

Published by the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities
"Helping people to live, learn and work in our community"

DSPs urge others to sign up for COVID-19 vaccine

by Rita Price, FCBDD Communications Coordinator

Every day, Patricia Atemkeng checks the latest pandemic news and sadly notes the growing toll: More than 400,000 lives lost as the novel coronavirus continues its rampage across the nation.

"We all have to do what we can to make this go away," said Atemkeng, who has worked as a direct-support professional for the past 11 years.

Atemkeng received her first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine in mid-January and is encouraging others in the disability community to make an appointment as soon as they are eligible. She and her colleague Franca Erhunmwunsee want DSPs to know the vaccine is safe, effective and will help to protect both those they serve as well as their own loved ones.

State and national health officials worry that vaccine refusal could extend the pandemic's grip and lead to more deaths, especially among vulnerable populations such as those with developmental disabilities.

A Gallup poll conducted in December and January found that about 35% of Americans surveyed said they were not likely to take the vaccine. Though overall willingness has grown since summer, minorities remain less likely to want to be vaccinated, researchers say.

"People are going to social media, and they are not getting correct information," Erhunmwunsee said. "I think some are afraid because the vaccine came out so fast."

Rumors and myths have spread, with some fearful that Black vaccine recipients "are being experimented on," Atemkeng said.



Direct-support professional Patricia Atemkeng received her first dose of COVID-19 vaccine from Columbus firefighter Mark Hill.

Story continued on page 3

Beth Savage re-elected President

During its January, 2021 organizational meeting, the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities re-elected Beth Savage to serve as President of the Board.

Beth Savage began her service to the Board in 2012, when she was appointed by Franklin County Probate Judge Robert Montgomery. She was reappointed in 2016 and again in 2020 and will serve until the organizational meeting in January, 2024. Board members can serve three full, four year terms.



FCBDD Board
President -
Beth Savage

President Savage works for PriceWaterhouseCoopers, LLP as Director of Midwest Forensic Services and is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA). She has two children, one of whom is eligible for services from the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Beth's community experience includes leadership on the Boards of the Down Syndrome Association of Central Ohio (DSACO), Best Buddies and Marburn Academy. Beth's first year as President of the Board was in 2020.

Marie Crawford, parent advocate and parent of two adult children served by the Board was re-elected as Vice President and Michael Underwood, Attorney and Partner with the Porter Wright Law Firm, was re-elected Secretary of the Board.

Other Board members continuing their terms are: Linda Craig, Chair of Human Resources Committee; John Bickley, Chair of Ethics Committee; Bill Wilkins, Chair of Finance Committee.

Renée Stein finished her time on the Board in January. At 'Dateline's' deadline, her replacement had not been re-appointed by the Franklin County Board of Commissioners.

OhioRISE meetings commence

OhioRISE, Medicaid's effort to launch the next generation of its managed care program for youth with complex behavioral health and multi-system needs, has established an Advisory Committee and begun meetings.

OhioRISE (Resilience through Integrated Systems and Excellence) aims to shift the system of care and keep more kids and families together by creating new access to in-home and community based services for children with the most complex behavioral challenges.

In October, 2020 the Ohio Department of Medicaid released a request for applications to solicit responses from managed care organizations interested in serving as the OhioRISE specialized managed care organization for eligible youth with multi-system needs. Ohio Medicaid will select the organization. The organizations who submitted applications were:

- **Aetna Better Health, Inc.**
- **Beacon Health Options of Ohio, Inc.**
- **Kids Care Alliance Co.**
- **Magellan of Ohio, Inc.**

OhioRISE will feature intensive care coordination and behavioral health services targeted toward youth under the age of 21 who meet a functional needs threshold for behavioral health care, as identified by the Child Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool. This new Medicaid waiver program will help families prevent custody relinquishments.



The OhioRISE Advisory Council held their first meeting on January 11, 2021, which included introductions of the members and a brief overview of the charge of the council. Close to 40 individuals are on the Council, including former foster youth, family members, psychiatrists, representatives from the mental health and developmental disabilities fields, Family and Children First Councils, Children Services Agencies and Probate/Juvenile Courts.

The Advisory Council will begin with three workgroups on Services, Eligibility and Care Coordination, and Implementations and Operations.

For more details on OhioRISE, click on the link below:

[OhioRISE \(Resilience through Integrated Systems and Excellence\)](#)

Vaccine update

While the number of available vaccines were limited, the good news is that the vaccine for COVID-19 began to be distributed in December, 2020.

Two vaccines were approved for distribution (Pfizer and Moderna) by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and first in line to receive the vaccines were health care workers and first responders. Beginning in January, 2021, individuals with developmental disabilities living in group situations and their staff began to receive the vaccines in Phase 1A. Phase 1B includes school personnel, individuals 65 or older and other individuals with developmental disabilities who also have other underlying conditions defined by the state.

The Columbus and Franklin County Public Health Departments are coordinating vaccine efforts. Larry Macintosh, Director of Administrative Support Services and Joni Sparks, Administrative Assistant are representing the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities with this process. The first group of individuals with developmental disabilities and staff totals approximately 8000 individuals.

Columbus Public Health serves Columbus and Worthington and the Franklin County Public Health Department serves the remainder of the county. Columbus Public Health began providing vaccines at the Celeste Center at the Ohio State Fairgrounds and the Franklin County Public Health Department began clinics at the Board of Elections headquarters, located at 1700 Morse Road. People must be registered with the Health Department to receive the vaccine, which will be done in phases directed by the Center for Disease Control, Ohio Department of Health and local Health Departments.

"We are excited the vaccines are now being administered, yet mindful that this process will take several months," said Jed Morison, Superintendent/CEO.

Ohio's Vaccination Program
A Phased Approach

During Phase 1 vaccine supply will be limited.
Vaccine administration will be focused on reaching critical groups.

PHASE 1A

- Health care workers and personnel who are routinely involved with the care of COVID-19 patients
- Residents and staff at nursing homes
- Residents and staff at assisted living facilities
- Patients and staff at state psychiatric hospital
- People with developmental disabilities and those with mental health disorders, including substance use disorders, who live in group homes, residential facilities, or centers and staff at those locations
- Residents and staff at our Ohio veterans homes
- EMS responders

All available vaccines will be administered to those who choose to receive it.

OHIO MIKE DEWINE GOVERNOR OF OHIO OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH coronavirus.ohio.gov

During Phase 1 vaccine supply will be limited.
Vaccine administration will be focused on reaching critical groups.

PHASE 1B

GOAL: Save Lives

- Ohioans age 65 and older
- Those living with severe congenital, developmental, or early-onset medical disorders

GOAL: In-Person School by March 1st

- Adults who work in schools

All available vaccines will be administered to those who choose to receive it.

OHIO MIKE DEWINE GOVERNOR OF OHIO OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH coronavirus.ohio.gov

Lois Curtis: An activist and artist who made history

by Rita Price, FCBDD Communications Coordinator

During Black History Month in February, advocates celebrate the woman behind the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that established the rights of people with disabilities to live in their communities instead of institutions.

Olmstead v. LC is often hailed as the nation's most significant civil-rights ruling for people with disabilities.

But most of the American public knows little about Lois Curtis, a Black woman from Georgia with developmental disabilities and mental illness who turned to the Atlanta Legal Aid Society to help her fight for home-based services.

"I always thought it was ironic that we called it the *Olmstead* case, when *Olmstead* was the name of the Georgia official who wanted her kept in the mental institution," said Michael Kirkman, former executive director of Disability Rights Ohio.

The court held in 1999 that the state had violated the Americans with Disabilities Act and discriminated against Curtis and a second plaintiff, Elaine Wilson, who also wanted community services so that she could leave the institution. Wilson died in 2004.



Lois Curtis
Photo by Robin Rayne

"Undue isolation is segregation that violates federal law. That was a magic moment," Kirkman said of the ruling's nationwide impact. "That freed up people in all kinds of situations. It's huge."

Today, thousands of Franklin County residents with developmental disabilities receive the services they need to live and work in settings they and their families choose.

Kirkman, now retired, has met Curtis several times. She remains passionate about art and in 2011 presented President Obama with one of her pastel self-portraits.

"I am looking at one of her paintings now," Kirkman said during a recent phone conversation. "Her art is amazing – full blown, full throated. It's about people being free and expressing themselves."

Kirkman cherishes not only the painting he has, but also a sketch of him that Curtis, 53, made during a visit to Cleveland several years ago.

"Lois was doing public speaking, which consisted of one of her staff asking her questions, and answering them in her own way," he said. "She told her story very effectively with that structure. Lois had challenges, but she was very independent."

DSPs urge others to sign up for COVID-19 vaccine (Continued from page 1)

She and Erhunmwunsee, who both work in Franklin County for the support-services provider Dungarvin, do their best to explain that the vaccine was thoroughly tested, that side effects generally are mild and that the vaccine can prevent COVID-19 in about 95% of people.

"The fact is, COVID-19 vaccines are very safe," Dr. Laura Sorg, medical director for the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, said during a recent webinar. "There were no steps skipped."

