

Developmental Disability Services February Newsletter

Come See Us!

February 11, 2026

- Grand Island Agency Fair: 4pm - 7pm
(Grand Island Senior High)
- Kearney Community Fair: 2pm - 6pm
(Buffalo County Fairgrounds)

Events at a Glance

Grand Island:

- 2/13 - Valentine's Day Party
- Starting exercise group

Hastings:

- Starting to volunteer at CSS
- Starting book club at Hastings Library
- 2/06 - Coffee and Donuts with HPD

Kearney:

- 2/17 - Fat Tuesday Brunch
- 2/26 - Jet the Horse visits

FEBRUARY MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICE

Take a moment
to love yourself.
You deserve care
and compassion,
just like you would
give to someone.
else.



Did You Know?

Did you know that Goodwill has Benefits Specialists who can assist individuals receiving DD Waiver Services?

Goodwill's Benefits Specialists provide individualized guidance on how employment may impact state, local, and federal benefits.

This support is available not only to individuals who are currently working, but also to those who are considering employment.



Our team offers case-specific information and hands-on assistance to help resolve benefits-related questions and concerns—empowering individuals to make informed decisions about work and long-term financial stability.

If you are interested in this service or would like more information about it, please reach out to your local manager.



Advocacy Efforts

The following is a brief summary of several bills that have recently been introduced in the Nebraska Legislature concerning Medicaid, disabilities, and behavioral health. While these legislative proposals may not directly impact Goodwill services at this time, it is important to remain informed as developments may occur. Advocacy involves staying aware of policy changes and voicing concerns when necessary to ensure your perspectives are considered. Goodwill is committed to keeping updated on these issues and will share information about changes as available.

Document	Primary Introducer	Description
LB722	Quick	Provide for use of the Behavioral Health Services Fund for individuals with substance use disorder
LB724	Quick	Require the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct a cost study of behavioral health care rates
LB733	Riepe	Change the name of the Division of Developmental Disabilities to the Division of Disability and Aging within the Department of Health and Human Services
LB737	Rountree	Require a joint public hearing to evaluate the progress of the Olmstead plan for individuals with disabilities
LB812	Bostar	Provide requirements for the Department of Health and Human Services relating to medicaid eligibility redeterminations and community engagement
LB832	Hansen	Extend the prohibition of the addition of long-term care services and supports to the medicaid managed care program
LB860	Bostar	Require the Department of Health and Human Services to create a program to provide behavioral health care services to individuals under twenty-one years of age
LB911	Hardin	Provide requirements for licensed behavior analysts, certain child care licensing facilities, behavior analysis services under the Medical Assistance Act, and the Department of Health and Human Services
LB929	Fredrickson	Provide requirements for the Department of Health and Human Services relating to deductions and cost sharing for medicaid enrollees
LB972	Fredrickson	Change provisions relating to parking spaces for handicapped or disabled persons, the State Boat Act, the Motor Vehicle Registration Act, the Motor Vehicle Operator's License Act, the Motor Vehicle Safety Responsibility Act, and the Nebraska Rules of the Road
LB1011	Dungan	Change provisions relating to compensation for temporary disability under the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act
LB1031	Dorn	Require appropriations from the Hospital Quality Assurance and Access Assessment Fund and state intent regarding medicaid rates for mental health providers
LB1200	Guereca	Require industrial integrators to submit an annual disaster mitigation plan to the Department of Health and Human Services
LB1222	Prokop	Require insurance coverage of acquired brain injury services and require insurance and medicaid coverage of certain testing and treatments for Alzheimer's disease and related dementia
LB1233	Hansen	Adopt the Developmental Disabilities Provider Excessive Training and Cost Reduction Act
LR316CA	Cavanaugh, M.	Constitutional amendment to provide for certain rights of persons with disabilities

A Message from the Director

Weather & Safety Update

As we move through the winter season, our top priority continues to be the safety and well-being of the individuals we support and the staff who serve them. To ensure we are doing everything we can to protect everyone, our teams monitor weather and road conditions very closely each day.

Because conditions can change quickly—whether due to snow, ice, extreme cold, strong winds, or dense fog—there may be times when transportation or day services need to be adjusted, delayed, or cancelled. We know these changes can impact schedules, and we truly appreciate your understanding and flexibility as we make decisions with safety in mind.

