It is sometimes inevitable that unintended consequences occur when someone attempts to fix one problem, and in turn creates a potentially greater problem as a result. This year’s Missouri legislative session made a positive effort to raise the woefully low rates for IDD providers across Missouri to a more equitable level. It was part of a series of incremental steps that have been enacted over the past few years to help providers offer more pay to staff to hire and retain qualified people to serve persons with developmental disabilities. There is absolutely no question that direct support professionals need to be paid higher wages and have better benefits commensurate with the importance of the services they provide, and the skill levels they need. However, getting rates to a higher level this year meant taking funds from another line item of the Department of Mental Health’s budget that also supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

As treatment modalities improve, and people with disabilities live longer, the cost for providing services continues for

McNamara Joins eitas Team as TCM Director

Just before the summer started, eitas welcomed Jorgi McNamara as the new Director of Targeted Case Management. We sat down to learn more about Jorgi. Here is our discussion:

Tell us about your background.
I am a widow with three adult children, four grandchildren and a Siberian Husky named Eli.

I grew up in Jackson County. (Lee’s Summit High School, Class of ‘85!) I have a cousin who has a developmental disability, so I was his weekend babysitter when he was young. I loved spending time with him. After college (UCM—Go Mules!) I began working with children who have developmental disabilities in central Missouri. I loved the field, so I went to work for the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) in 1992. I worked in various capacities such as a habilitation specialist at Marshall Habilitation Center, a case manager for Central Missouri Regional Office, and a case management/assessment supervisor. In 2002, I left

McNamara continued on Pg. 6
eitas celebrates employees at luncheon

The annual Employee Appreciation Luncheon was held July 19. The event is held to honor the hard work of each eitas employee, as well as to provide recognition for years of service.

“Although we know that our staff do a great job year round, it’s nice to be able to take a day to stop and thank them in a special way,” said eitas Executive Director Jake Jacobs. “Our annual appreciation luncheon has proven to be a great way to have a congenial social setting to acknowledge what special and dedicated employees we have at eitas.”

The luncheon also was an opportunity for those from the other eitas facilities to visit with each other.

Rice retires after 19 years with eitas transportation

On June 4, Bob Rice celebrated his retirement with many co-workers at the Transportation services building.

After 19 years of service, Rice, the eitas transportation manager, oversaw many tremendous accomplishments within the department - from adding GPS and cameras to all eitas vehicles to the building of a state of the art transportation facility that can accommodate the growing fleet of vehicles to meet the needs of customers.

Many were on hand for the celebration, and several shared stories about Rice. Some of those stories were about his insatiable thirst for Dr. Pepper or about how generous and kind he was to his staff throughout the years.

According to Rice, retirement will be spent traveling and spending time with grandchildren. Roger Montero has moved into the role of transportation manager.

To view more photos of the retirement celebration, please visit http://bit.ly/2KE9JMi.
Providing funding for local agencies working with the intellectually or developmentally disabled community is one of the many things eitas does. And this year marks the first time eitas has partnered with the Down Syndrome Guild (DSG) of Greater KC, a local non-profit 501(c) organization.

On January 1, DSG of Greater KC began a new program called Pathways. Pathways is described as a life-changing and transformation community-based, therapy program for children and young adults with Down syndrome ages 4-20 and their families. The service also helps individuals with developmental disabilities become successful in obtaining and maintaining meaningful work in adulthood, living and belonging to their community.

The program’s goals include increasing social relationships, activities of daily living, community integration and overall, improving their quality of life in the broader community.

This year, eitas partnered with DSG of Greater KC to provide funding for 10 families from Jackson County so they could participate in the new Pathways program.

“Funding is very important to us because we receive no state or federal dollars,” said DSG of Greater KC Chief Operating Officer Amy Allison. “All of our programs are subsidized, so having a partnership with eitas is very exciting and appreciated.”

Pathways is an intensive and comprehensive program. Families receive 50 hours of assessment, intervention and consultation services at an accessible service site over the duration of 12 months for every year they are enrolled.

“I would say the program is innovative because it has a multidisciplinary approach,” said Sarah Vallandingham, eitas Agency Relations coordinator. “You have an occupational therapist, speech-language pathologist, board certified behavior analyst and two educators all working together to support the individual reach his or her goals.”

Tracy Mauk, Agency Relations supervisor with eitas, agrees that it’s an vital partnership.