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine has said that about 60% of staff in Ohio nursing homes declined the vaccine during the state's initial rollout. Some developmental disabilities provider agencies also are reporting disappointing rates so far among DSPs, who are now eligible for the vaccine if they work in group settings.

"Patricia has been very vocal about why it's important," said Sara Eppard, Ohio director for Dungarvin. "She's one of those unofficial leaders."

Atemkeng and Erhunmwunsee participated in a drive-through immunization clinic at the state fairgrounds with Columbus Public Health. "We want life to get back to the way it was," Atemkeng said. "So we all have to do our part."



Direct-support professionals Franca Erhunmwunsee, left, and Patricia Atemkeng are all smiles after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine during a drive-through clinic.

For information about vaccine eligibility and sites, go to coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Public briefing on Early Childhood Development - February 5

A virtual public briefing has been scheduled for February 5, 2021 at 9:15 a.m. by Future Ready Columbus to discuss how racial and economic disparities impact early childhood development.

Mayor Andrew Ginther, Commissioner Marilyn Brown, Alex Fischer, Bishop Timothy Clarke and Jane Leach, Director of Future Ready Columbus, will talk about a solution and movement to improve the percentage of children who are ready for kindergarten.

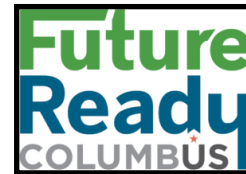
In Franklin County, only 40% of our children are ready for kindergarten. Further, this low percentage of children ready for kindergarten negatively impacts our community. By the time a child reaches the age of 5, 90% of their brain has developed, making the progression from birth to kindergarten the most significant time in their life. Early childhood development – positive and negative – directly affects how the brain develops, leaving a lasting impact on learning, behavior, and health.

Future Ready Columbus, a nonprofit, collective impact, is leading the charge and has assembled a team of central Ohio family members, community leaders and government officials, known as the Early Childhood

Advisory Council (ECAC), to develop an equitable, action-oriented kindergarten readiness plan, Future Ready by 5. Jed Morison, Superintendent/CEO of the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities, serves on the Council.

Research demonstrates that four kindergarten readiness drivers are crucial to a child's ability to be ready for kindergarten: health & behavioral health, families & communities, education & development supports, and public & private infrastructure. These four drivers come together as our early childhood system.

The public briefing on Friday, Feb. 5 will educate Franklin County on the solution and launch a community-wide request for insight on Future Ready by 5. These insights will be collected from community meetings, small and large, throughout Franklin County, either in person (following COVID protocols) or online. Join the virtual event by visiting futurereadycolumbus.org/publicbriefing.



Vaccine video with Dr. Roberts

Columbus Public Health Commissioner Dr. Mysheika Roberts recently distributed a video on the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccines.

Vaccine distribution began in December, 2020 and is expected to continue for several months.

The Columbus Health Department administers vaccines at the Celeste Center at the Ohio State Fairgrounds and the Franklin County Public Health Department administers the vaccines at the Board of Elections building at 1700 Morse Road. At 'Dateline's' deadline, more locations were anticipated.

Dr. Roberts' video can be found at: <https://youtu.be/hhJuYbH3rQY>



Preschools and schools resume

Preschool and West Central School programs of the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities resumed in-person classes on January 19, 2021.

West Central School is open to all students recognizing the low enrollment and big spaces at the school. Safety precautions, including masks, social distancing, sanitizing and frequent hand washing will continue. No class will have more than eight students and many have less.

Preschool classes operated at the Early Childhood Education and Family Center (ECEFC) at 2879 Johnstown Road and Early Childhood Learning Community (ECLC) located on Rudy Road, will have no more than nine students per class.

In-person services were suspended in December due to an increase in positive COVID-19 cases. Virtual services were provided until January 15.

School staff are included in Phase 1B for the vaccine. Children under age 18 are not yet scheduled to receive the vaccine until more trials are completed.

Stay informed - sign up for NewsBits

'NewsBits' is an email blast that updates recipients of the latest news or announcements. The intent is for the emails to be short with 'bits' of information, hence the name 'NewsBits'.

To sign up for 'NewsBits', one can visit the website of the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities (www.fcbdd.org) and click on the sign up at the bottom of the home page.



[Click here for a link to FCBDD's Website](http://www.fcbdd.org)

Good For You

Notable achievements in the FCBDD community

Congratulations to Adam Herman, recently promoted to Chief Operations Officer for the Ohio Association of County Boards (OACB).





Thank you to Columbus Public Health and Franklin County Public Health for continued efforts related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including vaccine distribution.

Thanks to Commissioners Joe Mazzola and Dr. Mysheika Roberts and staffs.

Congratulations to Erich Hiner, recently promoted to Director of Communications for the Ohio Association of County Boards (OACB).





