



# Direct Connection

## A Message from Valerie Huhn

### Technology First: Missouri’s Assistive Technology Initiative



Valerie Huhn, Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities

I am very pleased that in February, the Department of Mental Health will designate Missouri as a “Technology First state.” Technology First means that we first look at technology as a solution for an individual who needs developmental disability services instead of direct support staffing. Technology can include many things such as simple medication reminders or dispensing devices, sensors on doors and windows, or systems that enable individuals to communicate with remote staff by using phones or web-based technology.

There are many benefits to Technology First. Technology improves the quality of life for individuals who receive services. Individuals who receive services tell me they want more independence in their lives. Technology allows individuals to have that independence and gives them more privacy in their homes. It also provides tools that can increase safety and health for individuals. For example, technology may be used to track adherence to medication schedules, sleep patterns, and the occurrence of health events.

Technology First can also be one of the solutions to the direct care staffing shortage that we have right now. Using technology is often a less expensive option to providing direct support. If you can improve someone’s quality of life at a lesser cost, Technology First can be the right decision for an individual.

This issue of the Direct Connection is dedicated to Technology First and the many options it provides to increase independence, safety, and health for individuals receiving services.

## Missouri Joins State Technology Consortium

The available options for assistive technology are expanding at a rapid rate. To keep up with the pace, Missouri’s Division of Developmental Disabilities has joined with eight other states in a newly formed consortium interested in furthering the use of technology for individuals receiving services. The consortium, which will collaborate with the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services, also includes Tennessee, Alaska, Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. The consortium will meet to share ideas about how assistive technology can improve the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities.

### Connecting with the Division of Developmental Disabilities

Missouri Department of Mental Health

Division of Developmental Disabilities

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Jefferson City, MO 65101

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## Assistive Technology Gives Man Freedom & Independence

“Before moving to her own apartment, Rose lived in a residential care facility (RCF). Seeing her go from that to living without full time staff is just phenomenal.”

Sarah Randazzo, Support Coordinator, Progressive Community Services

“When they had full time staff, Danny and Josh always felt like someone was watching them. Having a remote support system gives them the freedom of expression to be themselves.”

Erin Fletchall, Professional Manager, Rolling Hills Creative Living

Buddy loves living in his own home in the country of rural Worth County. He relies on a combination of supports to provide him the safety he needs and the independence he loves. Buddy has severe diabetes and receives medical personal assistance services from Rolling Hills Creative Living. He also uses a video remote support system through Rest Assured. This allows Buddy to enjoy time to himself in his home without staff and allows staff the option to leave whenever Buddy's actions indicate he would prefer to be alone. Since Buddy is hearing impaired, his personal assistants and Rest Assured staff communicate with him by sign language. Buddy also uses a bed shaker which is connected to his smoke alarm and alerts him in case of a fire while he is sleeping. This combination of assistive technology services and medical personal assistance gives Buddy the freedom to choose where he lives and independence in his home.



Buddy's bed shaker was purchased for him through the comprehensive waiver.



Buddy with his Rest Assured staff person, Ariel. The technology requires internet access.



Ariel can remotely turn on the lamp to get Buddy's attention, if needed.

*Less than 1% of all individuals participating in a DD waiver received an assistive technology service in fiscal year 2018.*



## Health and Wellness

### 3 Quick Tips

1. Take time to get the flu vaccine as recommended by the CDC.
2. Avoid germs and people that are sick.
3. To prevent serious complications, take anti-viral drugs as prescribed.



### Is it a cold or flu?



Signs and Symptoms	Influenza	Cold
Symptom onset	Abrupt	Gradual
Fever	Usual	Rare
Aches	Usual	Slight
Chills	Fairly common	Uncommon
Fatigue, weakness	Usual	Sometimes
Sneezing	Sometimes	Common
Stuffy nose	Sometimes	Common
Sore throat	Sometimes	Common
Chest discomfort, cough	Common	Mild to moderate
Headache	Common	Rare

Dehydration: a harmful reduction in the amount of water in the body.



Healthy Living

**OBSERVE! DECIDE! ACT!**

### DEHYDRATION

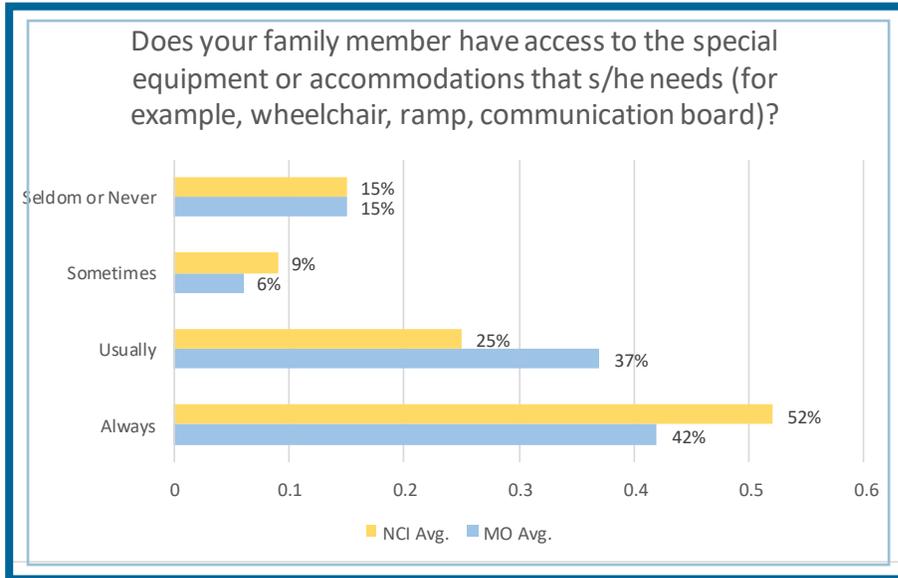
**Dehydration** is a common problem experienced by patients with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities. A person may not be able to tell someone that they are thirsty or be able to get up and get a drink themselves. Dehydration can range from mild to severe and contributes to other health problems such as medication toxicity, kidney problems, and seizures. This is a condition that can easily be overlooked and can be life-threatening.