“Our partnership with the Down Syndrome Guild has provided new opportunities for people with disabilities to gain the skills needed to obtain the life that they want,” added Mauk.

DSG of Greater KC recently received positive feedback from a parent about the Pathways program. The parent has a young adult daughter with a dual-diagnosis of Down syndrome and autism.

“Pathways has provided a support system to enhance my daughter and our family’s life. They have provided hope and the

By Anthony Zuccarini
Communications Coordinator

*DSG continued on Pg. 7*
Medicaid Expansion: Seven things the public should know about the evidence

In 2012, the Supreme Court affirmed the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act but made Medicaid expansion optional for states. This resulted in a natural experiment in which 37 states (including the District of Columbia) expanded Medicaid and 14 have not, including Missouri. As Missouri considers Medicaid expansion, we have the unusual opportunity to learn from an extensive body of research on the differences between the states that have expanded and those that have not. These results consistently show that expansion benefits patients, health care institutions, and communities, and that it is fiscally prudent for states. The most recent comprehensive review of these studies by the Kaiser Family Foundation summarized the findings from 324 analyses. Building off the evidence, which continues to accumulate, more studies are pending, including those beyond the direct effects on health and health care. In this post I highlight important evidence in seven areas. Overall, these findings make a compelling case for expanding Medicaid in Missouri.

Here’s what you need to know about it:

1. **Expanded insurance coverage and access to care**
   Expansion results in more people having insurance coverage and access to care; this may appear obvious, but its importance should not be overlooked. The consequences are real – more patients seek care earlier, stay healthier, and health care spending is reduced. Fewer people will forgo needed doctor visits for cardiovascular disease and more people will have better glucose monitoring. With full implementation, Missouri’s expected enrollment would increase by more than 300,000, resulting in a significant increase in Missourians getting better coverage and access to care.

2. **Improved health and longer lives**
   Tracking the effects of coverage and access on people’s health over several years has produced recent findings that show expansion reduces mortality from cardiovascular diseases, end-stage renal disease, and cancer, as well as infant and maternal mortality. Not surprisingly, research on overall mortality shows declines as well, with estimates that the nation would have had 15,600 fewer deaths if all states had expanded Medicaid at the outset.

   Findings regarding improved health are as noteworthy as those on longer lives. Medicaid expansion results in fewer people experiencing psychological distress and days of poor mental health. Health disparities are reduced among covered populations, which include children, young adults, veterans, mothers, people with HIV, racial and ethnic groups, and newly diagnosed cancer patients. Especially relevant for Missouri, rural residents disproportionately gain health benefits from expansion. In brief, our health care system would take a big step toward fairness with Medicaid expansion.

3. **Ameliorated the opioid epidemic**
   Expansion states have done a much better job of providing care for patients with opioid use disorder. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) made addiction treatment an essential benefit that must be provided under Medicaid expansion. Drugs approved for treating addiction or overdose are used more than three times as often in expansion states. Federal funds targeted to address the opioid epidemic are subject to re-authorization, therefore expanding Medicaid is the best long-term solution in order to make real progress on this issue, which has shown to be a huge health barrier in Missouri. While most states saw a decline in overdoses, Missouri’s rates increased last year.

4. **Increased family financial stability**
   The health problems of patients and families are almost always accompanied by financial stress and strains. In expansion states fewer patients incur medical debt or use payday loans. (In Missouri, over 20 percent of the population has medical debt in collections, more than the share of Missourians with student loan debt.) Missouri is ranked seventh in adults reporting past due medical debt and has one of the highest payday loan use rates. Expansion reduces the likelihood of having medical debt and borrowing money or skipping payments on other
eitas celebrates National Disability Employment Awareness Month

On October 1, eitas announced its participation in National Disability Employment Awareness Month, an annual awareness campaign that takes place each October. The purpose of National Disability Employment Awareness Month is to educate about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America’s workers with disabilities. This year’s theme is “The Right Talent, Right Now.”

The history of National Disability Employment Awareness Month traces back to 1945 when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year “National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.” In 1962, the word “physically” was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

“Every day, individuals with disabilities add significant value and talent to our workforce and economy,” said U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta. “Individuals with disabilities offer employers diverse perspectives on how to tackle challenges and achieve success. Individuals with disabilities have the right talent, right now.”

Reflecting this year’s theme, throughout the month, eitas will be engaging in a variety of activities to educate its employees on disability employment issues and its commitment to an inclusive work culture. These efforts include our Employment Provider Fair to be held on Oct. 29 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the eitas Training Center located at 8508 Hillcrest Rd., Kansas City, MO 64138. We will also be posting many disability employment messages across our social media channels and on our website at www.eitas.org.

