



**EASTERSEALS BACKGROUND INFORMATION BRIEF
JUNE, 2020**

FACTS AND STATS REGARDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES POPULATION

One in four people – 61 million – are living with disability today (Source: [CDC](#))

Types of disability and demographics (Source: [CDC](#))

- Types of disability
 - 13.7% - Disability associated with mobility
 - 10.8% - Cognitive disability
 - 6.8% - Independent living disability
 - 5.9% - Deaf or hard of hearing
 - 4.6% - Blind or low vision
 - 3.6% - Self-care disability
- Demographics
 - 2 in 5 people with disabilities are 65 years or older
 - 1 in 4 women have a disability
 - Race and ethnicity
 - 3 in 10 American Indians/Alaska natives have a disability
 - 1 in 4 African Americans has a disability
 - 1 in 5 Caucasians has a disability
 - 1 in 6 Hispanics has a disability
 - 1 in 6 Native Hawaiian Pacific Islanders has a disability
 - 1 in 10 Asians has a disability
 - 38.2% of adults with disabilities are obese (26.2% of adults without a disability are obese)
 - 28.2% of adults with disabilities smoke (13.4% of adults without a disability smoke)
 - 11.5% of adults with disabilities have heart disease (3.8% of adults without disability have heart disease)
 - 16.3% of adults with disabilities have diabetes (7.2% of adults without disability have diabetes)
- Access to health care
 - One in three adults with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 44:
 - Have no health care provider
 - Have unmet health care needs due to costs within the past year
 - One in four adults with disabilities between the ages of 46 and 64 did not have a routine check-up in the past year.
- Access to education

- Access to a high-quality education for children with disabilities and other special needs is guaranteed and protected by law under the U.S. Department of Education's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA as it is known. Originally adopted by the federal government in 1975 and amended in 2004, IDEA ensures that all children with disabilities are provided with equality of educational opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic sufficiency. The law delivers rights and protections to infants, toddlers and children with disabilities – as well as to their parents or legal guardians. (Source: Ed.gov).
- First and foremost, children must qualify for services under IDEA – and those services begin at birth through age 3 under Part C of the legislation and continue from age 3 through age 21 under Part B. Regardless of age, an evaluation must be done to determine that a child has one of 13 disabilities as defined by IDEA and that the impact of the disability must create a need for services. The evaluation can be done by the child's health care provider from birth to 3 to qualify for early intervention services. A team of experts upon entering school from age 3 through age 21 will determine access to the protections of IDEA for the child and parents or legal guardians through annual evaluations.
- The six provisions of IDEA focus on students' rights and the responsibilities of public schools to children with disabilities. The provisions include the right to a free appropriate education; an appropriate evaluation to determine and make recommendations regarding a child's eligibility for special education services in a timely manner; an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that is done annually with teachers, the child and parents to outline goals and other criteria including the child's strengths and specific academic, developmental and functional needs. Since IDEA places strong emphasis on placement in a general education setting, another provision assures that classroom modifications, supplemental aids and services, and alternative instruction methods are being leveraged to provide the student the Least Restrictive Environment. Other provisions assure extensive parental participation in any decisions regarding their child's education as well as procedural safeguards to ensure adherence and enforcement of IDEA and ways to resolve disagreements between parents and schools should they occur.
- Learning disabilities impact nearly 40% of children receiving special education. (Source: NCLD)
- The high school graduation rate for students with disabilities across the nation is on the rise: for the 2016-2017 school year graduation rates for those with disabilities reached 67.1%, up from 65.5% the previous year. That's the sixth year in a row that the rate has increased; however, it's still lower than the 84.6% graduation rates of their non-disabled peers in the 2016-2017 school year. (Source: NCES)
- College graduation rates for students with disabilities still lag behind students without disabilities. Postsecondary education is increasingly regarded as a critical component in gaining suitable and meaningful employment, especially as our economy has become more knowledge based. However, it is disheartening that as of 2005, individuals with disabilities in the U.S. were still much less likely than those without disabilities to possess a college degree (13% vs. 30%) (Houtenville, 2007).

People with disabilities continue to face challenges that result in lower attendance and graduation rates when compared to people without disabilities (Dowrick, Anderson, Heyer, & Acosta, 2005; Henderson, 2001; Kober, 2002). The reasons cited for students with disabilities not obtaining postsecondary degrees in greater numbers have included such issues as: academic dismissal, dropping out for personal reasons, family responsibilities, and the lack of assistance on campus. (Old data but most current available).

