



Environmental Scan

We have extended the deadline for our [Needs Assessment Environmental Scan Survey](#). The deadline for completing the survey is now 1/17/22 to be sure you have a chance to add your views. Please take a moment and use this "Last Call" opportunity to help us identify the needs in our state and in our communities for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and their families. We will use your input to help set our priorities and goals for the next 5 years. Thank you so much to those that have already completed the survey. You can take the survey by clicking on this [link](#) or by scanning the QR code at the top of the page.

Arc of Oklahoma Lifetime Achievement Award



The Arc of Oklahoma recently honored Dr. Valerie Williams with the Lifetime Achievement Award in Advocacy Award. This award recognizes the individual, group or organization that has worked to improve the lives of people with disabilities throughout their lifetime. Please join us in congratulating Dr. Williams on the incredible impact she has made in Oklahoma for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families since 1990. [Watch Dr. Williams receive the award](#) and talk about her 31 year career as the Director for The Center for Learning and Leadership/Oklahoma UCEDD. Congratulations! We are so proud of you!

COVID-19 Resources and Grant Updates

[Dr. Aaron Wendleboe](#), Epidemiologist with the Hudson College of Public Health at OUHSC, stresses the importance of vaccines/boosters and urges everyone to continued masking. "COVID-19 vaccines are still doing their job. They are preventing death and hospitalization from COVID, including Omicron. If you get boosted, they do a great job of preventing infection. Also, wear a mask this winter. It will help you not get sick from COVID, the flu, RSV, or cold viruses."

For more information on COVID-19 or to schedule your vaccine/booster, visit The Center for Learning and Leadership's updated [COVID-19 Information and Resources](#) page.

Braille Literacy Month

January is National Braille Literacy Month. Braille, a reading and writing system of raised dots, helps those that are blind or visually-impaired read with their fingertips. It is named after Louis Braille, who invented it at age 15. Braille can be read in many languages including English, Spanish and Chinese. Did you know it also includes musical notes? Reading Braille can be done on special paper, computers, phones, calculators, watches, signs and many other everyday objects. Find out more about the importance of accessibility and independence given to so many people by going to the Paths to Literacy's [Celebrate Braille Literacy Month](#) page.

No Surprises Act (NSA) – effective January 1, 2022

The NSA was established to protect patients from surprise medical bills for emergency care and remove the individual consumer from payment disputes between health plans and providers. This is particularly welcome news to those with disabilities and their families, who often require more healthcare visits than most. This new federal protection applies to most surprise bills. Review the latest Fact Sheet from CMS.gov [here](#) for more information on the No Surprises Act.

The University of Oklahoma advances a diverse, equitable, and inclusive university community by embracing each person's unique contributions, background, and perspectives. OU Norman, OU Tulsa, and the Health Sciences Center recognize that fostering an inclusive environment for all, with particular attention to the needs of the historically marginalized populations, is vital to the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of our institutional mission and enhances the OU experience for all students, faculty, and staff.

focus facts is published for the University Affiliated Developmental Disabilities Network members. Its purpose is to highlight specific information and data items relevant to developing and sustaining positive community environments. Individual information items are provided for use in this form, or for further circulation. When re-printing information please reference *focus facts* and the month of issue noted below the banner at the top of this page. The name of a contact person for additional information on items referenced in the newsletter is provided for your convenience. If you have data, information or a story to report relevant to community living, please send it to *focus facts* Editor at the Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD OU Health Sciences Center, PO Box 2690, Oklahoma City, OK 73126.

Please include the information source, by title, a one paragraph (or less) description or story, a contact name who can provide additional information on the subject, and a daytime or evening telephone number for the contact. If you have other questions regarding the format for submissions, please call the Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD Headquarters Office at (405) 271-4500.

The University Affiliated Developmental Disabilities Network is open to membership by any organization or individual who shares the interests of Network members. The Network is dedicated to identifying opportunities for collaboration and information exchange among its participating members, which leads to improving our statewide, regional or local capacity to provide a better living environment in Oklahoma for people with developmental and other disabilities and their families. The Network is partially supported through a grant from the U.S. Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Health and Human Services, and by the Offices of the Designated Representatives of the Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD Collaborating Partners.

If you have a disability (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, Blind/low-vision, mobility, cognitive, etc.), and require accommodations, please reach out to [Learn2Lead@ouhsc.edu](#). It is helpful if you share what type of accommodations will be needed to ensure that you are able to use the resource materials.