

News from the South Dakota Department of Human Services

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Rechtenbaugh Named Interim Secretary

Governor Noem has named Shawnie Rechtenbaugh interim secretary of the Department of Human Services. Rechtenbaugh, a Mobridge native, and was the interim secretary for the South Dakota Department of Public Safety. Before taking on that role, she served in varying capacities at Public Safety, including as deputy secretary. Rechtenbaugh was formerly state prevention coordinator for the South Dakota Department of Human Services and Social Services where she coordinated grant dollars for the implementation of evidence-based programming to reduce underage drinking and substance abuse. Rechtenbaugh has also specialized in providing in-home mental health case management services for youth, adults, and families, and has worked with adult mental health.



What is a Community Living Home?

A community living home is a residential service where individuals can receive long term services and supports in a small, licensed home through the Home and Community-Based Options and Person Centered Excellence (HOPE) Waiver. This service provides waiver participants with the opportunity to remain living in the community in the most integrated setting while receiving necessary care and supervision. It also provides an alternative long term care option to individuals who meet Nursing Facility level of care and whose needs can be met in the community.

Community living homes may be owned, leased, or rented by a provider and must be licensed by the South Dakota Department of Health (Administrative Rules of South Dakota 44:82). Providers must ensure the basic health and safety needs of waiver participants are met 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The maximum number of participants receiving community living home services in any one residence may not exceed four people. For information on how to become a community living home provider contact Misty Black Bear with the Division of Long Term Services and Supports at 605-773-3656.

Business Specialist Column

The Division of Rehabilitation Services will begin featuring testimonials of South Dakotans with disabilities that have achieved successful outcomes throughout various editions of the Department of Human Services External Newsletter. It's important to recognize the perseverance and outcomes of individuals' paths as they achieve employment or other successes within their lives.

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Carolyn Raville's Story: Persevering Through Limitations Towards Employment

Carolyn Raville keeps things simple. Her advice to anyone wanting to be successfully employed is: "Get yourself to work. Learn the job. Always do the best you can. Stay positive. And most of all SMILE!"

These are words that she lives by each day when going to a job that she truly enjoys. Carolyn lights up when talking about her journey to becoming a full-time employee at the Southside Walmart in Sioux Falls. To fully understand her story, you would need to go back to around the year 2000. This is when Carolyn started to feel like she had "butterflies fluttering in her legs." What was happening was the onset of multiple sclerosis (MS).



Due to this progressive condition, Carolyn eventually needed a walker for mobility reasons. She also struggled with driving as her foot was too weak to move from the gas pedal to the brake. She came to Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) in 2015, requesting assistance with seeking employment that would be compatible with her functional limitations.

Carolyn has continued to feel positive results of working. When asked about what makes her job better, she's quick to answer: "the 3-tiered cart!" Even though it is an accommodation that was provided to specifically help her, her co-workers are also benefiting it by using it. With the assistance of DakotaLink, DRS researched the cart and purchased it. It was approved ahead of time by Walmart management and has allowed her to complete her job tasks more efficiently.

Another thing that Carolyn says added to her success, are the hand-controls that DRS helped her with getting installed on her vehicle. Because of her MS, she was also encountering more difficulty with driving. With the assistance of her VR counselor and DRS rehabilitation engineer, she completed an evaluation through Sanford Occupational Therapy. DRS ordered the hand-controls and then contracted with R&R Mobility Conversions, Inc. to install them on her vehicle. Carolyn then received training, so she could use the controls effectively. With the strength in her hands and the control knobs on her steering wheel, she feels safe and secure when driving.

Carolyn was also quick to point out the no-skid shoes that she was able to purchase through DRS's assistance. They have lasted two years and have really help her to ambulate throughout the deli. Carolyn says she was also fortunate to have benefits specialist, Rhonda Erickson, help her navigate and get accepted for the Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD) program. When she began working at Walmart she was employed on a part-time basis in which she needed medical insurance. Under MAWD, Carolyn receives Medicaid insurance to cover on-going medical expenses. Even though she has been promoted to full-time hours, Carolyn continues to receive MAWD and it saves her a great deal on monthly insurance premiums.

But most important, Carolyn just enjoys working. Visiting with the deli customers when getting their orders and problem solving with co-workers is what she likes best. In her spare time, Carolyn exercises in the therapeutic pool at Bethany Meadows and spends time with her five adult children and six beautiful grandchildren.

It is evident that she has formed many meaningful relationships with her co-workers and customers alike when walking around Walmart with her. Walmart is one fortunate company to have Carolyn on their team!

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