

PARTNERS

BlueCare Tennessee Managed Long-Term Services and Supports Program

News and tips to support MLTSS partners and enhanced care for our members

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Quality Corner: Supporting Community Inclusion for Members



According to research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1 in 4 Americans have a disability. This same data shows 33.4% of Tennesseans over the age of 18 reported having a disability. Cognitive, mobility, hearing and independent living disabilities were the most common types reported in Tennessee.

People with disabilities can often feel excluded or isolated from their communities because of misconceptions about intelligence, capabilities and independence. Community inclusion and participation not only provides positive outcomes for our members, but also strengthens diversity support within our communities.

Sources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Division of Human Development and Disability. Disability and Health Data System (DHDS) Data [online] <https://dhds.cdc.gov/>
- https://nci-ad.org/upload/state-reports/NCI-AD_22-23_TN_State_Report.pdf

Person-centered interventions can support our members and have the most positive outcomes. Here are some examples of these interventions.

- **Focus on strengths and abilities.** Person-Centered Support Plans include a person's strengths and interests. Review them frequently with members and support systems to see if their strengths and interests have changed. New interests can lead to more participation and exploration of community activities.
- **Discuss activities and resources.** Members, their families and their caregivers may be hesitant to explore their community because they're not aware of available activities. Educating them on the accessibility of activities and resources available can encourage them to explore interests within the community. Provide education in the member's preferred communication method (large print, picture, audio format, etc.).
- **Educate the community.** Explore the reasons why a community may be hesitant to foster a sense of belonging. This hesitancy could be because of a lack of knowledge on specific disabilities. Providing education about disabilities can help lessen the stigma associated with a disability and increase inclusion. This can also lead to more diverse and positive relationships within the community.

Check out these resources for more information about disability inclusion.

- [Disability Barriers to Inclusion | Disability Inclusion | CDC](#)
- [Community Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities | ALSO Oregon](#)
- [Understanding the Challenges of Community Integration for People with I/DD](#)
- [Stigma, Acceptance and Belonging for People with IDD Across Cultures - PMC](#)

2025 Goal Setting for Workforce Development

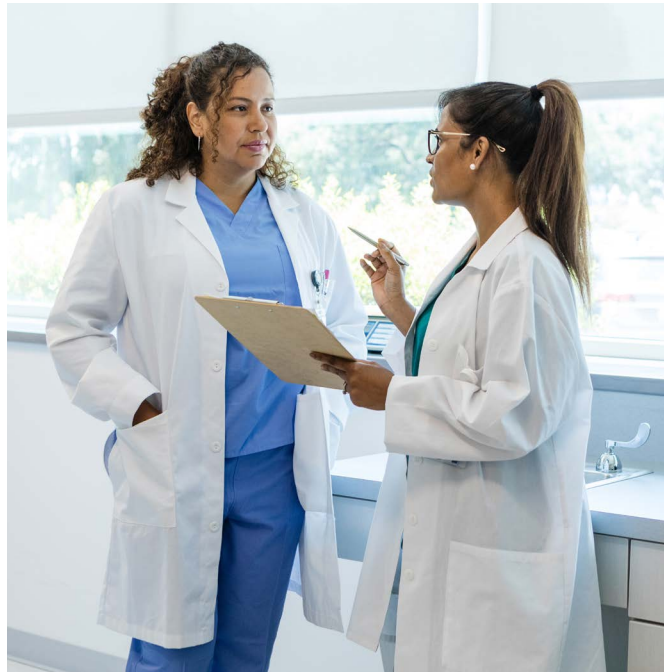
As 2025 starts, many people are setting New Year's resolutions (like swapping out those chips for carrot sticks). It's also the perfect time to set new goals for your workforce development efforts this year. With a wide range of initiatives available to improve staffing, it's important to narrow your focus and figure out what will have the biggest impact on your agency.

Think about your performance in 2024 and decide which areas need the most attention. Is it recruitment and candidate selection? Onboarding processes and training? Turnover and retention efforts? Setting SMART goals can help address these challenges effectively. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound, so they're clear and easy to follow.

Unexpected turnover could be caused by things like unclear job postings, the onboarding and training experience, or insufficient retention efforts. If you aren't sure why you're having turnover, try implementing exit and stay interviews or conducting an employee feedback survey to gather insights. These can help you find out what area needs the most attention. For example, if candidates don't understand the role, a realistic job preview can give them a visual representation of the job. Or if new hires feel unprepared after training, a mentorship program can support their learning, confidence and connection to the agency.

Struggling to find strong candidates? You may need to evaluate your recruitment strategies. If you're primarily relying on websites like Indeed, consider diversifying your recruitment pipelines. Job fairs, employee referrals or our Healthy Careers program in Southeast Tennessee can help.

By setting focused goals and diversifying your strategies, you can make 2025 a year of growth and improvement for your agency. Our workforce development team is here to support you along the way. Let's work together to build a strong workforce. Contact Christian Ceccotti at Christian_ceccotti@bcbst.com or **(423) 290-9284** to schedule time to talk with our team about all the ways we can help you.



Reportable Event Management Process Reminders for 2025

With the start of a new year, we're sharing some helpful reminders about the Reportable Event Management (REM) process.

The new Department of Disability and Aging (DDA)

The Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability and the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities merged on July 1, 2024, to become the DDA. Some important email addresses have changed.

- For general REM questions: DDA.ReportableEvents@tn.gov
- For questions about specific REM final reports or Initial Notifications Pending Investigation: DDA.Investigations@tn.gov
- For questions about specific REM Action Plans or Closure Letters
 - East Region – DDA.ActionPlans.East@tn.gov
 - Middle Region – DDA.ActionPlans.Middle@tn.gov
 - West Region – DDA.ActionPlans.West@tn.gov

Reportable events for ER visits

Here are some reminders and resources for reportable events. The DDA electronic reportable event form (REF) can be found [here](#).

ER visits are only reportable when the member receives treatment, like intravenous fluids, oxygen, breathing treatments (nebulizer), shots, sutures, medications prescribed, etc.

When submitting a reportable event for an ER visit with treatment, please include in the Event Description section of the REF what treatment was received.

Provider Action Plans

Provider Action Plans must be submitted to both BlueCare Tennessee and the DDA for all substantiated Tier 1 and Tier 2 investigations within 10 business days of receipt of the final investigative report.

- Provider Action Plans should be submitted to BlueCare Tennessee at ReportableEvents@bcst.com
- If multiple Managed Care Organizations are involved in a single event, the Provider Action Plan should only be sent to the DDA.

Informational findings

You can respond to informational findings at your earliest convenience, as long as it's within 30 days of receiving our email request.

- Most informational findings can be answered with a concise email response listing actions taken to address the findings.
- Some findings are more easily explained by simply attaching supporting documents (policy, written disciplinary action, proof of training, etc.).
- Provider Reportable Event Review Team (PRERT) minutes can also be shared to document the resolution of the informational findings.

Communicating Effectively

Effective communication is an important part of any relationship, but it's especially important in the workplace. People from all backgrounds and life experiences work together, so effective communication is essential to helping people work together well.



Provider reportable event review teams

Employment and Community First CHOICES, CHOICES, Katie Beckett, 1915(c) waiver programs and ICF/IID provider agencies that provide day, residential and personal assistance services must develop a PRERT.

The purpose of a PRERT is to review and evaluate reportable events, investigations and trends to implement internal prevention strategies. The PRERT should meet regularly but no less than monthly, and meetings should document any discussions and follow-up actions concerning reported events and investigations, their causes, actions taken and recommendations made by the review team.

PRERT provider oversight for reportable and non-reportable events will continue to be monitored by DDA and BlueCare Tennessee during annual quality assurance surveys and re-credentialing.

For more information, please visit [Reportable Event Management \(REM\)](#).

How people communicate affects all aspects of work, including managing a team, speaking with a client, collaborating among teams or even socializing with coworkers. Understanding your communication style and the style of those around you can lead to more productive conversations.

