



OACB26

SPRING CONFERENCE

MAY 21 - 22 • COLUMBUS

Schedule-At-A-Glance: Breakout Sessions

Last updated: Monday, April 20, 2026

Thursday, May 21, 2026

Track: Leadership

What HR 1 Means for Medicaid in Ohio (11:00-12:00) Hybrid

What could HR 1 mean for Medicaid in Ohio? This session breaks down the federal reconciliation bill—also known as the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act”—and its potential impact on Medicaid financing. Attendees will gain a clear understanding of the legislation and explore the critical decisions that may shape the future of Ohio’s Medicaid program.

Presenters: Amy Rohling McGee, President, Brian O’Rourke, Healthcare Policy Analyst (Health Policy Institute of Ohio)

Sustaining Ohio’s DD System: Leadership, Strategy, and Decision-Making for County Boards (1:00-2:00)

In a continuation of her keynote presentation, we move from mindset to action by helping leaders pinpoint where results are actually breaking down inside their own systems. Instead of trying to improve everything, you’ll learn how to identify the few problems that matter most and understand why they keep showing up day after day. We’ll walk through how to see those patterns more clearly, focus your attention where it has the greatest impact, and take targeted action that improves performance without adding unnecessary complexity. This is about cutting through the noise, getting specific about what’s holding your system back, and making smarter decisions about where to focus time, energy, and resources in day-to-day leadership and management.

Presenters: Kristen Cox, Founder and CEO (Epiphany Associates, LLC)

Protecting What Families Built: The Future of DD Services in Ohio (2:15-3:15)

Founded by families in 1967, Ohio’s county boards of developmental disabilities support more than 117,000 people statewide. As service needs and costs rise, reliance on local property taxes is putting long-term stability at risk. This session will explore proposed actions to protect services, improve fairness across Ohio, and rebalance state and local funding—launching a broader, inclusive conversation about the future of services for people and families.

Presenters: Adam Herman, CEO, (OACB), Monica Juenger, Chief Policy Officer (OACB), Jake Dowling, Legislative Affairs Manager (OACB)

Effective Communication in a Public Context (3:30-4:30)

Public agencies at all levels face an increasingly skeptical environment regarding the value of the services they provide. That challenge is even greater when an agency’s work is specialized, complex, or experienced by a smaller group of individuals and families, such as county boards of developmental disabilities. In this landscape, effective communication is not just a responsibility; it is essential. This session explores key principles for effective communication so public sector leaders can build understanding, maintain trust, and sustain the support they need to effectively carry out their essential missions.

Presenter: Scott Milburn, Executive-in-Residence (Ohio University Voinovich Academy for Excellence in Public Service)

Schedule At-A-Glance

Last Updated: Monday, April 20, 2026

Register via [MemberConnect](#)

Thursday, May 21, 2026

Track: Human Resources

The Employment Experience Through an Autism Lens (11:00-12:00)

After 28 years of supporting people with developmental disabilities, Steve was diagnosed with autism in 2014. Drawing on both professional and lived experience, he offers a powerful, practical perspective on autism. Participants will gain insight into how people with autism experience the world, building empathy and understanding of behavior. The session also explores sensory processing, communication, and social interaction, along with strategies to provide more effective, person-centered supports.

Presenter: Steve Maenle, Executive Director (Manahan)

Emerging Leaders (1:00-2:00)

The Perry DD Emerging Leaders program is a structured pathway designed to grow strong local leaders and strengthen community connections. Its 12 levels guide individuals from foundational leadership skills to advanced development, with the highest tier offering eligibility for DODD Superintendent certification. Through hands-on learning, mentorship, observation, facilitation training, and real-world leadership practice, the program emphasizes ability, inclusion, and integrity. This session will highlight how Emerging Leaders builds confident leaders who positively shape organizational culture and community impact.

Presenters: Shelly Lackey, Community Supports Department Director (MT Aloysius), David Couch, CEO (MT Aloysius)

Why SSAs Leave in the first 6 months; How to Fix It Before They Start (2:15-3:15)

Many early hires don't leave because they can't do the job, but because the job didn't meet expectations. Realistic Job Previews (RJPs) are an underused tool that helps candidates understand what the job is really like before they say yes. In this session, participants will learn how to build RJPs using input from current employees and exit insights, ensuring candidates hear what they need to know. We'll also explore how to partner with hiring managers to align on proper communication without slowing down hiring. Participants will apply what they learn in a hands-on exercise: creating an RJP for one of their own roles.

Presenter: Lora Fish, Founder (Fish Talent, LLC)

Whole Person Leadership (3:30-4:30) Hybrid

This session challenges the reductive model of leadership that treats people as productivity units and replaces it with a framework grounded in one foundational truth: you cannot lead what you do not see. Drawing on behavioral science, organizational psychology, and hard-won experience leading large, complex teams, this session explores what it actually means to lead the whole person. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of why whole person leadership is not a soft skill but a strategic one, and what shifts in mindset and practice are required to lead with that kind of depth, consistency, and earned trust.

Presenters: Dustin Dale, Founder & CEO, and Sarah Saunders, Executive Leadership Consultant (Beyond the Horizon Consulting)

Schedule At-A-Glance

Last Updated: Monday, April 20, 2026

Register via [MemberConnect](#)

Thursday, May 21, 2026

Track: Early Intervention

Better Together: Building Powerful EI Teams (11:00-12:00)

This course examines how service coordinators and providers can establish strong, collaborative partnerships to support families in Early Intervention (EI). Participants will gain practical strategies to enhance communication, clarify roles, and work together to develop cohesive, family-centered services that result in improved outcomes for families.

Presenters: Heather Knoble, Early Intervention Supervisor (Lorain DD), Kelly Ryba, Early Intervention Manager (Cuyahoga DD), Anne Sweeney, Speech-Language Pathologist Supervisor (Cuyahoga DD)

Coaching in the Childcare Context: Practical Strategies for Early Intervention Providers (1:00-2:00)

The childcare setting is a natural environment for children's development, making it a crucial context for EI. For children attending community childcare, EI providers must coach both families and childcare staff to achieve meaningful IFSP outcomes. This presentation highlights practical strategies for EI providers to coach effectively in childcare settings. Participants will explore methods to align classroom priorities with family goals, identify teachable moments, and foster collaboration. Attendees will also learn how to engage childcare staff in understanding EI roles and session objectives, and how to integrate these practices into daily routines.

Presenters: Kathy Lawton, Director of Early Childhood Education (Franklin DD), Troy Hunter, President & CEO (ElevateDD), Henry Matthews, Associate Director of Early Intervention (Franklin DD)

Connecting the Dots: How Ohio PROMISE can support Early Intervention Professionals and Families (2:15-3:15) Hybrid

Supporting young children with developmental concerns works best when everyone works together. This session will explore how EI professionals and OCALI's Early Childhood Center of Excellence can partner to coach early care and education professionals. Participants will gain information about Ohio PROMISE, the Early Childhood Center of Excellence, and identify strategies for effective collaboration.

Presenters: Jody Bailey, MEd-EdL, Early Development and Learning Specialist, and Brittany Prince, M.Ed., EIS, Early Childhood Family Support Manager (Center for the Young Child, OCALI)

Working Together: Assessment, Red Flags, and Specialist Collaboration (3:30-4:30)

This session will help service coordinators and early intervention providers recognize developmental red flags and diagnoses that signal the need for hearing and vision referrals, while building confidence in when and how to involve specialists early. Participants will strengthen their ability to complete the vision checklist and learn practical, family-centered strategies for introducing sensory services. Emphasis will be placed on timely, collaborative support to empower families and promote each child's full potential.

Presenters: Jennifer Remeis, Assistant Administrator, Early Learning Services Coordinator (Early Intervention Vision Services), Gretchen Hagarman, Hearing Services (Ohio Deaf and Blind Education Services)

Schedule At-A-Glance

Last Updated: Monday, April 20, 2026

Register via [MemberConnect](#)

Thursday, May 21, 2026

Track: SSA

Fixing Systems, Not People: Designing Work That Works Through a Neurodivergent Lens (11:00-12:00)

Many workplace challenges labeled as “performance issues” are actually system design issues. This session reframes neurodivergence as a signal to improve systems, not reduce expectations. Learn how ONI approaches communication, workflows, and accountability in ways that support different ways of thinking while strengthening performance across the board.

