



National Hispanic Heritage Month

National Hispanic Heritage Month celebrates the culture, contributions and achievements of the Latino community. The 2021 theme is “Esperanza: A celebration of Hispanic Heritage and Hope.” The Latino population is the largest racial and ethnic minority in the U.S. The HHS Office of Minority Health (OMH) will be promoting disease prevention and other health resources for the Hispanic/Latino communities during the month. [Learn more information from the HHS Fact Sheet on the website.](#)

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

October is recognized as National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). This is the month to publicly acknowledge how valuable those with disabilities are to America’s workforce and economy. The theme for 2021, “America’s Recovery: Powered by Inclusion,” reflects the significance of involving workers with disabilities in the national economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Labor’s NDEAM website has many useful and creative ways for individuals, employers, educators and organizations to get involved in the celebration of this awareness month. [The site has an interactive feature that allows the user to plan a NDEAM activity for each day of October.](#)

Oklahoma Senate Bill 21

Senate Bill 21 was first authored by Senator Kay Floyd in February of 2021. The bill was intended to mandate suicide prevention and awareness training within every public school in Oklahoma. Studies show that suicide is the second leading cause of death in the country for those aged 10 – 21 years old, and is the leading cause of death in Oklahoma for the same age group. The expectations of SB 21 is that those students considered to show at-risk behaviors will be better linked with appropriate services and talk more openly with the people close to them about suicidal thoughts. SB 21 also increases the training of school staff members to improve the identification process of those students with suicidal ideations and/or thoughts. [Read the follow up article regarding the joint interim study focusing on pediatric suicide here.](#)



(From left) Senator Kay Floyd, author of SB 21, is joined by the Smartt family and Jessica Hawkins, Sr. Dir. Of Prevention Services at ODMHSAS, as Governor Kevin Stitt signed the bill into law.

The September 26th Project

Although the date has come and gone, we always need to be prepared for emergencies. With the introduction of The September 26th Project, quick and easy emergency checklists have been made available for those individuals with disabilities and their families. This annual emergency preparedness checkup provides information on Fire Safety, Natural Disasters and Wandering Prevention. These simple checklists should be done annually, on September 26th. This project was created to honor Feda and Muhammed (Mu) Almaliti, who tragically lost their lives in a house fire on September 26, 2020. The hope of the project is to remind people that 10 minutes every 365 days saves lives. [Visit the September 26th Project site to learn more about the checklists and information about emergency safety.](#)

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.