Congratulations to Commissioner Kevin Boyce, recently elected President of the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, and special thanks to Commissioner John O'Grady, past President of the Board of Commissioners, for excellent leadership throughout 2020.

Career Milestones

40 years

**Sherri Noecker
Donna Tracy**

35 years

Anne Thomas

30 years

Marva Lovely

25 years

**Letitia Porter
Eric Vazquez**

20 years

**Loretta Bankston
Stacie Meeks**

10 years

Michele Sexton

5 years

**Sondra Blue-Schneller
Vincenzo Gualtieri
Jazmine Platt**



Special Olympian wins first place in state competition by Megan Bender, Special Olympics Specialist

Congratulations to Kevin Cantrell, first place winner of the Special Olympics Statewide art competition. Kevin is a Franklin County Special Olympian, competing in power lifting.

Special Olympics Ohio hosted a state-wide competition for athletes to create a canvas demonstrating "what Special Olympics means to them."

The state office distributed 500 canvases to athletes, and 28 were selected to return to Columbus to be displayed in an art gallery and auctioned. Franklin County Flyers had seven athletes submit their masterpieces, which are displayed in offices at 2879 Johnstown Road.



Kevin's painting demonstrates how Special Olympics empowers people of all races, backgrounds and genders to compete for the gold. His piece won \$500 for the Franklin County sports program and will be featured at state competitions.

For details on Franklin County Special Olympics, connect to Facebook at the following link:

[Franklin County Special Olympics](#)



ARC Industries receives innovation award

ARC Industries has been selected to participate in one of few Innovation Catalyst Programs for 2021.

Innovation Catalyst is a program built to help nonprofit organizations develop new initiatives that improve their sustainability and mission impact.

Through a competitive application process, Cause Impact works with community funders to select a small cohort of organizations that are ready, willing and able to commit the time, effort and resources needed to support meaningful innovation.

The Innovation Catalyst Program is offered by Cause Impact, an organization that includes nonprofit consultants and coaches that help their clients drive change through innovation and strategic focus. Sponsors of the Innovation Catalyst Program include the Columbus Foundation and United Way of Central Ohio.

Anthony Hartley, Chief Finance and Strategy Officer of ARC Industries, will serve as the team project leader, working with ARC Industries staff and Board member Cynthia Hengeli. The program is expected to develop a

social enterprise, which is a business that a nonprofit operates to generate outcomes and earned revenue to support its mission.

Other examples of social enterprises are the Goodwill Thrift Stores and Hot Chicken Takeover, a restaurant that employs restored citizens.

Congratulations to ARC Industries.



Training Center coming

Thanks to efforts of the Human Resources Department of the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities, an FCBDD Training Center has been established.

Beginning in February, online training will be provided for staff on topics such as trauma informed care, self-advocacy or perspectives on how services in visitations have evolved over the years. The Equity Committee is expected to offer training and specifics on topics like retirement planning, health insurance/wellness and technology tips.

According to David Ott, Director of Human Resources, suggestions are always welcome. "We want this to be an opportunity for staff to learn about a variety of topics, both for professional and personal growth. Staff participation in the training will be voluntary and current plans are to schedule one-hour trainings from 11:45-12:45 on Thursdays."

For details, or to provide suggestions, call or email David Ott at david.ott@fcbdd.org.

Dateline

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities

- Beth Savage**, President
- Marie Crawford**, Vice President
- Michael Underwood**, Secretary
- John Bickley**
- Linda Craig**
- William W. Wilkins**

Superintendent/CEO **Jed W. Morison**

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities does not discriminate in employment or services on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, or disability.

The following staff contribute to the monthly publication and distribution of *Dateline*:

- Carl Scott** **Amy Magginis** **Rita Price**
- Jennifer Cunningham** **Carolyn Earnhardt**

News releases, story ideas, and suggestions should be sent to:

Jed Morison, Superintendent/CEO
2879 Johnstown Road
Columbus, Ohio 43219
(614) 475-6440 FAX (614) 342-5001
e-mail: jed.morison@fcbdd.org

Information about the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities is always available on the internet at:

www.fcbdd.org

Calendar

Editor's Note: The following calendar is tentative due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Call 614-342-5950 before attending any meeting to see if it is still scheduled.

February 2021

- 2 Groundhog Day
- 14 Happy Valentine's Day!
- 15 Presidents' Day - all county facilities closed.
- 25 Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities Board meeting 11:30 a.m. via Zoom. Please contact Amy Magginis at 614-342-5950 for details. Click on the following link to connect:

[FCBDD Board Meeting Link \(Zoom\)](#)

