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Sign Nexus

ABLE

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>> Hi everyone, if you have signed and to learn about your ABLE account. You are in the right place. We will be starting in a few minutes.

>> Hello, you are two minutes way of learning of creative ways that you can contribute to your ABLE account. We have a lot of people who are logging in right now. We're just waiting two minutes to give people a chance to get settled and comfortable. We will begin in two minutes.

>>JODY ELLIS: Welcome everyone to ABLE resource Center and vessels partnership. In presenting a webinar for maximizing your ABLE account. You will learn creative ways to contribute to your account today. Let me give you a couple of tips for listening to the webinar. The audio for today's meeting can be accessed using computer audio or by calling and by telephone if you select computer audio please make sure your speakers are turned on or your headphones are plugged in. If you do not have sound capabilities on your computer or if you prefer to listen by phone dial 1929 205-6099 the meeting code is 896 3562 9380. Today we are providing captioning and American sign language interpretation. The captions can be found by clicking on the closed captions icon in your zoom controls at the bottom of the screen. If you do not see the captions after clicking the button, or at the ASL interpreters on the screen, please alert the host via the Q&A box. For questions and technical assistance, questions: Please place your questions in the Q&A box during the webinar. If your question is not answered or if you are listening by phone or Facebook live, please email info@ablenrc.org or visit our website double NRC.org and contact us of our resources do not provide the answer you're seeking. For technical issues, if you have difficulties please email Abel at NRC.org enter webinar help on the subject line. With the logistics covered, let's begin. I am the director of the ABLE national resource center. The ABLE national resource center is the comprehensible comprehensive and reliable information about ABLE programs and activities. We were founded in 2015. We are managed by the national disability Institute. Our curated library is a go to source for information for individuals and families, service providers, employers and other support professionals. Today I am joined by a team we have two project coordinators Lexi and Cheyenne. They are here behind-the-scenes to make your experience today as smooth as possible. I am also joined by subject matter experts Lori and Marlene. With that said I would like now to introduce David, David Bell Vice President of Vestwell savings if you could introduce that your team.

>>DAVID BELL: They give rhodium David Bell Vice President at Vestwell stays savings. Just so you know Vestwell is a company with the sole focus of helping to close the savings gap. We offer opportunity almost across the board. Today we are focused obviously on ABLE and what Vestwell does is it helps the state that administer the plans for to help them as their program manager. We have 19 ABLE plans that we help serve as program manager for federal get into more detail later. We're excited to be here with you. Help discuss ways to maximize these ABLE savings plans with me have two individuals, Jim and Daniel both from Vestwell as well. They been working on ABLE plans for a long time. There helping to answer some of the questions in the Q&A. Thank you Jody.