“We want to help spread the important message that individuals with disabilities make important, and unique contributions to their communities and to workplaces,” said Jake Jacobs, eitas executive director.

Employers and employees in all industries can learn more about how to participate in National Disability Employment Awareness Month and ways they can promote its messages — during October and throughout the year — by visiting www.dol.gov/NDEAM.

Gov. Parson signs order creating Missouri as a Model Employer initiative

On September 9, 2019, Governor Mike Parson signed Executive Order 19-16 announcing the commencement of the Missouri as a Model Employer initiative.

The Model Employer classification is an emerging trend supported by the federal Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Initiative continued on Pg. 7

DSP Recognition Week

This year eitas joined in celebrating Direct Support Professional Recognition Week held Sept. 8-14.

This year Ancor and Relias released a new logo to highlight the significance of the week. Items can be purchased from their online store at https://www.promoplace.com/98519/stores/ANCOR2019.

In this year’s store you’ll find common items such as t-shirts and bags, tumblers, thermoses, popsockets and lunch bags.
them. But also, every year more people with developmental disabilities enter the state system. In Jackson County alone we average about 200 young people graduating from high school each year, many of them needing to enter Medicaid services.

For the 2020 budget that began July 1, 2019, the Department of Mental Health (DMH) budgeted $30.3 million dollars for Medicaid growth to serve a projected 1,302 people statewide who would need new or greater assistance through Medicaid. Those funds were included in Governor Parson’s budget that was sent to the State legislature.

During the budget process of trying to meet all needs, that $30.3 million was reduced to $8.5 million so that rate increases could occur for providers.

If the $30.3 million served 1,302 people, it is projected that the $8.5 million can only serve 444 individuals across the State this fiscal year, a reduction of 72 percent. As a result, on July 1, 2019 DMH initiated a waiting list for anyone needing new Medicaid Waiver services. The Developmentally Disabled (DD) Division will monitor funding on a monthly basis such that in-home services will be limited to 30 new individuals a month and residential services will be limited to 5 new individuals per month. (Residential services are the costliest services funded by the DD Division, and historically, 23 people per month have been added.)

This reduction is a serious blow to a system that for years operated in a crisis-only mode that left thousands of people on a waiting list without any assistance or services until their needs became critical – and even then it could not always meet their requirements. Through innovative programs like the Partnership for Hope Waiver and strong determination to meet the needs of the most vulnerable among us, Missouri worked hard to eliminate the waiting list and succeeded in doing so in 2017. But now we are faced with a waiting list dilemma again. I urge everyone, the SB 40 Boards, the IDD providers, DMH, Governor Parsons and our state legislators to work tirelessly in the approaching legislative session to reach a budget that helps everyone meet the needs of both the persons who live with disabilities every day and the dedicated people who support them.

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What brings you to eitas?
First and foremost, Jake Jacobs. Many of my colleagues asked how I could go from being the executive director to a position that reports to someone else. I could not have done that for just any supervisor. Jake is tremendously respected in our field. He is extremely smart and kind. I knew that working for him would be a wonderful opportunity. Also, those grandchildren were getting bigger.

What is your role with eitas? Responsibilities?
I am the director of Targeted Case Management. My primary responsibility is to insure that the 1,800-plus people who receive case management from eitas have the support they need to live an empowered life. I am here to make sure that the support coordinators have everything they need to make that happen. I also am here to partner with the families and providers to navigate the complicated world of developmentally disabled services. In addition to support coordinators, we have a utilization review department, a records department and an intake coordinator in my chain of command, so we all work together to get the job done.

What are your expectations for the first year?
I would like to use my experience with CARF to assist with eitas’ accreditation process, I would like to work with the providers to build a better rapport, and I would like to work with our support coordinators to improve the efficiency of our internal systems.

What do you like to do when you’re not at work?
I love live music, travel and spending time with my family and my fiancé. I also like to play golf in the summer and bowl in the winter.

What else would you like people to know about you?
I want people to know that I am here to help. If you don’t feel like you are getting what you need from us, please email or call me.
bills to pay for health care. Also, for employed enrollees Medicaid makes it easier to continue working, and for unemployed enrollees it makes it easier to look for a job.

The health of Missouri families is obviously the most important aspect of the Medicaid debate, but the state has a dual responsibility to protect our overall economy along with our health.