- Access to employment
 - The unemployment rate for people with disabilities in May, 2020, was 17.9% compared to an unemployment rate of 13.3% for the general U.S. population. (Source: [Fred Economic Data](#))
 - Interestingly, the unemployment rate for veterans during the same reporting period was 9.1%. (Source: [DOL](#))
- Discrimination and social injustices are repeatedly experienced by people with disabilities:
 - Societal barriers faced by people with disabilities: access to healthcare; access to meaningful employment; availability of affordable and accessible housing; and the public's perception and awareness of the skills, merits, abilities and contributions of people with disabilities to heighten inclusion and acceptance in all areas of life. (Source: [NIDILRR](#))
 - Children with disabilities, particularly children of color, are referred to law enforcement or arrested at school at disproportionate rates. This phenomenon is referred to as the school-to-prison pipeline and is a threat to the academic and social well-being of children with disabilities. Sadly, people with disabilities are twice as likely to be victims of crime and violence than people without disabilities; those with developmental and/or cognitive disabilities (including autism) and people with mental health disability are the most likely to be victimized. (Source: [OVC](#))
 - Hear from a [recent panel discussion of disability rights activists](#) – including author Judy Heumann, a leader in the disability rights movement for decades – on the social injustices they face as women with disabilities in all areas of their lives.

COVID-19 Impact on Populations Served by Easterseals

- Health care disparity has adversely affected populations served by Easterseals:
 - Given CDC stats relative to access to health care among people with disabilities cited above, people with disabilities, often with underlying chronic medical conditions, are at higher risks of being infected with the virus – and at a loss in accessing to medical care.
 - Roughly one in four adults in the U.S. have a disability, and an estimated 60% of Americans have at least one chronic health condition that could make the symptoms of COVID-19 more severe or deadly. Even in normal times, people with disabilities and chronic illnesses confront biases in medical care, face waiting lists to get support in their own homes instead of at nursing homes, and struggle to access government benefits. But amid a global pandemic, those challenges are heightened. ([Time, April 24, 2020](#))

- A recent NPR article highlighted COVID-19 and its effects on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The [article](#) noted that in New York and Pennsylvania, COVID-19 fatality rates for people with IDD are between 7-10 percent higher than that of the rest of the population. People with disabilities have also been contracting COVID at a higher rate, especially because many individuals with IDD live in group home settings across the country. In addition, these individuals tend to suffer more complications from COVID-19 due to preexisting health conditions. Scott Landes, from Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, noted that individuals with IDD are "four times more likely to actually contract COVID-19 than the general population. If they do contract COVID-19, they're about two times more likely to die from it."
- There has been a lot of focus on the impact of COVID-19 on people in nursing homes (understandably). But less attention has been paid to date about seniors and people with disabilities receiving long-term home and community-based services (HCBS) who also face serious issues and disruption of care due to the pandemic. (Kaiser Family Foundation 2020)
 - Home and Community-Based Services help with tasks such as bathing, dressing, and preparing meals. Medicaid is the primary payer for these services, financing 59% of HCBS.
 - More than 2.5M people received services through Medicaid HCBS waivers offered in all 50 states and DC in FY 2018.
 - People receiving HCBS may be at increased risk of adverse health outcomes from COVID-19 due to older age and/or chronic illness as well as from unmet daily needs due to workforce and medical supply shortages during the crisis. Maintaining and potentially expanding HCBS during the public health emergency is critical to prevent increased need for nursing home care.
- Racial disparity in access to healthcare and other factors have severely hit people of color during the pandemic:
 - For Black Americans, the novel coronavirus has been especially devastating. Black Americans die of COVID-19 at a rate more than twice that of white Americans, and greater than that of Latino Americans, Asian Americans, and Indigenous Americans, according to a [June report in APM Research Lab](#).
 - Black Americans are also more likely to be hospitalized due to the virus. An [analysis published in May 2020 in the journal *Health Affairs*](#) found that 52.5 percent of Black American patients with the disease were hospitalized, compared with 25.7 percent of patients identifying as non-Hispanic white Americans. A [study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) of 580 hospitalized COVID-19 patients found that one-third were Black, although they made up just 18 percent of the population examined, and comprise 13 percent of the U.S. population as a whole.
 - [Patrice Harris, MD](#), immediate past president of the American Medical Association, says that preexisting conditions among Black Americans play a major role. The [CDC indicates](#) that people who already have serious medical conditions such as [heart](#)

disease are more likely to become severely ill from the virus. “African Americans are disproportionately impacted by a lot of these health conditions — hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and also certain types of cancer,” says Dr. Harris. “So you already have a particular community suffering a disproportionate impact from those conditions, and then, unfortunately and tragically, we see more deaths and illness from COVID-19.”

