



TENNCARE UPDATE

TAHC 2026 Fall Conference | May 5, 2025

Introduction

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Introduction – LTSS Senior Leadership Team

Katie Evans
Director of LTSS

Meghann Galland
Deputy Director of LTSS

Lindsey Smith
Executive Administrative Assistant

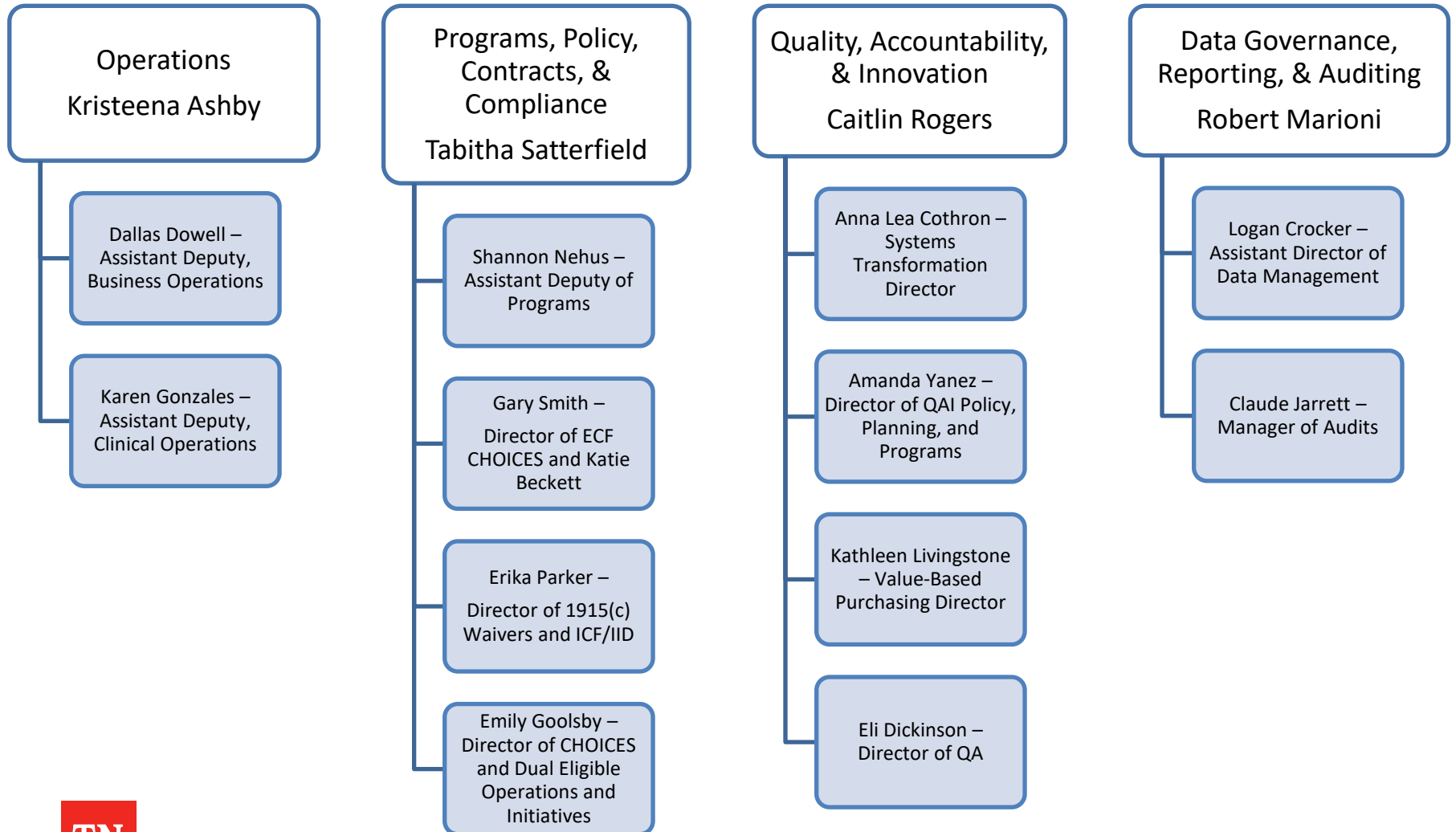
LTSS Operations
*Kristeena Ashby – Deputy Director of
LTSS Operations*

**Data Governance, Reporting, and
Auditing**
*Robert Marioni – Deputy Director of
LTSS Data Management and Auditing*

**Quality, Accountability, and
Innovation**
*Caitlin Rogers – Deputy Director of
LTSS Quality and Innovation*

**Programs, Policy, Contracts, and
Compliance**
*Tabitha Satterfield – Deputy Director of
LTSS Programs and Contracts*

LTSS Team Leads



Roadmap for Discussion

- NCI-AD Results
- Updates:
 - Employment Updates
 - Open Model EVV Update
 - Self-Direction of Healthcare Tasks Update
- HCBS Access Rules Implementation and Updates
- Waiting Lists and Service Initiation Delays
- Shared Savings:
 - Workforce Metrics and E-Badge Updates
 - Capacity Building Funding Opportunity
- Fiscal Year 2027 Budget
- Open Discussion and TAHC Topics

CHOICES Program – Metrics and Evaluation

TennCare utilizes the NCI-AD survey tool as a measure of member satisfaction in the CHOICES program (includes PACE as of 2025 reporting).