Communicating effectively involves more than listening and responding in conversations. It also involves recognizing how different people express themselves and responding appropriately. There are four main communication styles in the workplace:

- Directive communication means giving specific steps and actions to an employee to help them reach a clear goal.
- Supportive communication involves asking questions and trusting your employee, guiding them toward a solution rather than providing step-by-step instructions.
- Subjective communication provides the explanation behind why something is the way it is.
- Objective communication is sticking to the facts, providing the bulleted list of what someone needs to know, without unnecessary details.

Knowing which style of communication to use in different situations can help conversations go smoothly and help your organization be more successful.

Employment Staff Training Requirements

With the start of the new year, we want to remind everyone of staff training requirements for Employment Providers. The Division of TennCare and the DDA updated the staffing requirement memo last year. It's now more streamlined and includes Employment and Community First CHOICES, CHOICES and 1915(c).

Employment staff, including Job Coaches and Job Developers, must meet the staff training requirements for their role before providing any Employment services to members. You can find these training requirements, which services each role can complete and the links to the approved trainings in the updated DDA memo, [Employment Staff Training Requirements for All HCBS Programs](#). This memo also has information about the ACRE professional requirement and other employment services that may require additional training.

Providers who deliver Employment services, or who are interested in doing so, should review the updated memo to make sure their staff are meeting these requirements. You can find more information about training at the DDA website [here](#).

If you have any questions, feel free to contact your area's LTSS Employment Services and Supports Specialist or your Provider Network Manager. Employment Specialists are also available to provide training and support to Employment providers and their staff.

LTSS Employment Services and Supports Specialists

Aimee Rogers (East region)
aimee_rogers@bcbst.com
(423) 362-2562

Nichole Phillips-Brock (Middle and West regions)
nichole_phillips@bcbst.com
(615) 651-9076

Healthy Careers Program: A BlueCare Tennessee Workforce Development and ETSU Partnership

Our Provider Relations Workforce Development team is pleased to announce a partnership with East Tennessee State University's (ETSU) Center for Community Outreach to help connect job seekers with employers. We worked with ETSU to apply for a Community Development Grant through the Tennessee Department of Human Services to create the Healthy Careers Program, offering both job placement and social and family supports.

The program is also designed to address staffing challenges in home- and community-based services providers in Tennessee. Participants in the program get employment connections as well as social and financial resources like:

- Temporary childcare assistance
- Dental care
- Eyeglasses
- Temporary utility support
- Car repairs
- Clothing/shoes
- Required and career-advancement training coverage

ETSU staff are referring pre-qualified candidates to providers, as well as offering one-on-one counseling and guidance. We're offering this pilot program in the Southeast Tennessee Workforce District. It includes Hamilton, Bradley, Polk, McMinn, Meigs, Rhea, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, Grundy and Marion Counties.

Any BlueCare Tennessee network provider or consumer-directed staff in the CHOICES, Employment and Community First CHOICES, Home Modifications and Home Health networks offering services in the counties listed above is eligible to participate. Providers don't have to be based in Tennessee. They only need to provide services in any of the above counties. Any provider who wants to receive referrals will need to accept and act on these applications.

To learn more or participate in the Healthy Careers Program, contact BlueCare Tennessee Workforce Development Team Manager Christian Ceccotti at Christian_Ceccotti@bcbst.com or ETSU Team Director Tekai Williams at WilliamsTE@mail.etsu.edu. They can answer your questions, provide additional educational resources and help you get started.

Reportable Events and Interventions

Your compassion while serving our members is invaluable to their experience, but so are your observations. Reportable Event Management (REM) is one important component of an overall approach for ensuring the health, safety, individual freedom and quality of life of members receiving home- and community-based services and intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities services.

When members are at risk, you're required to Report It Now. When you report these issues, they can be addressed, which helps keep the members you serve safe. Documenting the risk also helps protect you if there's ever a question in the future.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Report It Now and who to contact for a Reportable Event.



Committed to Service

As your partner in serving our CHOICES and ECF CHOICES members, we're committed to providing you unmatched service and support. Stay current with the most current news and program guidance. Visit us at bluecare.bcbst.com to find resources, updates and the most recent version of the CHOICES newsletter.

How Are We Doing?