- Harris traces these health inequities to a number of societal challenges. “Communities of color are disproportionately impacted by the social determinants of health, such as food insecurity, safe and affordable housing, educational disparities, transportation issues, and lack of access to healthcare,” she says.
- A 2019 report from the progressive think tank The Century Foundation noted that the cost of health insurance coverage has kept the number of uninsured and underinsured Black Americans high. The U.S. Census estimates that the uninsured rate in 2018 among Black Americans was 9.7 percent, while it was just 5.4 percent among white Americans. About 18 percent of underinsured adults in the United States are African American, according to the Century Foundation report. “Preventive healthcare is less accessible to Black Americans as far as we can tell,” says Kumi Smith, PhD, an assistant professor in the division of epidemiology and community health at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. “Plus, we have a for-profit model for healthcare right now that is incentivized toward emergency medicine, instead of trying to prevent the health problems in the first place. I think that’s why there’s a temptation to completely rethink the whole healthcare system and come up with a much more equitable model.” Harris stresses that creating greater access to meaningful healthcare by making it more affordable would reduce comorbidities among Black Americans, reducing their vulnerability to COVID-19.
- The CDC highlights a number of economic and social conditions that impose greater health burdens on racial and ethnic minorities.
 - Members of racial and ethnic minorities may be more likely to live in densely populated areas because of institutional racism in the form of residential housing segregation, according to the health agency. Many live in multigenerational households, making it more difficult to protect older family members against infection through social distancing practices. (The CDC reports that 8 out of 10 COVID-19 deaths reported in the United States have been in adults 65 years old and older.)
 - Racial and ethnic minority groups are overrepresented in jails, prisons, and detention centers, facilities that have been outbreak hot spots across the country.
 - Additionally, these populations may live farther from medical facilities and not have adequate means of transportation to get there. Research has suggested that they may not have access to healthy food sources, with low-

incomes neighborhoods offering more fast-food outlets and convenience stores.

- Black Americans are often employed in areas — including healthcare, retail (such as grocery stores), and transportation — that are more likely to expose them to the virus. The CDC estimates that nearly one-quarter of employed African American and Hispanic workers in the U.S. work in service industry jobs, compared with 16 percent of non-Hispanic white Americans.
 - They are frequently sole breadwinners for the family and less able to take time off. The Institute for Women’s Policy Research says more than 4 in 5 Black mothers are breadwinners, with a majority of Black mothers (60.9 percent) raising families on their own. “We know that Black and brown people have less job security overall, and they may be more likely to fill vulnerable jobs,” says Yvonne Maldonado, MD, senior associate dean for faculty development and diversity and chief of the infectious diseases division within the department of pediatrics at Stanford University in California.
 - General stress adding pressure related to systemic racism may accelerate aging among the Black American population, a concept that scientists refer to as “weathering.” “There are studies that suggest that just dealing with the stresses of racism, day in and day out, may actually compromise an individual’s health to the point that they are more vulnerable to a lot of the chronic disease outcomes that we see that are so much higher in Black communities,” says Smith.
 - Dr. Maldonado suggests that the stressors of racism may even negatively impact an individual’s genetic makeup. “We know that African American kids in urban stressed environments have higher levels of stress hormones, and that their chromosomes have areas called telomeres that are shortened — they’re actually aged much faster than telomeres of other children,” she says. “These are environmental influences that can change your genomic responses and be carried down from one generation to the next.”
 - Children as young as 7 years old recognize and are affected by racism, but discrimination’s long-term negative effect is diminished when a child understands and identifies with his or her racial or ethnic group.
- Community health care providers like Easterseals are providing services in the same way acute care doctors are – ensuring a continuum of care and ensuring that people are kept out of emergency rooms in order to alleviate the heavy burden the acute healthcare systems

are facing as a result of the Coronavirus. A focus on the broader national healthcare network will ensure the best outcomes as we continue to face the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Mental health and Substance Abuse Disorders (SUD) were at crisis level before COVID. Post-pandemic, the need for mental health and SUD services is expected to increase exponentially given the toll that social isolation, financial burden and job loss has taken on us.
 - In a recent [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) poll, nearly half (45%) of adults in the U.S. reported that their mental health has been negatively impacted due to worry and stress as a result of the virus --- and the uncertainty it's created in our lives.
 - People with disabilities may be at a higher risk of mental health issues related to the pandemic as a result of social isolation and not having access to medical supplies and supports they may need – in addition to often having underlying conditions which put them at greater risk of contracting COVID-19. (Source: [APA](#))
 - Research on the psychological impact of mass trauma (e.g., natural disasters, flu outbreaks) suggests that the pandemic might particularly harm the mental health of marginalized populations who have less access to socioeconomic resources and supportive social networks. (Source: [APA](#))
- The [availability of childcare services for parents of children with disabilities has never been adequate](#) according to the Center for American Progress. This lack of childcare was the catalyst for Easterseals' introduction of its inclusive network of Child Development Centers, where children of all abilities learn and grow together, in communities nationwide nearly a decade ago. As a result of the Coronavirus, nearly half of child care providers across the country completely closed their facilities during shutdowns due to the pandemic, [according to a survey](#) by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Of those that stayed open, 85% are operating with less than half of their usual child enrollment as communities begin to reopen. The outlook for the industry is grim: an [analysis by the Center for American Progress](#) found that roughly half of U.S. child care capacity is at risk of disappearing.

FACTS AND STATS REGARDING KEY DISABILITIES SERVED BY EASTERSEALS – AND SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS IN THOSE DISCIPLINES

EARLY INTERVENTION AND CARE (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

- In 2018, there were [nearly 20 million children between the ages of birth to 5 years in the U.S.](#)
 - [10% to 15% of children between birth and five years have physical, cognitive, social and behavioral delays, representing nearly three million infants and toddlers.](#)
 - Consider too that every year in America, one million children start kindergarten with **unidentified developmental delays**.
 - High-quality early education programs are proven to help children succeed in school; increase high-school graduation rates; reduce teen pregnancy rates, crime and other

social problems; and reduce long-term social costs for special education, child welfare and public assistance. (Source: [the Ounce](#))

- Societal benefits aligned with investments in early child development programs include a return of 13% per child on upfront costs through better outcomes in education, health, employment and behavior in the decades to follow. ([University of Chicago 2016](#))
- Early childhood interventions have been found to generate a return to society ranging from \$1.80 to \$17.07 for each dollar spent ([RAND Corporation 2014](#)).
- [Early intervention services can begin at birth through age 3 under Part C of the U.S. Department of Education's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) or IDEA as it is known (and continues through age 21 under Part B of the legislation) Regardless of age, an evaluation must be done to determine that a child has one of 13 disabilities as defined by IDEA and that the impact of the disability must create a need for services. The evaluation can be done by the child's health care provider from birth to 3 to qualify for early intervention services.
- Parents of children with disabilities, compared to parents of nondisabled children, are disproportionately unable to find childcare (34 percent vs 28 percent) or least difficulty finding it (34 percent vs. 25 percent) according to [the Center for American Progress](#). The Center also found that:
 - Parents face numerous barriers to care, including a lack of available slots, scheduling challenges, and concerns about quality.
 - Parents reported patching together help from extended family, childcare centers, special education preschool, and nurses and home health aides, as well as making significant changes to their jobs to provide care.
 - Parents of young children with disabilities are three times more likely to experience job disruptions because of problems with childcare than parents of children without disabilities.
 - The consequences of not finding care extend far beyond job disruptions; many parents reported greater financial strain, health challenges, and increased stress.
- [Easterseals Children's Services:](#)
 - Easterseals is committed to creating a world where every and any child born with a disability is given the support needed to fully participate in life – and realize their hopes and dreams!
 - Early intervention services help young children with disabilities achieve their goals in cognitive, social/emotional, communicative, adaptive and physical development. Services may include occupational therapy to help an infant learn to hold her bottle, physical therapy to help her learn to roll over, or speech therapy to help her learn to eat. Most early intervention services take place in the home or, in the case of working parents, at childcare facilities, including Easterseals Child Development Centers in the local community.
 - Our [Make the First Five Count](#) initiative provides a free, online screening tool so that parents, grandparents educators and child care providers can be sure the children for whom they care are meeting critical developmental milestones – and what to do if they're not.
 - Inclusive childcare services offered by its Child Development Network allow children of *all* abilities to learn and grow together.

- **Easterseals Subject Matter Experts (Early Intervention and Education)**
 - [Donna Davidson](#), President and CEO, Easterseals North Georgia
 - [Sue Ventura](#), President and CEO, Easterseals Florida
 - [Barry Simon](#), President and CEO, [Easterseals Oak Hill](#), Hartford (CT)

AUTISM SERVICES

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that **1 in 59** children in the U.S. has autism.
 - The prevalence is four times higher among boys than among girls.
 - Recent research found that 7% percent more white children are on the autism spectrum than black children and 22% more white children have autism than Hispanic children.
 - Suggests that the rise in prevalence may be the result, in part, of improved services for children who were previously missed.
 - The CDC reports dramatic differences in autism prevalence among states. The highest prevalence is 2.93 percent in New Jersey, whereas the lowest is 1.31 percent in Arkansas.
 - This divergence may reflect real differences in the number of children who have autism. Alternatively, it may reflect a disparity in access to healthcare and in autism awareness among different counties.
 - States with robust special education records show prevalence estimates over the national average.
- Despite rising awareness of autism, only 42% of children with autism had a diagnostic evaluation by age 3, even though about 85 percent showed some signs of the condition by that time.
 - Early identification, evaluation and intervention are critical.
 - Easterseals' free online screening tool at www.easterseals.com/mtffc helps parents and others who care for young children identify developmental delays so they can seek care for their children if they are not meeting critical development milestones in the child's first five years of life.
- **[Easterseals Autism Services](#)** impact the lives of children and adults living on the autism spectrum throughout the lifespan through Easterseals services ranging from early intervention and inclusive childcare to employment and residential services. Autism-specific services including Applied Behavior Analysis are also available.
- **Easterseals Subject Matter Experts:**
 - [Dr. Sara Ray Stoelinga, PhD](#), President and CEO, Easterseals Serving Greater Chicagoland and Rockford (IL)
 - [Paula Pompa-Craven](#), Chief Clinical Officer, Easterseals Southern California (http://es.easterseals.com/site/PageServer/?pagename=ntl_mtffc_bios_ppompacraven)
 - [Wendy Sullivan](#), President and CEO, Easterseals Midwest

VETERANS SERVICES

- There are 18.2 million veterans in the United States, according to the [most recent statistics from the US Census](#).
 - Other source: https://www.va.gov/vetdata/Quick_Facts.asp
- Key to the successful transition of veterans to civilian life is the ability to secure meaningful employment.

- The unemployment rate for veterans in May, 2020, was 9.1% compared to the general population's unemployment rate of 13.3%. (Source: [DOL](#))
- Unfortunately, the news is not as positive when it comes to the mental health of our nation's veterans according to the [National Council for Behavioral Health](#):
 - 30% of active duty and reserve military personnel deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan have a mental health condition requiring treatment representing approximately 730,000 men and women. Many are experiencing post-traumatic stress and depression.
 - Less than 50% of these veterans receive any mental health treatment.
 - The Veterans Administration reports that approximately 22 veterans die by suicide every day.
 - Additionally, military children and U.S. Army wives are experiencing mental health and emotional difficulties due to lengths of deployment of their loved ones.
- [Homelessness is severely impacting our nation's veterans](#):
 - 11% of the homeless adult population are veterans
 - 51% have disabilities; 50% have serious mental illness; 70% have substance abuse problems
 - 20% of the male homeless population are veterans
 - 57% are white males, compared to 38% of non-veterans
 - 50% are age 51 or older, compared to 19% non-veterans
 - 68% reside in principal cities; 32% reside in suburban/rural areas
- **Easterseals Veterans Services:**
 - Veterans and military families leverage a variety of Easterseals services though some services are specifically tailored to veterans and their families.
 - Among these:
 - Employment
 - Mental health services
 - Caregiver support
 - Homeless veterans reintegration programs
 - Financial literacy programs
- **Easterseals Subject Matter Experts:**
 - Veterans Services (Overall)
 - Andrea Chrisstoffels, Veterans Count, [Easterseals New Hampshire](#)
 - [BG Ronald "Ron" Welch](#), Retired, Vice President of Military & Veterans Services, Easterseals Capital Region and Eastern CT
 - Employment services:
 - [David Muir, Jr.](#), SVP, Veterans Staffing Network, Easterseals DC MD VA
 - [Scott Robinson](#), Director of Military and Veterans Services, Easterseals Greater Cincinnati
 - Mental health:
 - [Dr. Tracy Neal-Walden, PhD](#), Clinic Director, Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic, Easterseals DC MD VA
 - Homelessness:
 - [Easterseals Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program](#):
 - Carol Salter, CEO, Easterseals Oregon (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/carolsalter/>)

