



## **2022 DRRC Policy and Advocacy Priorities**

### **I. COVID-19 DISABILITY, INDEPENDENT LIVING, AND REHABILITATION RESEARCH**

**Continue to advocate for enhanced disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, including data collection, Long COVID, and targeted research for key populations.**

- Work with the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress and the Biden Administration to ensure that the federal response to the pandemic continues to include targeted research on the inequitable impact of COVID-19 and Long COVID on people with disabilities.
- Ensure that the COVID-19 research agenda includes examination of the “ripple effects” on access to services, health, and independent function not directly resulting from COVID-19 infection.
- Ensure that federal data collection efforts (related to COVID-19 and beyond) include disability status as a mandated category in all collections of demographic data.
- Promote disability considerations as research agencies continue to carry out their strategic plans and efforts regarding COVID-19 research.
- Support federal research efforts into the impact of Long COVID on both people with preexisting disabilities and those with new long-term or permanent disability, as well as multidisciplinary rehabilitation for treatment of Long COVID symptoms and functional impairments.
- Support expanded research into the benefits and impact of telehealth expansion during the COVID-19 public health emergency specifically for individuals with disabilities.

### **II. NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH)**

**Advocate for expanded medical rehabilitation research at NIH.**

- Follow up with senior NIH leaders with whom DRRC has already engaged and maintain a close working relationship with key NIH staff.
- Meet with additional NIH leaders at Institutes and Centers relevant to the DRRC’s mission, including the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD).
- Continue to engage with new personnel at the National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research (NCMRR) to ensure a continued and strong relationship between the DRRC and the Center.

- Meet with leaders at the NIH Researching COVID to Enhance Recovery (RECOVER) initiative to maximize the impact of funds supporting research into Long COVID. Engage with the Biden Administration to continue to raise the profile of disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research at NIH.
- Participate in future public comment opportunities to weigh in on the direction of NIH-Wide and Institute-specific strategic planning processes.
- Engage with NIH to support diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts within the Office of the Chief Officer for Scientific Workforce Diversity (COSWD), NIH-wide, and across the scientific workforce including NIH employees and grantees.
- Advocate for recognition of people with disabilities as a designated health disparity population within NIMHD and NIH-wide.

### **III. NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY, INDEPENDENT LIVING, AND REHABILITATION RESEARCH (NIDILRR)**

#### **Advocate in support of NIDILRR and its research mission.**

- Advocate for increased funding for NIDILRR's operations in the FY 2022 and 2023 appropriations cycles.
- Continue to monitor and help facilitate the implementation of the 2018-2023 NIDILRR Long-Range Plan.
- Work with NIDILRR leadership to provide input and help develop the next NIDILRR Long-Range Plan (2024-2029)
- Meet with NIDILRR leadership and Administration for Community Living (ACL) officials to reaffirm commitment to disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research.
- Work to more closely involve NIDILRR in CMS activities, especially regarding the role that NIDILRR's data and disability expertise may play in improving the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

### **IV. INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY RESEARCH (ICDR)**

#### **Advocate for an expanded recognition of the role of ICDR and enhanced collaboration and coordination on disability research across federal agencies.**

- Continue to advocate with ACL and the leadership of the Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR) to promote the implementation of the government-wide strategic plan on disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research and encourage commitment to the ICDR's mission.
- Advocate for federal government-wide efforts to expand self-declaration and self-identification for people with disabilities within the federal workforce and among those receiving federal funds.

## **V. FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2022-2023 APPROPRIATIONS**

### **Advocate for additional funding and applicable report language to support DRRC goals.**

- Solicit membership for priority programs and prepare DRRC appropriations and report language recommendations.
- Advocate before congressional appropriations leadership to support DRRC budget requests (including consideration of a potential dedicated budget for ICDR).
- Meet with relevant agency and administration officials as appropriate regarding budget needs.
- Prepare charts summarizing President's budget proposals and House/Senate/Conference funding decisions and accompanying analyses.
- Support enactment of proposed funding increases for key disability and rehabilitation programs in the final FY 2022 conference agreement.

## **VI. OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES**

### **Promote the coordination and enhancement of disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research across the federal government.**

- Engage with the appropriate leaders at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to re-appoint a Chief Disability and Health Officer and re-establish the Disability and Health Working Group.
- Advocate before key officials and work in tandem with the research community to address next steps to restore CDC's view of disability and rehabilitation research.
- Engage with the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) to support further emphasis on disability and rehabilitation research within the Institute's portfolio.
- Support disability community representation and policy focus within the White House's scientific advisory staff, including the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST).