

POLICY TALK

The Latest in Public Policy Center News and Events



Featured News

Nebraska Strong Crisis Counselors Find Creative Ways to Provide Outreach During the Pandemic



Outreach workers with the **Nebraska Strong Recovery Project** are finding creative ways to reach communities around Nebraska and let people know about crisis counseling and support during COVID. During October and November, more than 650,000 print materials have been distributed to more than 60 crisis counselors in six

behavioral health regions around the state of Nebraska. Crisis

counselors are working to distribute these materials to assisted living facilities, Catholic charities, food banks, community colleges, veterans, libraries, and local businesses. In light of recent quarantine and lockdown restrictions, counselors are working together to find ways to reach more diverse groups of people who may be experiencing stress and anxiety from the pandemic. Read more about their efforts in [Nebraska Today](#).

Senior Research Manager Kate Speck Retires After 13 Years

Congratulations to Dr. Kate Speck on her retirement! As a senior research manager at the PPC, Kate's service has had an immeasurable impact. Her expertise in motivational interviewing, mental health, and suicide prevention has helped expand the Center's reach and impact around the state. Among her many projects over the years, Kate Speck most recently served as the project manager for the Nebraska Youth Suicide Prevention project and helped lead a multi-agency suicide prevention effort. Read about her great work and the impact she has had in Nebraska and beyond: go.unl.edu/katespeck.



Combined Efforts Assist the Ryan White Project with Improving Care for Nebraskans with HIV or AIDS



Center researchers are assisting with quality management and improvement processes to help enhance services to Nebraskans living with HIV or AIDS. PPC researchers are working with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Ryan White Part B Program on this effort. Efforts on this project include providing webinars and technical assistance on quality improvement tools, hosting community of practice sessions and other collaborative meetings, and revising the state Ryan White Part B Program's Clinical Quality Management Plan. As project lead, Senior Research Manager Stacey Hoffman, framed, conceptualized, and contributed on this project. Research Specialist Lisa Bowers manages the Community of Practice events for the program providers. Senior Research Specialist Tarik Abdel-Monem, along with Research Coordinator Khadijah Davis, presents webinars on tools and best practices to support statewide quality improvement goals.

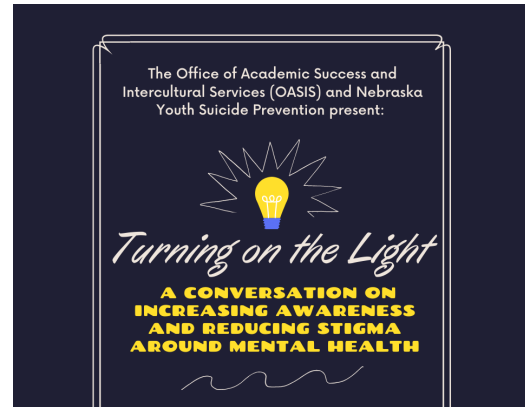
Follow us to see the latest news and events.



Spotlight of the Month

Event Aims to Shine a Light on Mental Health

In early November, the **Office of Academic Success and Intercultural Services (OASIS)** and the Public Policy Center's (PPC) **Nebraska Youth Suicide Prevention Project** hosted the event, "Turning on the Light: A Conversation on Increasing Awareness and Reducing Stigma of Mental Health" via Zoom. During the event, they talked about mental health, breaking down stigmas, providing resources, and answering students' questions. A panel consisted of Charlie Foster (Director, OASIS), Alice Mitwaruciu (Assistant Director, Counseling and Psychological Services), Pat Tetreault (Director, LGBTQA+ Center and Women's Center), Quinn Lewandowski (Research Specialist, PPC), and included student panelist, Mike Knowles.



Next Time: the December issue of Policy Talk will include a new spotlight feature about an ongoing project.

Upcoming Events

Upcoming Training Focuses on Communication and Multidisciplinary Teams—with Justice-Involved Populations

The training will feature Dr. David Mee-Lee speaking on "Communication and Multidisciplinary Teams: How to Communicate and Integrate Treatment and Case Management Information when Working with Justice-Involved Populations."



Location: Zoom Meeting

Date/Time: Wed., December 2nd, 1:00pm-4:00pm CDT

Application has been made for 2.75 APA and criminal justice continuing education hours. Participants must attend the entire webinar to receive continuing education credits.