SENIOR SERVICES

- In the next decade, more than 71 million Americans will be 65 years of age or older.
- In 2009, 52.8% of adults ages 65 and older reported having a disability, and more than a third reported a severe disability. (NIH)
- With an increasing number of older adults and people with lifelong disabilities living longer, there will be a need and demand for stronger home- and community based-services.
 - 41% of adults aged 65-79 have at least one self-care, household activity or mobility issue but for those 80 years or older, this share rises to nearly 71%.
 - Home- and community-based services help with tasks such as bathing, dressing and preparing meals. Medicaid is the primary payer for these services, financing 59% of HCBS.
 - More than 2.5M people received services through Medicaid HCBS waivers offered in all 50 states and DC in FY 2018.
 - People receiving HCBS may be at increased risk of adverse health outcomes from COVID due to older age and/or chronic conditions as well as from unmet daily needs due to workforce and medical supply shortages during the crisis.
 - New “family fear” of nursing homes and long-term care facilities – nearly one-third of all COVID-related deaths occurred in nursing homes
 - Need for alternative ways in which to provide care for people with disabilities including veterans and seniors which HCBS represents – while also mitigating risk of adverse health outcomes from COVID-19 for these vulnerable and at-risk populations
 - Crisis in securing direct care workers must be addressed; we must train and certify them to provide a living wage so there is a continuum of care
- **[Easterseals Senior Services include:](#)**
 - Community-based Adult Day Services meet the daytime needs of adults with disabilities and older adults while promoting their dignity and independence. Easterseals partners with families to ensure a continuation of their care focused on the client’s wellbeing.
 - In-home services to meet the various needs of seniors – from personal care, household chores and meal delivery to more extensive in-home care and companionship - are offered in select markets nationwide.
 - The purpose of both home- and community-based services is to help people live as independently as possible for as long as possible.
 - A variety of supports and services including respite are available for family caregivers.
 - Populations served include individuals with various disabilities due to aging including dementia and Alzheimer's.
- **Easterseals Subject Matter Experts**
 - [Dee Prescott](#), Vice President, Adult Day Services, Easterseals Southern California
 - [Kathleen Kolenda](#), Vice President, Adult Day Services, Easterseals Southern California Dan – add link from drop box

- [Nancy Rollins](#), Chief Operating Officer, Easterseals New Hampshire
- [Loreen Chant](#), President and CEO, Easterseals South Florida

CAREGIVING

- Taking care of an elderly parent, though increasingly common these days as Baby Boomers age, isn't the only form of caregiving. If you care for a child with a disability, a sick sibling or an injured veteran, you're a caregiver. And you're certainly not alone. There are more than 67.5 million American adults who are caring for someone who is ill, disabled or aging—that's 29% of the adult population—according to the National Alliance for Caregiving.
 - **Easterseals Subject Matter Experts**
 - SMEs in early intervention, veterans and senior services can address caregiving.

WORKFORCE/EMPLOYMENT

- The unemployment rate for people with disabilities in May, 2020, was 17.9% compared to an unemployment rate of 13.3% for the general U.S. population. <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/LNU04074597>
 - Interestingly, the unemployment rate for veterans during the same reporting period was 9.1%. (Source: [DOL](#))
- Obstacles to employment for people with disabilities can include:
 - Physical environments that are inaccessible or hard to navigate
 - Lack of assistive tools or technologies to help the person be successful
 - Negative attitudes within the work environment
 - A lack of access to transportation, relevant systems, services, and policies to welcome people with disabilities into the workforce
- Because of these reasons and others, unemployment and underemployment disproportionately impact people with disabilities – though the quantitative and qualitative benefits realized by employers who employ people with disabilities are captured in a [2018 Accenture study](#):
 - Corporations deemed “Disability Inclusion Champions” realize higher shareholder returns and were, on average, two times more likely to outperform their peers in terms of total shareholder returns compared with the rest of the sample.
 - These same businesses achieve 28 percent higher revenue and 30 percent higher profit margins compared to companies that do not include people with disabilities in their diversity and inclusion strategies.
 - Enhancing these quantitative benefits are qualitative benefits, such as:
 - Higher levels of loyalty. A Nielsen study in 2016 found that persons with disabilities tend to be more brand loyal and also make more shopping trips and spend more per trip than the average consumer.
 - Higher employee retention rates. Staff turnover is lower—by up to 30 percent—when a well-run disability community outreach program is in place.