As a valued BlueCare Tennessee provider, we welcome your feedback and want to hear from you. If you have questions and/or concerns about a process, or if there's an individual that you'd like to point out for good service, please email us at: CHOICESProviderRelations@bcbst.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

Provider Network Manager and Workforce Development Contacts

Manager	Region	Phone	Email
Britney Douglas, Provider Relations Supervisor	Statewide	(615) 427-3782	britney_douglas@bcbst.com
Phyllis White, Director, MLTSS	Middle	(615) 295-9680	phyllis_white@bcbst.com
Recie Gunartt, Provider Network Manager	West	(901) 201-7786	recie_gunartt@bcbst.com
Anitra Rogers, Provider Network Manager	West	(901) 355-3124	anitra_rogers@bcbst.com
Marilyn Turner, Provider Network Manager	West	(901) 573-2607	marilyn_turner@bcbst.com
Tanya Glover, Provider Network Manager	Middle	(615) 393-9117	tanya_glover@bcbst.com
Marea Sweeney, Provider Network Manager	Middle	(615) 946-3101	marea_sweeney@bcbst.com
Mark Watson, Provider Network Manager	Middle	(615) 598-2816	mark_watson@bcbst.com
Marquita Wilson, Provider Network Manager	Middle	(423) 413-5384	marquita_wilson@bcbst.com
Kevin Brooks, Provider Network Manager	East	(423) 290-8768	kevin_brooks@bcbst.com
Rainey Johnson, Provider Network Manager	East	(865) 712-5980	rainey_johnson@bcbst.com
Robert Dugger, Provider Network Manager	East	(865) 617-2980	robert_dugger@bcbst.com
Christian Ceccotti, Workforce Development Manager	Statewide	(423) 290-9284	christian_ceccotti@bcbst.com
Tonya Starks, Workforce Development Specialist	West	(901) 713-9602	tonya_starks@bcbst.com
Kylie Hennie, Workforce Development Specialist	Middle	(615) 924-3424	kylie_hennie@bcbst.com
Patrick Hampton, Workforce Development Specialist	East	(423) 509-3791	patrick_hampton@bcbst.com
Brittney Cook, Claims Liaison	East	(423) 637-0734	brittney_cook@bcbst.com
Corey Vance, Claims Liaison	East	(615) 761-8732	corey_vance@bcbst.com
Nichole Phillips-Brock, Employment Services & Supports Specialist	Statewide	(615) 651-9076	nichole_phillips@bcbst.com
Aimee Rogers, Employment Services & Supports Specialist	Statewide	(423) 362-2562	aimee_rogers@bcbst.com
Kathryn Walters, Technology Champion	Statewide	(865) 340-1363	kathryn_walters@bcbst.com
Evy Boyer, Housing and Transition Manager	Statewide	(615) 218-2642	evelyn_boyer@bcbst.com

Where to Turn for Help

Your Service Need	Operational Area	Contact
Eligibility Services, Claims, Inquiries	BlueCare Provider Services/ Eligibility Service Line	1-888-747-8955
General Contracting/ Credentialing Questions	Provider Network Services/ Credentialing	1-800-924-7141, ext. 5775 (Provider Network Services) 1-800-357-0395 (Credentialing)
Member Related Questions/Supports, Member Emergencies (After Hours/Weekends Only) During Regular Hours Contact Coordinator Directly	Support/Care Coordination	1-800-262-2873
Sandata/EVV Tech Support	Sandata Client Relations (EVV)	1-855-389-4843
Availity Claim Submission Tech Support	Availity	1-800-282-4548
CHOICES Web Portal Claims Tech Support	e-Business	(423) 535-5717, select option 2
Provider Education, General Provider Support, Assistance with Contracting/Credentialing	CHOICES/ECF Provider Relations	CHOICESProviderRelations@bcbst.com
Authorizations Support, General Billing – Release of Units	Provider Inquiry Specialist Team	ProviderAuthIssues@bcbst.com OR call 1-888-747-8955, select option 2
Change of Ownership Notifications, Questions/Concerns	Provider Relations	Provider_CHOW@bcbst.com
EVV Exceptions	Provider Specialist Team	EVV_Exceptions@bcbst.com