>>JODY ELLIS: Great. So, for today's agenda we will be covering the benefits of a ABLE account. We will be providing some strategies for maximizing your contribution options. These include standard contributions as well as ABLE to work contributions. Automatic payroll deposits, savings boosters, gifting, and other creative options. At the end time permitting we also have a question and answer period. So, let's get started benefits of ABLE. So, first, ABLE, ABLE is used for a lot of different acronyms for today's purposes ABLE and RC and all of our space ABLE is achieving a better life experience. This act allows millions of eligible people with disabilities the chance to save and invest money without paying taxes on investment earnings. It is a great tool for financial independence, because it also allows ABLE account owners who receive needs tested benefits so examples of some need tested benefits one of the most common ones is supplemental security income. Could be a Medicaid. Could be a HUD Housing and Urban Development programs. Could be snap. Medicaid, FAFSA. It allows people who receive these needs based benefits to save more than the savings limit. Right now and 2024, the savings limit for SSI is $2000 annually for a single person or $3000 annually for someone who is married. So, account honors you can save more than this amount and still get the benefits that you need. Additionally, the savings can be spent on things that will help you stay healthy. Help you be independent and have a good life. This includes many different categories, but some of them are basic needs. This does include food. It could include transportation, housing, education, wellness and health. There is a legal fees, a few different domains. They are called qualified disability expenses. The other great thing about a ABLE account is anyone can deposit money into the account not just the account holder. So, why save in a ABLE account? Obviously, if you receive supplemental security income. You can save up to $100,000 in this account. Because the hundred thousand dollars is disregarded as a resource. So, if you could if you have a ABLE account you could say potentially hundred thousand dollars versus the $2000 asset limit now in a regular savings account. Any amount of a ABLE savings plan up to the balance limit so the plan balance limit is cumulatively. That amount does not affect eligibility for your other public benefits. So, someone had already listed whether it is had, snap, Medicaid, Medicare, SSDI, that amount in your savings will not be impacted by these other public benefit programs. You can make direct contributions into a ABLE account from family, from friends, from a special needs trust a pooled trust you could roll over a 529 college savings plan. These do not count as income by these federally funded means of benefit programs. A ABLE account savings can help cover the many extra costs that are assisted with living with a disability. It could also be used as an alternative to a retirement account if you do not have an employer-sponsored plan. So, next there is a lot of benefits about ABLE accounts. I will cover a few of the features, but these accounts are very convenient to open. They can be opened online 24 seven. Their low to no cost fees to open. Those states that these range from zero dollars to $50. To open an account with control, the funds are directly controlled by the account owner. Unless there is an authorized representative either legally or otherwise designated. These accounts are available nationwide. So, there are actually four states right now but do not have a state ABLE plan. But there are I believe 31 different plans right now to select from that do allow out-of-state residents to enroll in their plan. So, even if you do live in one of the states. You do still have opportunities to open up one ABLE account. These are available nationwide. Also there is transferability. So, you do have the ability to change to a different ABLE plan. So, if you opened up a plan in one state for one reason or another. You are finding other account features they think of the more advantageous to your situation. You would be able to transfer that ABLE account to a different plan. There are lots of options. David will be covering those options in more detail. There is savings options. There are checking options. There is investment options. Lastly, I just want to talk about how flexible a ABLE account is. It is flexible for qualified disability expenses. I sort of mentioned already wills large general domains of expenses. So, it covers a wide range. They could be used in all stages of life. You can use various methods to pay for these qualified disability expenses. It might be using a debit card pretty could be using a check account. They could be using a direct transfer of funds. So there really is a lot of flexibility built into these programs. So, next I will ask David come on the screen. He will be talking to you specifically about some ways you can maximize your contributions.

>>DAVID BELL: Thank you Jody and thank you everybody. Jody did a great job of expressing how important ABLE plans are for individuals with disabilities and their families they are vital. Incredibly for people to be able to save money above and beyond some of the means tested asset limits attached to so many of the benefits you deserve and utilize on a daily basis. ABLE accounts are also great places for you to spend your money. You want to be clear. Today we are focusing on maximizing your savings fed maximizing those contributions. Please do know that able accounts are there for you to save your money but also spend your money. Today though, let's focus on maximizing those contributions. Once again I'm David Bell. I do work for Vestwell. One of the program managers for a number of different ABLE plans. I'm going to go over which of the ABLE account there. Highlights of the importance they we are working hard to make sure this conversation today is applicable for all ABLE plans, regardless whether were the program manager or not. Like I said, we work with 19 different state ABLE plans for just to give you an idea this would be Washington's ABLE plan Oregon ABLE, Hawaii ABLE. Cal ABLE. We work for Marilyn ABLE, Alabama ABLE Florida's plan is called ABLE United. We also work with the stable plans for that is a partnership of 12 different states that have come together under Ohio's stable program to offer ABLE plans for those states. So, those of the 19 states we work with. Again though, we are trying to make sure this presentation is open for you whether you are working with one of the plans that we are a program management four. Whether you have a ABLE plan in a different state or whether you have not yet opened a ABLE plan. You're interested in the information seeking feel comfortable moving forward in this window as mentioned before, I did see some questions come up from individuals that were participating about whether they have to use their states plan or they can choose another. Jody just mentioned it. There are quite a few ABLE plans allow people outside of their state to use that ABLE plan. I like to suggest that people always look at their own states ABLE plan first grade at times, there benefits that come with using your states plan. There might be another tax benefit on contributions. There could be some resources in such available for that state to take a look at your states ABLE plan first. But no there are many available for you. I think we should dive in and start talking about maximizing our savings opportunities. So, on this