- **LTSS goals outlined in the TennCare Quality Strategy**
 - **Ensure LTSS members receive person centered care (NCI-AD)**
 - 2024-2025: 99% reported reflection of choices/preferences
 - **Increased** from 98% in 2023-2024
 - **Maintain or improve quality of life for LTSS members (NCI-AD)**
 - 96% in HCBS reported LTSS helps them live the life they want
 - » **Increased** from 95% in 2023-2024
 - 90% in NF reported LTSS helps them live the life they want
 - » **Increased** from 85% in 2023-2024

CHOICES Program – Metrics and Evaluation

- **Increase percentage of members who report their paid support staff show up and leave when they are supposed to (NCI-AD)**
 - 2024-2025:
 - 90% in HCBS reported staff show up and leave when they are supposed to
 - » **Increased** from 86% in 2023-2024
 - 73% in NF reported staff show up and leave when they are supposed to
 - » **Decreased** from 77% in 2023-2024

CHOICES Program – Metrics and Evaluation

- **Increase the percentage of older adults and adults with physical disabilities who report being able to do things outside of their homes as much as they want to (NCI-AD)**
 - 2024-2025:
 - 62% in HCBS reported doing things outside of their home as much as they want.
 - » **Decreased** from 63% in 2023-2024
 - 56% in NF reported doing things outside of their home as much as they want.
 - » **Increased** from 52% in 2023-2024

* TennCare Quality Strategy here: <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tenncare/documents/2025QualityStrategy.pdf>

Employment Update

Employment

- **27 CHOICES Members Working**
- **Average wage: \$16.50/hour**
- **Average hours/Week: 17.94**
- **9 Members** with at least one employment service authorized, 7 were Benefits Counseling
- Inclusive of employment services to assist members in deciding if they may want to work or not

Service Utilization Insight:

Benefits Counseling = 63.4% of all employment services authorized (July-December)

Have members that are interested in employment or want to know more about employment services?

- They can reach out to their MCO Care Coordinator

Employment Update

Recently updated and aligned information regarding training requirements for LTSS Employment Staff and Employment Supervisors across all HCBS programs (CHOICES, ECF CHOICES, and 1915(c)).

- New training options for Job Developers, Job Coaches, and Supervisors;
- Updates to core employment staff requirements; and
- New compliance expectations for Employment Supervisors and Benefits Counseling providers.

Providers can find the LTSS Training Protocol for the Training Requirements for 1915(c) Waiver, Employment and Community First CHOICES, CHOICES, and Katie Beckett Providers on the TennCare website:

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tenncare/documents/LTSSTrainingOperationalProtocolSeptember2025.pdf>

Visit the Department of Disability and Aging website, <https://www.tn.gov/disability-and-aging/about-us/divisions/training.html>, for Employment staff training requirements.



Employment First Accreditation

TennCare and DDA, in partnership with Shift Tech First and Vanderbilt University, wrapped up the third year of developing an Employment First Education & Accreditation program to enhance statewide organizational capacity and designate provider agencies as Employment First leaders.

Since the launch of the training program:

- 141 learners have completed the Employment First Fundamentals course
- 71 learners have completed the Employment First Job Coach course
- 50 learners have completed the Employment First Job Developer course
- 37 learners have completed the Employment First Leadership course

The Employment First Job Developer Course is ACRE and NADSP certified.

The pilot of the Employment First Self-Advocate coursework has concluded and will be available to the public later this year.

Open Model EVV Update

- Went live August 1, 2025
- TennCare expected a drop in EVV compliance post go live. While percentage did drop, it was less than expected (around 85%) and has trended upward each month, with a projected 90% compliance rate return in coming months.
- Continue asking questions and share feedback.

Thank you for all the hard work that went into making implementation successful!