- Increased productivity. A DuPont employee survey found that when employees with disabilities are graded on the same scale as other employees, 90 percent of them receive performance ratings of “average” or above average.”
 - Enhanced employee morale. Studies show that working alongside employees with disabilities makes non-disabled individuals more aware of how to make the workplace more inclusive and better for everyone.
 - The GDP could get a boost of up to \$25 billion if just 1 percent more of persons with disabilities joined the U.S. labor force.
 - The U.S. Office of Disability Employment Policy categorizes persons with disabilities as the third-largest market segment in the U.S., after Hispanics and African-Americans. The discretionary income for working age persons with disabilities is \$21 billion—greater than that of the African-American and Hispanic segments combined.
 - Persons with disabilities bring strengths such as problem-solving skills, agility, persistence, forethought and a willingness to experiment to the workplace—all qualities essential for innovation.
- [Easterseals employment services](#) ensured that more than 75,000 people with disabilities, veterans and older adults got the supports they needed to identify and leverage their skills, receive training and secure meaningful employment in 2019.
- **Easterseals Subject Matter Experts**
 - [Carol Salter](#), President and CEO, Easterseals Oregon
 - [Dr. Michael Wirth-Davis, PhD](#), President and CEO, Easterseals Goodwill Minnesota
 - [Luanne Welch](#), President and CEO, Easterseals North Carolina and Virginia
 - [Easterseals Disability Film Challenge](#) advances representation and employment of people with disabilities within the entertainment industry.
 - Spokesperson: [Mark Whitley](#), President and CEO, Easterseals Southern CA and [Nic Novicki](#), Actor and Board Member, Easterseals Southern CA

MENTAL HEALTH

- According to the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#):
 - [1 in 5](#) U.S. adults experience mental illness each year (46.1M people in 2017);
 - [1 in 25](#) U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year;
 - [1 in 6](#) U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year;
 - [50%](#) of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24;
 - Suicide is the [2nd leading](#) cause of death among people aged 10-34
- Relative to veterans mental health, according to the [National Council for Behavioral Health](#):
- 30 percent of active duty and reserve military personnel deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan have a mental health condition requiring treatment – approximately 730,000 men and women, with many experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and major depression.

- Less than 50 percent of returning veterans in need receive any mental health treatment.
- The Veterans Administration reports that approximately 22 veterans die by suicide every day.
- Lengths of deployments are associated with more emotional difficulties among military children and more mental health problems among U.S. Army wives.
- **Easterseals Behavioral Health Services** include mental health services for children, adults and families, including veterans and seniors, as well as substance abuse and recovery programs in select locations.
- **Easterseals Subject Matter Experts**
 - [Brent Wirth](#), President and CEO, [Easterseals Michigan](#)
 - Dr. Jim Schroeder, Vice President, Department of Psychology and Wellness, Easterseals Rehab Center, Evansville, Indiana
 - [Kathleen Murphy](#), SVP, Substance Use Treatment Services, [Easterseals New Hampshire](#)
 - [Dr. Tracy Neal-Walden, PhD](#), Chief Clinical Director, Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic, Easterseals DC MD VA

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Nothing breaks down barriers for people with disabilities of all ages like assistive technology (Comcast Values Report 2019).

- **Easterseals Assistive Technology Services** help people of all ages and abilities access devices and adaptations that improve or maintain their functional capabilities. AT can be as simple as a pencil gripper or as complex as a computer that is activated by eye gaze – and so many more supports to fit the individual’s needs: hearing aids, voice-activated remote control devices, wheelchairs and walkers, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices for those who may need extra support to communicate and participate in life.
- **Easterseals Subject Matter Experts**
 - [M. Wade Wingle, MBA](#), Vice President, [Easterseals Crossroads, Indianapolis](#)
 - [Joy McGowan](#), Director of Assistive Technology and Augmentative Communications, [Easterseals Southeastern PA, Philadelphia](#)
 - [Paul Medeiros](#), President and CEO, [Easterseals Massachusetts](#)

RESIDENTIAL AND HOUSING SERVICES

- For people with disabilities, there are far too many barriers to housing. Without affordable, accessible housing in the community, many are at risk of institutionalization or homelessness.
 - Affordability is a huge issue: approximately 4.8 million non-institutionalized people with disabilities who rely on federal monthly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) have incomes averaging only about \$9,156 per year – low enough to be priced out of every rental housing market in the nation.
 - Many people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual disabilities, live with **aging caregivers** (age 60 and older). As this generation of caregivers continues to age, many of their adult children are at risk of institutionalization or homelessness.