**Dehydration** is considered one of the six leading conditions that are likely to result in death for individuals with Intellectual/Development Disabilities (IDD) according to Health Risk Screening, Inc. (Green-McGowan, n.d.).

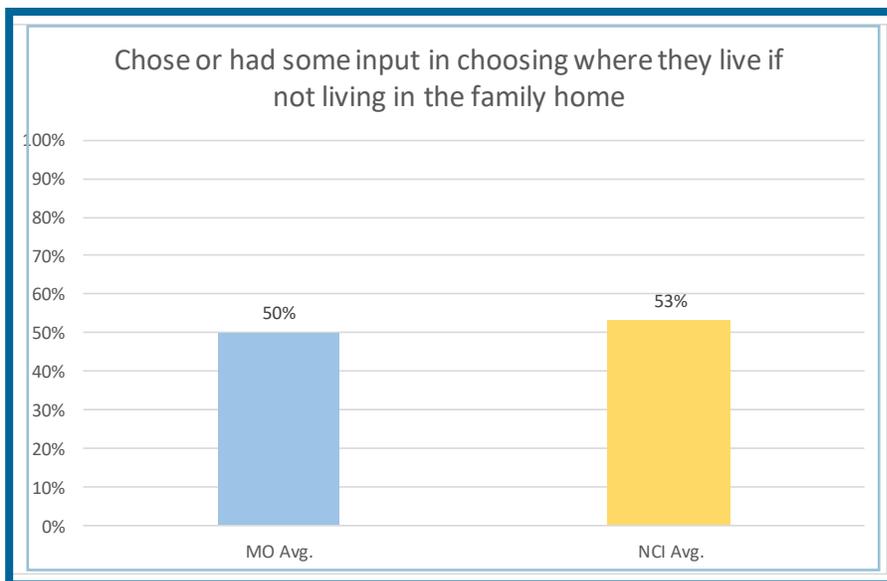
**If someone is having a decrease in level of consciousness and/or is in distress, call 911 for emergency services immediately. This is a guide for recognizing and preventing dehydration.**

The Division of Developmental Disabilities has developed a guide on dehydration to assist with recognizing signs and symptoms, common risk factors, and prevention methods. More information is available [here](#).

## National Core Indicators Data



This data is from the 2016-2017 National Core Indicators (NCI) Adult Family Survey, which is a questionnaire mailed to the family of adults (age 18+) who receive services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities and live in the family home. This graph demonstrates the percentage of respondents/family members in Missouri that report that their family member has access to the special equipment or accommodations that s/he needs as compared to the NCI (nationwide) average for this measure.



This data is from the 2016-2017 National Core Indicators (NCI) Adult In-Person Survey, which is a face-to-face interview with adults (age 18+) who receive services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities. The graph demonstrates the percentage of individuals that chose or had some input in choosing where they live as compared to the NCI (nationwide) average for this measure.

To review the full survey results, please visit: <https://www.nationalcoreindicators.org/resources/reports>

## Community Calendar

**January 23, 2019** – Autism Awareness Rally, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. State Capitol Building Rotunda, Jefferson City, Missouri  
For additional questions, please contact your Regional Office, local Parent Advisory Committee, or email [Leah Clausen](#) or [Rosemary Feraldi McCain](#) of the Missouri Parent Advisory Committee on Autism.

**March 13, 2019** – Save the Date—Disability Rights Legislative Day, Jefferson City, Missouri  
More information will become available on: [http://www.moddcouncil.org/?page\\_id=whatsnewstory&id=34](http://www.moddcouncil.org/?page_id=whatsnewstory&id=34)

**May 20 & 21, 2019** – Save the Date—29th Annual Aging with Developmental Disabilities Conference, St. Charles Convention Center, 1 Convention Center Plaza, St. Charles, Missouri 63303

**May 31—June 2, 2019** – Seeking Opportunities for and Advocacy Revolution (SOAR) Conference 2019, Stoney Creek Hotel and Conference Center, Independence, Missouri  
More information is available on: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/soar-regional-leadership-advocacy-conference-tickets-51084913351>

MISSOURI DIVISION OF  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES



Improving lives THROUGH  
supports and services  
THAT FOSTER self-determination.

### DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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**Fostering Self-determination**



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MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH