It’s no surprise that COVID-19 and vaccines are the main topic of conversation and I encourage everyone to read the related information in this newsletter. But much more is happening in our world.

1. Voting Rights
2. Increased access to in-home services
3. Increased wages and benefits for in-home care workers
4. Dental benefits included in Medicare

At the Federal legislative level there is significant push to increase access to in-home services for people with significant disabilities. Did you know that many states don’t have programs like we do in Kansas that allow you to receive in-home services instead of being forced to move into a care home? Increasing wages and benefits for your in-home care workers is also a focus at the Federal and State level. Most people acknowledge wages and benefits need to be increased, they just can’t agree on how to pay for it. I encourage all of you to contact your legislators and tell them your thoughts, share your struggles finding and retaining workers. If you need help putting together your thoughts or finding out how to contact your legislators, call our office; we are here to help you.

Dental health is also being discussed in Washington and around the Nation. You can add your voice to those supporting legislation to include dental care in Medicare plans. Dental health equals overall health.

If you have questions or concerns about access to voting, please consider joining our regional advocacy group. They have regular, monthly phone calls to discuss issues and support advocacy efforts at the local, State and Federal level.

And most important of all – Vote like your life depends on it because it does! If you are not registered to vote and need assistance to get registered, give us a call.
Employment Success Story

Through the 3Rivers Youth Employment Program, Adrian and Delaney Bata, both 19, overcame their fears about employment and are excited about their futures! They are currently employed at Pete’s Steak House in Atchison, KS. Let’s take a closer look at their story of success!

What challenges did you face when you began the Youth Employment Program?

Adrian - I wasn’t comfortable speaking up for my needs and I wasn’t confident in my choices. All the paperwork such as applications and banking were a challenge.

Delaney - I had to overcome my fear of applying for a job. I am learning to study and gain my driver’s permit.

What are you most excited about with your job?

Adrian & Delaney - Our job has a lot of routine but also something new and different each day. We love that we can interact with our employer and co-workers on an equal ground.

What were you most afraid of when you started looking for work?

Adrian - I was afraid I wouldn’t interview well, that I didn’t have the skills, and that I might fail.

Delaney - I was afraid that when our trial work period was over that my employer wouldn’t hire me and then I would have to look for another job.

What are your words of wisdom for anyone afraid of looking for or starting a new job?

Adrian - Take the chance. Not everyone is going to help you as the people at Three Rivers did for me. Not many will take the time, as Three Rivers has, with answering questions about a wide variety of situations. Use the help that is offered to you, for as long as it is given to you, or you might miss a great life experience.

Delaney - Do not be afraid. Things like finding a new job might be scary, but you will not know unless you try. Talk to experienced job hunters, like your parents, teachers, or older friends. Get the necessary paperwork and ask around. There is no wrong answer if you are new to finding a job.

A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles - Christopher Reeve
RTC:Rural is conducting a national research project on Personal Assistance Services (PAS) to explore differences in PAS delivery and to understand how rural PAS delivery influences community participation and health. They are building an Advisory Board to serve as expert advisors to this project.

Expert advisors are consumers and paid care providers. Share your voice!

RTC:Rural invites anyone involved in rural PAS to apply by completing the Advisory Board Application.

What will the Advisory Board do?
- Review materials and provide feedback
- Participate in bi-annual teleconferences
- Contribute to research through literature reviews and selection of survey questions

Commitment and Timeline
- 10-15 hours per year for at least 1 year
- No travel is required!
- Phone, email, webinar, and messaging platforms will be used. Training and accommodations are available

Compensation
Members will receive a $200 annual stipend

Questions?
Contact Rayna Sage at (406) 243-5233 or 3Rivers at (785) 456-9915

Need assistance with creating the perfect application?
Contact 3Rivers!

Want Another Opportunity?
RTC:Rural needs consumers from Kansas who are interested in receiving $30 cash for a one-hour interview, either by phone or via video chat, to discuss their experiences using personal assistance or PCAs. The interviews can be conducted in English or Spanish.

Interested? Contact 3Rivers for more information!
Calling all Direct Service Workers!
Meet our Fiscal Management Services (FMS) Team!

What FMS Wants You to Know:

1. Skip 3Rivers’ automated system and call our direct phone line: 785-456-8573
2. We are adding a text line! Soon you will be able to skip the phone call and send a message instead. This feature will also message Direct Service Workers about work availability in their area. Make sure we have your up-to-date phone #.
3. Paid training opportunities are coming soon. This fall, funds will become available to pay for training opportunities for in-home workers.

AuthentiCare Tips & Tricks

Call AuthentiCare from your consumer's phone. If the consumer’s phone number changed recently, please call our office and we will update AuthentiCare.

For daytime hours, please select “Self-Directed PCS” when clocking in. If your consumer is approved for overnight services, please select “Self-Directed ECS” when clocking in.

Please contact the FMS team if your consumer is hospitalized. As a reminder, workers are not allowed to clock in when a consumer is in the hospital.

It is crucial to work only hours within your consumer’s approved plan of care. Any hours worked above the plan of care are considered attempted Medicaid Fraud. If you are unsure how many hours your consumer is approved for, please contact the FMS team.
Welcome Aboard!

3Rivers welcomes Whitney to our team! Whitney joined in May 2021 as our new front desk manager. She was born and raised in Alma, KS and has lived there her whole life. She has 3 kids, 1 boy and 2 girls. Whitney is excited to continue working with us as she has always wanted to help others and, here at 3Rivers, she is able to do that!

**Least Favorite Chore:** Dishes/Laundry  
**Best Way to Start the Day:** Coffee!  
**Last Book/Movie that Made You Cry:** Me Before You movie and book  
**#1 Played Song on Your Phone:** More Hearts Than Mine by Ingrid Andress

Kayleigh joins 3Rivers as one of our Information and Referral Specialists. The army brought her family to Kansas in 2017 and she’s called Kansas “home” ever since. Kayleigh has 3 kids, 2 girls and 1 boy. She began her Masters in social work program at Washburn in 2020. Her internship brought her to 3Rivers where she knew she wanted to work with disability advocacy and rights long-term!

**Favorite Food:** lasagna  
**#1 Played Song on Your Phone:** Free Falling by Tom Petty  
**Favorite Outdoor Activity:** gardening, growing plants, hiking, and camping!  
**Favorite Quote:** “you must never be fearful about what you are doing when it is right” -Rosa Parks

Cheyanne joined the 3Rivers team in May 2021 as our intern and administrative assistant. She is a senior at Kansas State University double majoring in Psychology and Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies. She plans to become a therapist and work with young adults. At 3Rivers, Cheyanne works to increase the accessibility of the COVID-19 vaccine in our counties!

**Favorite Sound:** waterfall  
**Favorite Book:** The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue by V.E. Schwab  
**Dream Vacation:** Belize  
**Bucket List:** Skydiving
Direct Service Workers (DSWs) - you can receive compensation for completing the COVID-19 Vaccine series! 3Rivers wants to compensate our DSWs for their unpaid time receiving the vaccine. To receive a $50 gift card, email, mail, or fax a copy of your COVID-19 vaccine card after your second shot and before September 30th, 2021. Your gift card will be mailed to the address on record. So far, 52 DSWs have submitted their vaccine card and have received compensation. You could be one too!

Pictures of our Pottawatomie County Vaccine Clinic (above) in June and our Washington County Vaccine Clinic (right) in August!

Why I chose to get the COVID-19 Vaccine......

“I received the COVID-19 vaccine to protect myself and my family”
-LM, Brown County

“I want to live and I believe in science. I also have asthma and I knew the vaccine was going to help me stay safe” - WH, Riley County

“I work with vulnerable populations who have a higher chance of contracting the COVID-19 virus. I received the vaccine so I could protect them” - AG, Brown County

“I got the vaccine to protect me and my clients” - CB, Doniphan County

“I got COVID-19 last year and almost died. It took me 5 to 6 months to fully recover. I don’t want to ever go through that again so I got the vaccine” - CF, Geary County

Vaccine Villa

My Battle With COVID-19

I was exposed to COVID-19 on Thanksgiving, tested positive a week later, and it only took another week to be taken by ambulance to the hospital...a ride I do not remember.

Those first few weeks are a blur. After a month and a half, I was finally released to go home but required more rehabilitation. Now over six months later, and being told I am a “long-hauler,” I am still experiencing side effects such as fatigue, inability to focus, loss of hair, and dental issues. It seems that we get one thing addressed and another issue surfaces.

I truly believe that vaccinations will help get rid of this virus and all its derivatives. I got the vaccine as soon as I was able and I hope all of you do the same.

- Linda
QC/QA Specialist at 3Rivers
So Far in 2021...

We have assisted 22 people with finding employment

We have assisted 7 people with relocation back to community living

We have provided 592 services related to Independent Living Skills Training

We assisted consumers in 146 services related to advocacy

We have participated in 7 community events

We have assisted with 6 home modifications

We have loaned 24 pieces of equipment and assisted with 3 TAP phone applications

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announces individuals experiencing long term symptoms from COVID-19, sometimes called “long-haulers,” can be considered disabled under federal law and guidelines. These laws and their related rules define a person with a disability as an individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities. Examples of common symptoms include:

- tiredness
- difficulty thinking or concentrating
- shortness of breath
- headaches
- dizziness on standing
- fast-beating heart
- cough
- joint or muscle pain
- depression or anxiety.

3Rivers is currently working with individuals with these “long COVID-19” symptoms. Please contact your healthcare provider if you are experiencing these issues and reach out to 3Rivers if you need support to manage your daily life activities after recovering from COVID-19.
—We might be done with COVID, but COVID isn’t done with us.

Stay Safe

And remember to order PPE from 3Rivers!

785-456-9915