships that result in making employment available to adults with disabilities in States' high-growth industries.

Despite multiple government efforts and compelling reasons for hiring people with disabilities, they remain disproportionately out of the workforce. According to Census Bureau data, only 38% of Americans with disabilities aged 21-64 were employed in 2005, compared to 78% of Americans without disabilities.

Through participation in the 15-month State Leaders Innovation Institute, teams of high-level State policymakers from Connecticut, Maryland, and Minnesota —representing economic development, workforce development, and disability employment — will receive specialized technical assistance, leadership support, and other resources as they work to pioneer innovative approaches to improve employment for adults with disabilities.

The three States selected already are seen as leading the nation in workforce participation for adults with disabilities. Through participation in the State Leaders Innovation Institute, they will work to further improve economic and employment opportunities

through the development of sustainable partnerships among the States' workforce development, economic development, disability programs, and employers in key State industries.

Under the State Leaders Innovation Institute, the Connecticut team plans to develop strategic actions that leverage the services of multiple government agencies to build a more integrated continuum of career development supports for adults with disabilities, as well as create stronger alliances with workforce and employer needs. The State will focus specific high-growth, industry-related building efforts in southwestern Connecticut through The Workplace Inc., the State's southwest regional Workforce Investment Board.

Maryland's team will develop strategic actions that result in stronger coordination with the State's economic development, workforce development, and disability employment systems to better integrate training and preparation programs for adults with disabilities.

The Minnesota team will build on important recent work taking place in the State to integrate adults with disabilities into the design and implementation of State economic growth activities. The State will look to build on existing models that work to move youth with disabilities into jobs in the manufacturing sector by adapting these models to adults, and expanding the model to other high-growth sectors in the State.

For an overview of the NTAR Leadership Center and the State Leaders Innovation Institute, please visit www.ntarcenter.org.

Department of Transportation (DOT) – National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) – “Increasing Seat Belt Use Among 8- to 15-Year-Olds” Report

NHTSA has published a new report based on a research project aimed at increasing seat belt among 8- to 15-year-old child passengers. Many of these children travel at great risk on our roads and highways due in large part to non-use of seat belts.

The broad aim of this research project was to determine the nature and causes of non-use of seat belts among 8- to 15- year-olds, and to recommend interventions and strategic approaches to increase usage among this age group.

This report provides detailed background information from three phases of research:

- A literature review.
- 28 in-home family immersion interviews conducted in Illinois, Georgia, and Arizona. And,
- Detailed findings from qualitative testing of intervention concepts through 96 "triads" among tweens aged 8-15; six focus groups with parents in Pennsylvania, Iowa, Wisconsin, and California; and two focus groups with adult/teen influencers in Iowa and California. Interventions tested included

those based on new products, community and school influence, communications, and key influencers (parents, older teens).

To view this report, please go to
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/menuitem.cda13865569778598fcb6010dba046a0/> and under the "Safety Belt Reports" section, click on "Increasing Seat Belt Use Among 8- to 15-Year-Olds."

Legislative Tracking Grid

For a comprehensive listing of pending Federal legislation, please visit:
http://www.nashia.org/pdf/legis_grid_7_08.pdf to view the TBI Technical Assistance Center at NASHIA's Legislative Tracking Grid. The grid contains information on bills introduced to the House and Senate including sponsors and a brief summary of each bill. The Legislative Tracking Grid is prepared by Susan L. Vaughn for the TBI Technical Assistance Center at NASHIA.

If you have any questions about the above information, please contact Heather Crown at 301-656-3150 or hacrown@tbitac.nashia.org.

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