Our leadership team reviews conditions by 6:00 a.m., and any needed notifications are shared by 7:00 a.m. We will continue to monitor throughout the day and communicate updates as soon as possible.

If you ever have questions or concerns, please reach out to your local manager. Thank you for your continued partnership, support, and care for the people we serve.



Safety Tidbit from the Medical Coordinator

Staying Healthy: Simple Steps to Prevent Illness and Stop the Spread

Keeping our community healthy starts with everyday actions. Please remember to wash your hands regularly, cover coughs and sneezes, and clean shared spaces when possible. If you are feeling unwell, staying home and resting helps protect you and those around you. These small preventive steps make a big difference in reducing the spread of illness and keeping everyone well.



Quality Report

The Stakeholder Survey is conducted annually to assess the perceived quality of services provided by the DDS department. The results attached reflect feedback from the most recent survey, completed in December 2025.

We deeply value input from our stakeholders and use these insights to identify areas for ongoing improvement.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey.

Please remember that feedback is always welcome throughout the year—feel free to reach out to your local manager at any time to share your thoughts and suggestions.

Topic (as listed in the survey)	2024	2025	Difference
Programs/services designed to meet needs	83.30%	84.60%	1.3
Programs/services assist to reach goals	82.60%	88.50%	5.9
Staff respond promptly to referrals/questions	84.60%	89.30%	4.7
Staff seek & listen to feedback	84.60%	85.20%	0.6
Services delivered professionally & respectfully	82.60%	84.00%	1.4
Staff maintain confidentiality	87.00%	84.00%	-3.0
Staff sensitive to cultural differences	81.80%	85.70%	3.9
Environment is friendly, welcoming, appropriate	83.30%	92.30%	9
Positive reputation	77.30%	80.00%	2.7
Overall satisfaction with services	81.00%	84.60%	3.6

Resource Roundup

Public Comment Period - January 26 through February 25, 2026

Pursuant to 42 C.F.R. §441.304(f), the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is required to give public notice related to the state's plan to amend the 1915(c) Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Comprehensive Developmental Disabilities Services (NE.4154) waiver and the Developmental Disabilities Day Services Waiver for Adults (NE.0394). **The 30-day public comment period will be from January 26 to February 25, 2026.**

Upon approval by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), these waiver amendments would go into effect July 1, 2026.

For more information, go to the [DDD Public Comment page](#).

The Public Comment page also has information about the plan to renew the Aged and Adult and Children with Disabilities Waiver (NE.0187) and amend the Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver (NE.40199). The 30-day public comment period was from December 5, 2025, through January 5, 2026.

FREE VIRTUAL HEALTH LITERACY WORKSHOP

For anyone who wants to better navigate the health care system.



What you'll learn:

- Details on insurance & privacy
- How to make & navigate doctor visits
- How to understand your-family and personal medical history

Available dates (12 p.m. – 1 p.m.):

February 10	August 11
April 14	October 13
June 9	December 8

No cost to attend.

Penny Warford: 308-201-0455 Penny.A.Warford@nebraskatotalcare.com	Toni Webb: 402-906-5880 Toni.Webb@nebraskatotalcare.com
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No cost to attend.

teams.microsoft.com/join/2460164044428p6RkplOBvEq051mlf

UPCOMING TRAININGS

- 02/05 - MANDT Initial
- 02/09 - CPR Refresher
- 02/12 - MS New Hire (employees only)
- 02/12 - Med Aide Initial
- 02/16 - DDS New Hire Orientation
- 02/18 - CPR Initial
- 02/19 - Med Aide Refresher

Employee Updates

NEW EMPLOYEES

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EMPLOYEES ON THE MOVE

Sophia Pollares - Grand Island
Habilitation Specialist

DEPARTURES

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DDS Leadership

Associate Director

- Chelsie Blunt
- 402-831-7149

Director

- Laura Schenk
- 402-984-2566

Medical Coordinator

- Shelli Calhoun
- 402-705-8828

Program Manager - Grand Island

- Lucas Skrdlant
- 308-850-9094

Program Manager - Hastings

- Dacia Wright
- 402-705-8269

Program Manager - Kearney

- Kim Anderson
- 308-830-2015

Shared Living Manager

- Tia Hayman
- 308-380-1071