Presenters: Josh Young, Director of Operations and Clare Schloemer, Intake Specialist (Ohio Network for Innovation)

interRAI in Action: What Ohio’s New Assessment Means for SSAs (1:00-2:00) Hybrid

Join a panel of representatives from DODD, County/COG interRAI assessors, and workgroup members for an update on Ohio’s transition to the interRAI assessment. This panel discussion will cover implementation progress, timelines, and collaboration with Deloitte and stakeholders, while highlighting how interRAI will support SSAs with more comprehensive, consistent information to inform service planning. Attendees will also hear from newly trained assessors about their experiences and gain insight into how this tool will enhance person-centered outcomes and what supports SSAs will need moving forward.

Presenters: Janet Stephan, Development Administrator (DODD), TBD

Human Interaction Versus Technology: What Leaders Should Know (2:15-3:15)

This session explores a person’s lived experience to highlight why meaningful human interaction remains central to quality support. While technology and AI can enhance services, they must never replace accountability or connection. SSAs, investigators, DSPs, and others shape self-determination every day. Learn how rushed, overly complex, or documentation-driven interactions can lead to harmful outcomes—and how to refocus on truly understanding the person.

Presenter: Maria McWhirt, Owner (MPowerMe)

Advancing Community Integration (3:30-4:30)

High-quality day and employment services begin with strong assessment, person-centered planning, and ongoing monitoring. This session explores the critical role of the team in identifying meaningful outcomes and ensuring services align with each person’s vision for community life and employment. Participants will examine best practices from across the state and explore how collaboration, planning, and effective monitoring strengthen community participation, valued roles, and employment opportunities for people receiving services.

Presenter: Britta Hough, Community Life Engagement Project Manager (DODD)

Schedule At-A-Glance

Last Updated: Monday, April 20, 2026

Register via [MemberConnect](#)

Friday, May 22, 2026

Track: Health, Safety, and Wellness

AI Robots and Developmental Disabilities: Understanding the science of emotional attachment for coping with behavioral health disorders (10:00-11:00)

People with developmental disabilities are significantly more likely to experience behavioral health challenges, yet traditional supports don't always fit every situation. While research highlights the benefits of live animal companions, they aren't always safe or practical for everyone. This session explores the science behind emotional attachment to objects and examines how AI-powered companion technologies are emerging as an innovative alternative to support comfort, connection, and well-being.

Presenter: Tom Stevens, CEO (Tombot)

Special Considerations in Emergency Situations (11:15-12:15)

Learn how to develop inclusive, comprehensive emergency and safety plans that meet the needs of all members of your community. This session explores key elements such as evacuation planning, communication and notification strategies, and preparing staff to support people with varying needs, including those with disabilities. Participants will also learn how to share critical information with first responders to improve preparedness and ensure more effective, coordinated responses during emergencies.

Presenters: Ashley Terry, Fire Safety Educator (Ohio Department of Commerce)

Digital Boundaries - Using Virtual Reality for Safe Online Interactions (1:15-2:15)

Cuyahoga DD and Floreo VR partnered to develop a virtual reality module that teaches people with developmental disabilities how to recognize grooming behaviors and stay safe online. Through engaging activities, learners build decision-making and personal safety skills for digital and real-life situations. This session features a live demonstration of the Digital Boundaries module and insights from Cuyahoga DD and Floreo on implementation and how VR can support skill-building.

Presenter: Lori Mago, Director, Early Intervention and Therapy Services (Cuyahoga DD)

Connect: A Crisis Intervention Program for Everyone (2:30-3:30) Hybrid

Connect is a human-informed approach that helps people with disabilities and teams respond effectively to trauma, stress, and dysregulation. Using simple, practical strategies, it builds resilience, strengthens relationships, and supports emotional regulation in everyday interactions and moments of crisis. Grounded in felt safety, connection, and self-regulation, the framework includes tools like the Connect Thermostat and de-escalation strategies for anger. Participants will learn to use curiosity, stay grounded, and respond more effectively in challenging situations.