5. Minimal impact on state budgets
In 2020 and going forward, the federal government pays for 90 percent of the costs of expansion. The impact of the other 10 percent on the state budget can be offset by several factors, including the lower costs of expansion enrollees and the reduction in state spending for the uninsured in other programs like behavioral health, substance abuse services, and care in the criminal justice system. In addition, states get the enhanced federal match of 90 percent for some people previously enrolled under other categories with lower match rates. Overall most expansion states have found little, or even positive, change in their state budget as a result of expansion. This is consistent with a recent analysis of the estimated impact of expansion on Missouri's budget.

6. Bolstered state economies
Studies in Iowa, Colorado, and Ohio have found benefits of expansion to include increases in jobs, average household incomes, state and local tax revenues, and state GDP. Ohio, Michigan and Montana all found a stronger labor force, including a 9% job participation increase among low-income residents in Montana, better perceived job performance in Michigan and more accessible job opportunities in Ohio. Overall, the infusion of federal funds into these states has had positive ripple effects throughout their economies, especially in under-resourced communities.

7. Strengthened health care system
Expansion benefits the health care system in many ways, including reducing bad debt, reducing emergency room visits by “high utilizers” and patients without insurance as well as visits for asthma and diabetes (which are better managed at clinics or offices). In expansion states hospital revenues increased faster and uncompensated care decreased faster than in non-expansion states. Rural hospitals were less likely to close in expansion states, but closures happen for a number of reasons, in addition to Medicaid expansion. For clinics and offices that provide primary care and care for chronic conditions, expansion reduces the barriers to routine care and allows nurses, doctors, and pharmacists to more effectively manage their patients’ health problems.

Expanding Medicaid is not a panacea. It is only one component in making Medicaid the exemplary program that Missouri citizens deserve. Medicaid in Missouri also needs fundamental improvements in technology, policy, and staffing. This crucial linchpin in Missouri's safety net infrastructure is primed for both a comprehensive upgrade and expansion, and they can be done simultaneously, without choosing one over the other.

Looking to the future, it is possible federal legislation could bring sweeping changes to the financing and organization of health care. Legal challenges to the ACA also raise uncertainty over the future legal and regulatory framework for our health care system. But one thing is certain – when we look at the accumulation of evidence on the effects of Medicaid expansion, the unavoidable conclusion is that expanding Medicaid is a prudent and effective investment in the future of Missouri's health.

DSG continued from Pg. 3

According to eitas Executive Director Jake Jacobs, DSG provides important services that help the lives of so many.

“The Down Syndrome Guild has been providing a number of vital services throughout the KC region for a number of years,” added Jacobs. “It has certainly been a pleasure to work with them and help fund families to participate in their new program here in Jackson County.”

To learn more about the DSG of Greater KC, please visit https://www.kcdsg.org/. For more information about the Pathways program, please visit https://pathways321.org/.

Initiative continued from Pg. 5

Policy (ODEP) to help more people with disabilities obtain competitive, integrated employment. The Department of Mental Health has received assistance from ODEP to assist with implementing this initiative in Missouri.

“Being a Model Employer is critical to developing and maintaining a talented state workforce that reflects the rich diversity of Missourians,” Governor Parson said. “We are committed to doing everything we can, both through this initiative and other efforts, to eliminate barriers to employment and expand job offers to individuals of all abilities.”

To view Executive Order 19-16, click here. The press release announcing the executive order can be viewed at: Missouri as a Model Employer.
We would love the opportunity to keep you updated on everything going on in our orbit.

Here’s how you can stay in touch with us:

**www.eitas.org**: Our new website provides you with an opportunity to sign up to join our mailing list. This is a great way for us to be able to reach out to you with news items, upcoming courses and much more. We also include news releases our our website in the Announcements banner.

**Social Media**: We post related information on these social media channels:

- **Facebook**: [https://www.facebook.com/eitasJacksonCounty](https://www.facebook.com/eitasJacksonCounty)
- **Twitter**: @eitasjacksonco
- **YouTube**: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZmwKRLMFstYJzQFyIvUPrg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZmwKRLMFstYJzQFyIvUPrg)
- **LinkedIn**: [https://www.linkedin.com/company/eitas/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/eitas/)

If you ever have a news items or something you think eitas would be interested in knowing or sharing, please reach out to us at communications@eitas.org. We are always seeking newsletter topics, so please feel free to contact us.