



## **December 2023 Standing Committee Reports**

### **Children's Behavioral Health Committee | Deborah Humphrey, Chair**

The Children's Behavioral Health Committee has been in discussion of several of the current children's mental health issues. One of the issues discussed in committee was the support of legislation regarding universal screening. The need for universal screening was presented to the Legislative Committee. It is anticipated that universal screening will be proposed again in the spring session. A stated concern from committee members being the capacity to service children identified with mental health issues may be problematic with the workforce shortage in children's behavioral health.

Information was presented in committee on a workforce development initiative currently being established to create a Child and Parent Support Specialist Certification course study. The initiative is joined with experts' consultants with the Illinois Behavioral Health Workforce Development Center. Dana Wiener and Reigna Crider were recommended as other experts that may benefit in this development. It was also suggested that Dana Wiener present the "Blueprint for Transformation, A vision for Improved Behavioral Healthcare for Illinois Children" to the ACMHAI membership and Regina Crider present to the CBH Committee on the work she has done regarding behavioral health workforce development. An initial meeting has been conducted with Ms. Crider with plans to further engage her and Ms. Wiener.

Social media is negatively impacting children's mental health. The committee discussed the Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul announcement that he and 32 other states are suing Meta, parent company of Facebook and Instagram for harm to children and teens and investigating Tik Tok. A resource for communities to engage parents in understanding the impact on youth is "Screenagers" award-winning film probes into the vulnerable corners of family life and depicts messy struggles over social media, video games and academics. The film offers solutions on how we can help our kids navigate the digital world. [About Screenagers Growing Up in the Digital Age \(screenagersmovie.com\)](https://screenagersmovie.com)

### **Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Committee | Chris Myers, Chair**

Tanya Piephoff was named the new IL Director of DD Division in June 2023. She will be our speaker at the April 2024 Membership meeting. Issues continue at the State

Developmental Centers with no definitive answers or solutions in response. The DD Division did announce that they will not do a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Independent Service Coordination services for 2024-25. In the future, it will be at their discretion to decide whether a competitive solicitation is necessary for 1 or more of the regions. In regards to the Ligas Decree, the state of IL has filed the motion with the U.S. District Court that court oversight of services to individuals with disabilities is no longer needed. “The State continues to engage in practices that violate the Decree and the rights of class members (persons with I/DD covered by the Ligas class action lawsuit), at times endangering their lives,” the lawyers wrote. “This includes failing to develop and provide sufficient community services for class members with higher needs or who are in crisis, often resulting in their being sent to State Operated Developmental Centers (SODCs) or languishing in other inappropriate settings, and failing to provide timely and appropriate community services for class members who are living in the community.” Quote by Laura Miller from Equip for Equality. The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) continues to work with rate consultant, Guidehouse, and the Ligas Rates Oversight Committee on the next steps as it relates to the implementation of the Guidehouse-recommended Community-Integrated Living Arrangement (CILA) Rate Calculator. They have recommended three different scenarios of the CILA Rate Calculator.

### **Legislative Committee | Jason Holcomb and Cheryl Potts, Co-Chairs**

Earlier in November, the General Assembly concluded their veto session. Several measures were advanced while many high-profile measures remained on the sideline. The Legislature will reconvene in January.

#### **Community Mental Health Act Gets Revisions**

Illinois lawmakers voted to validate multiple referendums despite concerns that ballots were improperly written. The newly passed legislation, if signed into law, will validate and uphold multiple referendums despite concerns that ballots were improperly written. These referenda created mental health boards to levy taxes for mental health programs. By validating these mental health boards, units of local government can levy the taxes to allow the boards to function as intended.

The legislation also includes a provision that allows the city of Rockford to appoint two new members to the Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board. It also states that there may not be a mental health ballot question during 2024 in a township if there was an approved mental health ballot initiative in 2022.

ACMHAI will continue dialogue with the sponsors of the legislation to discuss other revisions to the Community Mental Health Act.

## **State to Dedicate Funds to Support Migrants**

Governor JB Pritzker announced the State will invest an additional \$160 million via the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis presented by the arrival of over 24,000 asylum seekers from the U.S. Southern Border

The governor said \$160 million in surplus funding from the Illinois Department of Human Services will be spent to help Chicago provide shelter and services to migrants, broken down into three programs.