Register today at go.unl.edu/teams-justice.

The University of Nebraska Public Policy Center (NUPPC) is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. The NUPPC maintains responsibility for this program and its content. This training is hosted by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center.

**Register
Today**

Center News

Work by Staff and Faculty Fellow Featured in Latest UNL Research Report



The **2019-2020 Research Report** highlights the Center's 'Mental Health Aid for Flood Victims' and Faculty Fellow Carrick Detweiler's drone startup. The 'Mental Health Aid for Flood Victims' highlights two initiatives serving areas impacted by 2019's devastating floods, aided by Public Policy Center staff who partnered with four Behavioral Health Regions. These efforts are funded by two grants totaling nearly \$2 million from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) secured by Senior Research Manager Stacey Hoffman.

The development of Drone Amplified with CEO and Faculty Fellow Carrick Detweiler was commended for its efforts in fighting fires with drones with the goal of saving the lives of people performing these dangerous jobs.

Learn more about flood efforts by going to research.unl.edu/annualreport/2020/highlights.

Learn more about drones and NUtech Ventures by going to research.unl.edu/annualreport/2020/glance.

Center Welcomes a New Member to the Team

In October, Ashley Miller joined the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center as a research specialist. Ashley received her B.S. in Psychology from the University of South Dakota and is enrolled in the MPA program at the University of Nebraska Omaha. She plans to pursue a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. Ashley's interests include individual and community resiliency, physical and behavioral health, predictive analytics of adverse outcomes, sustained behavioral change, and



collaborative endeavors with law enforcement.



Staff Members Celebrate Milestones at the University

Congratulations to this year's Celebration of Service honorees. University of Nebraska Public Policy Center's executive assistant, Diane Kennedy, celebrates 20 years of service and Research Specialist Quinn Lewandowski marks 5 years of service. Their service has helped the Public Policy Center continue to grow and expand the breadth of our impact around the state.

Center Director Presents at Nationwide Webinar

In October, Dr. Mario Scalora, director of the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, was invited to speak during the webinar, "Countering the Insider Threat on Campus." This training addressed the array of safety issues faced by research institutions across the nation. The U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Radiological Security sponsored the webinar. [Learn more about Dr. Scalora's work.](#)



New Publication Demonstrates Possible Application of Unmanned Aircraft System to Fill Gaps in Forecasting

Congratulations to PPC Faculty Affiliate Dr. Adam Houston, PPC Senior Research Managers Dr. Janell Walther and Dr. Lisa PytlikZillig, and former PPC Undergraduate Research Assistant Jake Kawamoto on the publication of their article, "Initial assessment of unmanned aircraft system characteristics required to fill data gaps for short-term forecasts: results from focus groups and interviews" in the *Journal of Operational Meteorology*. This work, which is part of a larger effort to examine the integration of new technologies into society, represents the first step towards establishing how unmanned aerial systems (UAS) could be used to fill data gaps that exist for short-term forecasts issued by the National Weather Service. [Read the full article.](#)



Community Resources

Nebraska Youth Suicide Prevention and The Nebraska Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Nebraska Youth Suicide Prevention is working to decrease the suicide rate among young people by sharing resources on their

[website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) for people currently dealing with anxiety and worry. During difficult or challenging times, mental health is especially important. **Individuals needing help can contact The Nebraska Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.** The lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention, and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.

Nebraska Rural Response Helpline and Nebraska Family Helpline Provide Help During COVID

The **Nebraska Strong Recovery Project** is working to help those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic by sharing resources on the [Nebraska Strong website](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#). **Individuals in need of help can contact The Rural Response Hotline at 1-800-464-0258** (M-F from 8AM-5PM) or the **Nebraska Family Helpline at 1-888-866-8660** (24 Hours/Day, 7 Days/Week). The hotlines provide free and confidential support for all Nebraskans experiencing difficulty during the events surrounding COVID-19.

SAMHSA Guide to Social Distancing

The **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)** has issued guidelines for taking care of your mental and emotional health during the current COVID-19 outbreak. [This short handout](#) explains social distancing, quarantine, and isolation; common reactions to these measures; and what you can do if you find yourself needing to implement these precautions.



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Our mission is to link policy with research, process & practice.

We team with policymakers & other stakeholders to actively inform public policy & put knowledge into action.



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