

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 – [H.R. 1319](#):

Key areas in the bill that will likely affect DAIL stakeholders. Still early to know how this will roll out in Vermont.

- [Supporting Older Americans and their families.](#)
- [Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders.](#)
- [Temporary increase in FMAP for medical assistance under State Medicaid plans which begin to expend amounts for certain mandatory individuals.](#)
- [Additional support for Medicaid home and community-based services during the COVID-19 emergency.](#)
- [Funding for State strike teams for resident and employee safety in nursing facilities.](#)
- [COVID-19 emergency medical supplies enhancement.](#)
- [Housing Provisions.](#)
- [Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.](#)
- [Crisis Support for Unemployed Workers.](#)
- [Additional funding for aging and disability services programs.](#)
- [Providing for infection control support to skilled nursing facilities through contracts with quality improvement organizations.](#)
- [2021 recovery rebates to individuals.](#)

Health Care Workforce Strategic Plan

Ena Bakus, Director of Health Care Reform and Wendy Trafton, Deputy Director of Health Care Reform

The office of Health Care Reform has grown and changed in its programs and responsibilities. This office works out of the Agency of Human Services Secretary's office. The position was created by the legislature as a point of coordination for healthcare reform. Some of the programs that are included in this office are: Blueprint for Health, Vermont Care Initiative, and Health Information Exchange.

Ena submitted a report on Nursing Workforce Shortage to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Health Care and the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare on March 1, 2021. This report recommends following the recommendations from the January 2020 Rural Health Services Report. The top four priorities are:

1. Support tax incentives for nurse recruitment and retention.
2. Pass the Interstate Nurse Compact.
3. Work with the Vermont State Legislature to assess scholarship programs created in Act 155 and identify ongoing funding.
4. Extend the timeframe for submission of an updated health care workforce strategic plan from July 1, 2021 to October 15, 2021, with submission to legislative committees of jurisdiction by December 1, 2021.

You can read the full report on the DAIL Advisory Board page in the March file.

(<https://dail.vermont.gov/resources/advisory-board/dail-advisory-brd-2021-items>)

Brain Injury Grant Update

Sara Lane, Brain Injury Program Manager

Sara Lane presented what the Traumatic Brain Injury State Partnership Grant accomplished over the past three years. The program was awarded the grant from 2018 through 2021. The grant partners were Vermont Department of Corrections and the Vermont Department of Health. To read about the accomplishments and the next funding opportunity see presentation here: [TBI State Partnership Grant](#)

The Traumatic Brain Injury Program's name is transitioning to Brain Injury (BI) Program. The change reflects that a brain is not only injured through trauma but can be injured through illness as well. What is not covered under the BI program are neural brain injuries.

Sara proposed that the Brain Injury Advisory Board (BIAB) integrate members into the DAIL Advisory Board (DAB). The way DAB is structured, the board must have a minimum of 19 members and up to a maximum of 24. The DAB is under the maximum number and it would benefit for BIAB to join DAB. This proposal was discussed with the DAB. The recommendation is that the new members still meet the requirements of the DAB which is either be a person over the age of 60, be a person with a disability, or be a caregiver for an older adult or someone with a disability.

Adult Day Updates

Angela Smith-Dieng, Adult Services Director

The adult days across the state are working on re-opening plans. Some of the sites opened briefly last fall and will revise those plans with the new guidance that is now in place for following COVID-19 protocols. The goal is to begin reopening sites in the next few months. Each site has unique features and resources that will affect the way sites reopen.

Since the adult day sites closing, many have offered online or telephone services. This change in providing services will likely continue once in-person services are again offered. Having the option to provide services remotely will create more inclusive and accessible services going forward.

Another change that was made during the pandemic response was how adult days could bill. Adult days can now bill for providing remote services. They can bill up to four hours per day, per participant. Without the recent inclusion of flexibility, adult days would not be allowed to bill for anything other than in person services. A permanent change will require reform which is a large project that is not in process yet. Once this project moves forward, Angela will report back to the DAB.

Three out of the ten adult days in the state, have permanently closed since last spring. The sites that closed are Oxbow, InterAge, and Project Independence. Once communities find replacements for these services, DAIL can provide technical assistance to those new sites.

Legislative Updates

Bard Hill, DAIL Principal Assistant

On Friday, March 12, marks crossover day in the legislature. This is when a bill is in one chamber and must move to the other or be dropped. On Monday, we will know which bills will continue to be considered for this legislative session.

The State of Vermont will receive money from the next stimulus package from the Federal government. What is not known yet, is how the money will have to be used. That guidance will come when the money is distributed to the states.

Since bill hearings are all held as Zoom meetings, it has made advocating difficult. There are no longer opportunities to run into someone in the halls or cafeteria to have the conversations that used to be helpful in making connections with law makers. However, Zoom has made it easier to follow bills because you can either view it live or watch a recording at another time.

Advisory Board Member Perspective

Marie Zura

Over the past 40 years, Marie has worked in five different states and sees Vermont as the most progressive state she has worked in. Marie started her career over 40 years ago in a Long Island, NJ facility working with people with Developmental Disabilities (DD). The work Marie did in this facility was significant in forming her philosophy. Marie has a deep passion and love for people with DD and has worked to help their voices be heard.

Four years ago, Marie left her employment at the Howard Center and started working in adult services at Comfort of Home. This new work is rewarding, and she has been able to make a direct difference in people's lives. One of her focuses at her new job is getting a person moved from a hospital setting back into the community.

Marie shared the importance of people having a choice in where they live. Whether that decision is in their own home, in a facility, or something in between. As more people choose to live at home as they age, having a strong model of home supports is important. As a caretaker to a loved one at home, Marie understands on a personal level how important these supports are.

Marie is glad to be a part of the DAIL Advisory Board. Being on the board complements her passion for helping people.

Marie Zura, Moved and Steve Pouliot Seconded - Meeting adjourned at 12:31