The state will spend \$30 million to create a large intake and welcome center for newly arrived migrants, to help eliminate bottlenecks in providing services to asylum seekers and reduce delays in finding both temporary shelter and permanent housing. Another \$65 million in funding to help set up winterized tent basecamps to provide temporary housing for up to 2,000 migrants. The remaining \$65 million in state funding will go toward expanding "wraparound services" the state already offers at the city's migrant shelters to help them with legal services, work permit applications, and other support services while they try to find permanent housing.

## **IDFPR Gets Emergency Rules to Upgrade Licensing System**

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) has been plagued by historic delays in the processing of license applications. The agency has argued that their outdated computer system has played a significant role in those delays. They had already received funding for the new system and there was a previous lengthy effort for a new system. It ultimately did not meet the requirements of the state's Procurement Act.

To help alleviate their problems, recently passed legislation creates emergency rules for an expedited and competitive bid procurement process for software to modernize the way IDFPR processes licensing. This will allow IDFPR to expedite the procurement process and not require the state to start from scratch. The law says the contract for the software solution shall be executed not later than 90 days the effective date of the act and implementation is required within 90 days after the contract begins.

IDFPR administers licenses for over 100 different professions including mental health counselors, nurses, barbers, roofers, social workers, dentists, and others. In Illinois, over 1 million people need a professional license or registration to work.

## **Lawmakers Approve Measure to Allow Small Scale Nuclear Development**

A revised bill ending Illinois' 36-year-old moratorium on the construction of new nuclear power plants has passed. Governor Pritzker vetoed a bill passed in the spring over concerns it would enable full nuclear power plants. The new measure specifically references and enables small modular reactors, generating less than 300 megawatts.

Proponents argue nuclear energy is more reliable and a transition away from fossil fuels. Opponents of the bill express concerns with safety risks and are worried that an investment in nuclear could deter or delay further investment in renewable energy.

### **Invest in Kids Scholarship Program Fails to Achieve Extension**

Lawmakers wrapped up the veto session without extending the Invest in Kids tax credit program, which provided indirect state support to children attending private and religious schools. The program, which allowed donors to donate to six approved private school scholarships to claim a 75% income tax credit on their donations, capped at \$75 million a year.

### **Bill to Allow Legislative Staff to Unionize Stalls**

Legislators will have to wait until Spring to advance a bill to allow legislative staff members to unionize. The legislation was championed by the staff of the Democratic Speaker and passed through that House in the first week of the veto session, The bill stalled out in the Senate.

### **Efforts Continue on Chicago's Elected School Board**

Lawmakers failed to reach a resolution over how members of the Chicago Board of Education should be elected next year. These efforts follow months of hearings and meetings about district maps that would be used in those elections. Lawmakers continue to argue over how many Chicago School Board members should be appointed versus elected, Members of the Illinois House and Senate plan to continue their talks on the issue when they return in January.

### **Upcoming Dates**

|                  |                                              |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| January 16, 2024 | Legislature Reconvenes                       |
| January 19, 2024 | Deadline for LRB requests                    |
| February 9, 2024 | Deadline for House/Senate bill introductions |

Report provided by Matt Maloney and Maureen Mulhall, Government Strategy Associates

## **Membership Committee | Amy Hopper and Dalila Alegria, Co-Chairs**

The membership committee continues to meet regularly on the fourth Tuesday of odd months at 10 AM.

Regarding Retention and Recruitment, we are focusing on our Best Practice Trainings, attracting new members, the ambassador program, and advocacy toolkit among other projects.

- February's virtual training on Psychiatric Advanced Directives has been confirmed!
- April's in-person training and meeting has been confirmed for April 25th and 26th in Springfield. Our focus will be on developmental disabilities.

Our online forum is up and running thanks to Jodi's work. The online forum allows members to post questions for members to respond to. This will allow for the conversation to be streamlined. Make an intentional effort to utilize it by clicking the link: <https://acmhai.org/committees/>

Lastly, we are exploring upcoming changes to benefit ACHMAI and its members. You will have the opportunity to share your voice in some upcoming questionnaires!

The committee will meet again on January 23rd at 10am. If any member is interested in joining the committee, please email Jodi Dart.