Presenter: T. Dean Swartz, Behavior Support Specialist, M.Ed., TRCC Trainer (The Academy for Professional Development)

Schedule At-A-Glance

Last Updated: Monday, April 20, 2026

Register via [MemberConnect](#)



Friday, May 22, 2026

Track: Children and Families

From Information to Action: Charting the LifeCourse Guided Implementation (10:00-11:00)

Charting the LifeCourse has been introduced across Ohio for nearly a decade, yet many still struggle with how to put it into practice. This session explores Guided Implementation—an approach designed to move from learning to action. Hear from county board professionals who have successfully integrated CtLC into their work, the impact it has had, and how it is helping them better support and empower people and families.

Presenters: Barbara Sapharas, Consultant (Family Resource Network of Ohio and Charting the LifeCourse Nexus at the University of Missouri, Kansas City), Tracey Manz, Project Manager (Family Resource Network of Ohio)

The Future is Now: Practical Approaches That Support Families of Transition Age Youth (11:15-12:15) Hybrid

Families of transitioning youth with disabilities have a unique opportunity to plan for a good future for their teens and young adults. Learn about two practical and sustainable approaches to customize resources, connect families, create community, and develop a long-term plan for a full adult life. Hamilton DD blends two models, the Future is Now and the Covenant of Support, to invite families and their youth to create an intentional path to a good life.

Presenters: Dawn Freudenberg, Director of Community Supports and Sean Bostic, Director of Service and Support Administration (Hamilton DD)

The Missing Piece: A Therapeutic Response to Supporting Families (1:15-2:15)

Through a multi-county grant initiative, Galperin Autism Consulting delivers telehealth-based counseling, education, and support to caregivers of children and young adults with intense behaviors at risk of out-of-home placement. This session highlights how the program strengthens caregiver confidence, stability, and skills—leading to safer home environments and high rates of individuals remaining successfully in their homes.

Presenters: Tom Galperin, Owner (Galperin Autism Consulting), Kimi Remenyi, Behavior Support Manager (Hamilton DD), Lori Watkins, Director of Behavioral Health Services (Clermont DD)

Respite Matters: Supporting Families of Individuals with Disabilities (2:30-3:30)

Respite services are critical to helping families sustain care and support at home. This session features a parent perspective on the real challenges families face when respite is limited, and the meaningful impact even small supports can provide. Learn how to access respite through waivers, explore practical navigation strategies, and discover creative ways families build support networks. Presenters will also highlight key resources, including Ohio PROMISE and local initiatives that expand access to care.

Presenters: Erin Simmons, Parent Mentor (North Central Ohio ESC) and OACB Trustee, Troy Hunter, President & CEO (Elevate DD), Kathy Lawton, Director of Early Childhood Education (Franklin DD), Jeff Pattison, Assistant Director of Service Coordination (Franklin DD) Anya M. Froelich, PsyD, BCBA, COBA, Psychology Supervisor (Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders at Nationwide Children's Hospital)

Schedule At-A-Glance

Last Updated: Monday, April 20, 2026

Register via [MemberConnect](#)

Friday, May 22, 2026

Track: Communications

Unlocking Your Docs: Practical Document Accessibility for Everyday Authors (10:00-11:00)

Hybrid

Many organizations create documents that are difficult to use with assistive technologies. This session explores practical ways to build accessibility from the start. Participants will learn how to structure content, write effective alternative text, and maintain accessibility when converting between formats. Using tools like Word, PowerPoint, Google Docs, Canva, InDesign, and Acrobat, we'll highlight common pitfalls and walk through an accessible document workflow—from creation to final delivery.