Self-Direction of Healthcare Tasks

- Anticipated implementation date of July 1, 2026
- Information forthcoming regarding PSSA licensure
- Updated training will be shared with providers
- MCOs will be sending out information on how providers can participate in SDHCT
- Protocol and FAQ to be posted on TennCare's website

HCBS Access Rule: 2026 Key Dates

- July 1, 2026
 - FFS payment rates must be posted
 - Tennessee is already in compliance
 - States must have clear rules for Grievance Systems for FFS (CMS has indicated this will not be enforced on July 1, 2026)
 - Tennessee will be in compliance July 1, 2026
 - States must report to CMS their readiness to comply with payment adequacy reporting (percentage of total payments spent on direct care worker compensation)
 - Tennessee will be transitioning to a new survey tool to meet this requirement

HCBS Access Rule: 2027 Key Dates

- July 9, 2027
 - States must ensure their incident management protocols, policies, and procedures contain certain mandatory components
 - States must ensure and report that person-centered service plans are reassessed per the frequency established by CMS
 - States must develop and implement a process for reporting wait list data and information to CMS
 - States must ensure the availability and accessibility of specified Medicaid data and information on their websites

HCBS Access Rule: 2028 Key Dates

- July 9, 2028
 - States must begin payment adequacy reporting (percentage of total payments spent on direct care work compensation) for homemaker, home health aide, personal care, and habilitation services

HCBS Access Rule: 2029-2030 Key Dates

- January 1, 2029
 - Interested Party Advisory Group-change in CMS guidance to require states to convene group by January 1, 2029 (indications are this will be removed as requirement due to MAC and BAC)
 - July 9, 2029
 - States must implement electronic incident management system
 - July 9, 2030
 - States must ensure compliance with payment adequacy minimum performance standards (80/20 rule)
- NOTE: We expect changes to this rule prior to implementation date.

Has the needle moved - CHOICES

- TennCare perspective: Multiple factors are potentially impacting service initiation and provider availability
 - Average of 3% of CHOICES members had delays in service initiation or gaps in services of 30 or more days in February 2020. This increased to 9% during 2021-2022. **We are down to 1.58% as of December 2025!**
 - The top three services delayed for the last quarter were Personal Care, Meals, and PERS
 - Currently, there is no waiting list for CHOICES Group 3 due to 2,000 slots being opened for those who do not receive SSI. Slots were available beginning July 1, 2025. Approximately 1,400 remain and due to the expected turnover in these slots, we anticipate these being sufficient for at least several years.

Has the needle moved – ECF CHOICES

- Average of 9% of ECF CHOICES members had delays or gaps of 30 or more days in February 2020, which increased to over 20% in 2021-2022. ECF CHOICES had an increase of 2,300 members during this time as well and decreases in service initiation is slower in this population, likely in part due to the increasing population. **As of December 2025, we are seeing SI delays of 7.83%.**
- Beginning July 1, 2,500 ECF slots were available to help clear the referral list. Those slots are being released in a manner to best support members.
- NOTE: this is indicative of members with at least one SI delay. They are receiving Medicaid benefits, including physical health and behavioral health care and now access to dental.

Workforce Development for LTSS

2025-26 HCBS Capacity Building Funding Opportunity

After a rigorous joint review process, TennCare's managed care organizations (MCOs) have selected 25 providers to receive funding awards.

Projects focused on:

- Expansion of services across the state, including CLS, CISS, ILST, employment supports, respite, personal assistance, transportation, and enabling technology— with particular focus in rural regions.
- Significant investment in workforce development, training, and capacity building to improve service quality, reduce wait times, and support specialized needs such as behavioral health and high-acuity members.
- Strengthening organizational infrastructure through accreditation efforts (CARF, COA, CQL), upgraded technology systems, improved documentation platforms, and enhanced EHR or EVV compliance.
- Efforts to advance member experience through improved engagement opportunities, expanded behavioral supports, safety upgrades, and more integrated care management approaches.
- Broad focus on enhancing care continuity and provider readiness by expanding provider networks, establishing new service capabilities, and modernizing operations to better meet the needs of HCBS members.

Workforce Development – NADSP E-badge

E-Badge Academy offers participants the opportunity to earn national certification through electronic badges that showcase mastery of essential knowledge, skills, and values critical to their roles as DSPs/Paid Caregivers.

E-Badge is available to all HCBS Providers (i.e. CHOICES, ECF, and 1915(c)) and recently expanded to Consumer Direction.

- During CY 2024:
 - 349 DSP's and 57 FLS's participated from 39 provider agencies
 - over 400 certifications were achieved
- During CY 2025:
 - 545 DSP's and 129 FLS's participating from 86 provider agencies
 - 280 certifications were achieved
 - \$1,236,600 incentives paid since January 2024

 **Tennessee is #2 in the Nation with number of certifications achieved** 

Workforce Development – NADSP E-Badge

- Recognition and Value
 - 98% of DSPs reported their organization recognized and valued efforts to enhance skills through E-Badge.
- Service Quality
 - 99% of DSPs reported the E-Badge program improved their ability to deliver better care to TennCare members.
- Providers Perceptions
 - 67% perceived the program as having a positive impact on retention.
 - 61% perceived the program as having a positive impact on service quality.
 - 64% viewed the program as positively influencing job satisfaction among employees.

Fiscal Year 2027 Budget

- 300 ECF CHOICES crisis slots
- Home delivered meals increase

TAHC Questions





THANK YOU