- Key programs at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that seek to increase affordable housing for people with disabilities include:
 - **Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities Program.** Section 811 is the only HUD program dedicated to producing affordable, accessible housing in the community for non-elderly, very low-income people with significant disabilities.
 - **Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers.** HUD's Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program helps very low-income families, the elderly, and people with disabilities afford rental housing in the private market. About 1 in 3 households using Section 8 vouchers are headed by a non-elderly (under age 62) person with a disability.
 - **National Housing Trust Fund.** The National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) is a new, dedicated fund that provides grants to states to build, preserve, and rehabilitate housing for people with the lowest incomes.

- **Easterseals Residential Programs** provide housing options to people with disabilities – regardless of age or ability – so they can live independently in the community and fully participate in life. Supports within residential services can include everything from personal care and medical assistance to transportation, employment and recreation.

- **Easterseals Subject Matter Experts**
 - [Guadalupe \(Lupe\) Trevizo-Reinoso](#), Vice President, Living Options, [Easterseals Southern California](#)
 - [Brian Fitzgerald](#), President and CEO, [Easterseals New Jersey](#)
 - [Nancy Rollins](#), Chief Operating Officer, [Easterseals New Hampshire](#) (Note: this is most recent bio available)

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

- Unfortunately, adults with disabilities are twice as likely as those without disabilities to have inadequate transportation (31 percent vs. 13 percent). Of the nearly 2 million people with disabilities who never leave their homes, 560,000 never leave home because of transportation difficulties. (Source: [AAPD](#))

- Transportation and mobility play key roles in the struggle for civil rights and equal opportunity in the disability community. Affordable and reliable transportation allows people with disabilities access to important opportunities in education, employment, health care, housing, and community life. Because our nation's investments in transportation infrastructure have disproportionately favored cars and highways, those who cannot afford cars or do not drive cars often lack viable transportation options. People with disabilities—particularly in rural areas—need accessible, affordable transportation options that bring employment, health care, education, housing, and community life within reach. (Source: [AAPD](#))

- **Easterseals Transportation Services** are informed by our legacy of empowering people with disabilities to live, learn, work and play in their communities. We know that transportation for people with disabilities is not just a ride; accessible transportation ensures that the one in four people with disabilities in America today can be full participants in their communities. At the

national level, [Easterseals Project Action Consulting](#) services provides training and technical expertise to transportation companies, human services agencies, states, tribal nations and communities nationwide to ensure accessible transportation compliant with the Americans With Disabilities Act. We also manage the [National Center for Mobility Management](#) to help people with disabilities across the country identify people and organizations in their state, region or local community that can connect them to the most appropriate transportation services and supports. Additionally, Affiliates throughout the country provide transportation services for their local and statewide communities.

- **Easterseals Subject Matter Experts**

- Carol Wright Kenderdine, Director, Easterseals Project Action, Easterseals National Office
- [Dr. Judy Shanley, PhD](#), Assistant Vice President and Director, National Center for Mobility Management, Easterseals National Office
- Nancy Rollins, Chief Operating Officer, [Easterseals New Hampshire](#)

MESSAGING

- **Boilerplate**

About Easterseals

For more than 100 years, Easterseals has delivered critical services and powerful advocacy so that children with disabilities are provided the resources they need to achieve their full potential in life. Throughout our history, we have been an indispensable resource for children and families – as well as for veterans, seniors, their families and caregivers. Our Network of 68 Affiliates in communities nationwide serve 1.5M people annually with home- and community-based services that help people with disabilities – regardless of age or ability – participate in life. In schools, workplaces and communities, we’re fostering environments where everyone is included and valued – making a real and positive impact on us all.

- **Brand Guidelines**

- Can be found at www.eastersealsbrand.com
- Highlights

- **Culture**

- [My Person-Centered Journey: How Person-Centered Culture and Practices© Came to Be](#)
- [About Person-Centered Services: Easterseals Southern California](#)