Presenter: James Warnken, Owner (Clear Vision Marketing and Media)

Applying What We've Learned: Adapting Your Marketing Plan for 2026 (11:15-12:15)

Marketing is changing quickly—and so are the expectations of the communities you serve. This session highlights what we've learned so far and how those insights can help you adapt your approach to stay visible, trusted, and impactful in 2026. The session will cover AI Search: What You Need to Be Doing to Keep Ranking, Social Media Trends: What's Actually Creating Engagement, and The Return of "Good Old-Fashioned" Marketing.

Presenter: Carol Schwiebert, Account Manager and Barb Burgie, Owner (Burgie Mediafusion)

Building Trust and Accountability to Strengthen Organizational Sustainability (1:15-2:15)

Trust and accountability are essential to a strong organizational culture, yet they can be difficult to build and sustain. In this interactive session, M.J. Clark explores how everyday behaviors shape trust and how accountability gaps impact teams and contribute to burnout. Participants will leave with practical strategies to understand the core elements of trust and accountability, recognize behaviors that build or break trust and identify actionable ways to reduce burnout by fostering a culture grounded in trust and shared responsibility.

Presenter: M.J. Clark, M.A., APR, Fellow PRSA, Vice President (Integrated Leadership Systems)

ADHD and Me: Sustaining Attention and Influence During Difficult Conversations (2:30-3:30)

In a world of constant distraction, earning attention—and trust—is more challenging than ever. This session explores why communication gaps are growing and how to adapt. Drawing on neuroscience and real-world strategies, you'll learn how to cut through noise, handle tough questions, and build understanding in polarized environments. Walk away with practical tools to strengthen messaging, connect with your audience, and communicate with clarity and confidence.

Presenter: Dan Farkas, Visiting Professor (Ohio University)

Schedule At-A-Glance

Last Updated: Monday, April 20, 2026

Register via [MemberConnect](#)

Friday, May 22, 2026

Track: Business Managers

Revenue Integrity: Strategies to Optimize Billing (10:00-11:00)

Building a “data-first” culture goes beyond compliance—it positions data as a strategic asset. This session explores how clean, reliable, and standardized data can strengthen decision-making and maximize revenue. Learn how improving data quality supports unit-based billing, including MAC and other funding streams, and discover practical steps to align your organization around data that drives both financial performance and better outcomes.

Presenters: Ashley Jackson, Assistant Director, and Alyssa Fleming, Data & Analytics Manager (Office of Budget and Administration, Hamilton DD)

Cost Report Workbook Updates (11:15-12:15)

Gain a clear understanding of the transition from the original County Board Cost Report (CBCR) to the new web-based version. This session will walk through how data is captured, how costs and indirect allocations are calculated, and why accurate allocation statistics matter. Presenters will also break down key process flows to help you confidently navigate and apply the updated reporting system.

Presenter: Sam S. Jeyandran, Senior Fiscal Manager (DODD Division of Fiscal Administration)

TCM Updates: Part Two (1:15-2:15) Hybrid

Continue the conversation from the April 8 TCM Updates meeting with a focus on turning updates into action. This session will highlight next steps in coming updates and provide practical strategies county boards can replicate, including how to leverage existing technology to improve tracking, monitoring, and overall efficiency. Walk away with ideas to strengthen overall processes and procedures to improve current practice.

Presenters: Jennifer Meadows, Medicaid and SSA Director (Hamilton DD), Neil Townsend, Director of Budget and Administrative Operations (Hamilton DD), and Amanda Seigle, Director of Individual and Family Support (Auglaize DD)

Maximizing Resources and Increasing Efficiencies by Sharing Services (2:30-3:30)

As county boards plan for long-term sustainability, shared services continue to emerge as a key strategy. This session brings together county board leaders who are actively sharing services to explore what it looks like in practice. Learn which functions are best suited for streamlining, how collaboration can strengthen supports and what it takes—operationally and programmatically—to make shared services work.

Presenters: Larry Gray, Superintendent (Fayette/Highland DD), Gloria Llewellyn, Superintendent (BHN Alliance), Steve Oster, Superintendent (Knox/Coshocton DD), Leigh Anne Wenning, Superintendent (Champaign/Shelby DD)

Schedule At-A-Glance

Last Updated: Monday, April 20, 2026

Register via [MemberConnect](#)