



NACBH

National Association for Children's Behavioral Health

NEWS

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PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

President Biden Delivers \$1.9 Trillion COVID Relief Package



Just seven weeks after Inauguration Day, President Biden signed the [American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#) into law, bringing total COVID relief spending over the past year to more than \$5.5 trillion. No Republicans in either chamber voted to approve the final \$1.9 trillion bill; one Democrat in the House voted in opposition.

In remarkably short order and with very little drama, passage of this sweeping spending package handed Mr. Biden a substantial early victory and validated House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's (D-CA) ability to keep her slim majority caucus in near-unanimity. This provides some momentum for the President's upcoming policy lifts: addressing a staggering infrastructure agenda, curbing climate change, expanding health coverage, and overhauling immigration laws.

A few last-minute tweaks to the House-passed version got the relief bill across the finish line in the Senate, including lowering the income cap for direct payments to Americans, continuing \$300/week in federal unemployment benefits versus the proposed increase to \$400/week, and removing a gradual increase to \$15/hour in the federal minimum wage. [Continue Reading](#)

State Legislatures Consider Banning Employer COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates

As we [reported](#) earlier, late last year, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission released [guidance](#) indicating that employers may require employees to receive COVID-19 vaccinations. According to the National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP), this prompted lawmakers in a number of states to introduce legislation prohibiting businesses from doing so as a condition of work.

NASHP has posted a [tracker](#) on its website, summarizing by state the bills introduced to date. As of this writing, a total of 57 bills have been introduced in 34 states. The tracker will be updated as new bills are introduced, passed, and/or enacted.

New Report Series Explores Medicaid's Role in the National Recovery

"In service of more than 77 million Americans and with more than \$600 billion invested in the health care delivery system annually, Medicaid can and will,



inevitably, play a critical role in the hard work of recovering from the pandemic and establishing a new normal for American health care.”

So begins the Dear Colleague introduction to the National Association of Medicaid Directors’ (NAMD) new [Medicaid Forward](#), a three-part series with the first focusing on behavioral health. This [first report](#) identifies opportunities to address immediate and long-term mental health and substance abuse challenges emerging from the COVID crisis – and existing before the pandemic – across the country. It offers options for state administrators to explore and determine what makes most sense for their state, both broadly and specific to children, older adults, individuals who are homeless, adults in the criminal justice system, and people with developmental or intellectual disabilities. [Keep reading](#) to see specific suggestions.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

National QI Center on Family-Centered Reunification

The National Quality Improvement Center on Family-Centered Reunification ([QIC-R](#)) is a five-year project designed to support the timely, stable, and lasting reunification of families by strengthening parent-child relationships and supportive community connections.

Applications are solicited for local implementation sites to design, install, evaluate, and sustain best and evidence-based practices to support family-centered reunification. Selected sites will receive project funding, technical assistance, and tailored support for the duration of the project. Eligible applicants are state and county governments and federally-recognized AI/AN tribal nations with responsibility over foster care services.

NACBH members are encouraged to bring this opportunity to the attention of your relevant public partners, particularly as Family First Prevention Services Act implementation efforts increase. [Applications](#) are due May 7. [Registration](#) is open now for a March 26 webinar to provide more information about the QIC-R and how to apply.

New Resources from Chapin Hall

Several new evidence-based resources have been released by the University of Chicago’s Chapin Hall, of particular interest to providers delivering or planning community-based child welfare services.

Mental health consultation has positive effects on early childhood staff:



With the right supports, early childhood teachers and home visitors can increase their skills and better serve families. One such support is mental health consultation. In this process, trained mental health professionals help early childhood service providers build their capacity to foster the emotional well-being of children and families. This consultation also helps providers recognize their own biases that could lead to inequitable disciplinary measures, such as expulsion, which disproportionately affect Black children. A new study by Chapin Hall focuses on one intervention, the [Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation](#). The three-year study of the Illinois Model of this program found that care providers in childcare, pre-K, and home visiting improved their professional skills while also being more mindful of self-care. [Continue Reading](#)

Practice Guide: Youth With Co-occurring Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders



[Treatment for Youth and Young Adults with Mood Disorders and Other Serious Emotional Disturbances and Co-occurring Substance Use](#), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. This guide reviews interventions on treating substance misuse and substance use disorders in youth with serious emotional disturbances, distills the research into recommendations for practice, and provides examples of the ways that these recommendations can be implemented.

Plan Now for Observances in April

[Child Abuse Prevention Month](#), 2021 theme: Thriving Children and Families: Prevention With a Purpose

[World Autism Month](#), beginning with World Autism Awareness Day on April 2

[National Minority Health Month](#), 2021 theme: #VaccineReady

Month of the Military Child, multiple resources including Department of Defense Education Activity ([DODEA](#)), the Military Child Education Coalition ([MCEC](#)), and [Military.com](#).

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