really what were focus on here is the very first thing that I think a saver and account owner or someone who is supporting the account owner should do to really learn to maximize her ABLE plan holistically. Get comfortable and familiar with the saver platform. Whether is our plans or maybe another states plans. There is going to be some sort of an online savings platform available to you. Right here were taking a look at Marilyn ABLE's platform. This looks very similar to the other states that we work with. Of course, there will be some things you expect to see, right? You should be able to see how much money have I saved? What is your total balance? You should be able to see where you're saving your money. For those of you who are not familiar when you're choosing to save what the ABLE plan you are able to select multiple for savings and investing pretty might choose one maybe you want to choose more than one? In this case, right here looks like this individual which is this a test account were not giving up anybody's sensitive data. This individual saving fully in FDIC insured cash option. Maybe there saving the cash option one the investment options, because they have different savings goals. That is okay. You have the opportunity. You can see that right in your savings platform. But things that you may not think of any really should discover all of the other tools that come with these savings platforms. This is the place or you can go and identify all the ways you can contribute money. There is quite a few. We will focus entire presentation on this. There will be ways you can pull money out of your account. Multiple ways to do that here for our plans we offer people the opportunity to set savings goals. That is really important, right? And might be a smaller goal for something you're looking to spend money on in a couple of months. It could be a wider savings goals. If you're saving money for a down payment on a house or a new vehicle. For upgrades to the vehicle we allow you to cite your savings goal break here. You can adjust as well. Right in the savings platform. Gifting pages. What better way to save money then have other people help you. You can set up a manager gifting pages in your online portal. Ability to use your money easily wherever you go. All of these things and much much more can be found right in the intuitive saver platform 10 make sure you save some time regardless of whatever saving plan you use to get familiar with and truly understand the opportunities inside of that platform. We will move on and start talking about contributions maximizing contributions. In order for us to do this there's two different type of contributions when it comes to ABLE plans. This is money that you encounter put into the represented put into it could be family and friends. It could be anyone that would go into the standard contribution bucket if it's money coming in. With the standard contribution the rules around ABLE accounts nationally there is a limit on how much you can put in right now for 2024 you can only put an $18,000 of standard contributions into your ABLE plan. This $18,000 is really tied to the annual gift tax exclusion. So, as I goes up, the annual contribution for ABLE will go up as well. Your plan will keep you posted on what your current contribution plan is presented contributions. There is another type of contribution. We will move forward and take a look at ABLE to work contributions. If an account owner is working and does not contribute to their employee sponsored plan they can contribute above and beyond the standard contribution limit. How that works is they can put in the standard contribution limit of 18,000, but if they are working. They can put in their earnings up to $14,580 for the 48 continuous states and District of Columbia. There is a higher amount as you can see on the slide for Hawaii. Which is $16,770. There is also higher amount for Alaska and a $2210. What does this mean? Basically if I'm an account owner and I am working I can at the standard contribution limit, but I am able to go higher than that because I'm working and not putting money into my employer's retirement program. This is pretty cool. For instance, I live in Oregon. I am part of that 48 continuous states. So, basically if I was earning less I was earning $15,000 for that year. I was able to put as much of my earnings and then hit my standard. I could put in $32,580 each year into my ABLE plan trade is 18,000 plus as additional $14,580. I can put in all of my earnings. My Is either my total earnings of the amounts you see on the screen. Pretty exciting. This is a great tool for individuals who are working to make sure they have the opportunity to maximize their savings opportunity. It is okay if you don't max out your ABLE plan to ABLE plans are there and available for you regardless of how you can put into the plan. Since we are talking about this today I thought this would be a good one to mention. The last thing I would like to mention on ABLE to work contributions is that it works maybe slightly differently depending on the ABLE plan that you use. Here Vestwell all the states that we work with. We allow you each time you put a contribution into your ABLE plan you are allowed to designate that is standard contribution or ABLE to work contribution. I know it is really small on this screen, but the middle top box you're sitting in the small dashboard on the right that shows you all your contributions for the year. The top line is the standard contribution. The bottom is the ABLE to work contribution. You can easily see how much you are putting in per contribution type. How much you have left per contribution type. It is okay if you're working with another ABLE plan that uses a little bit differently. Just find out from your ABLE plan how the ABLE to work plan is utilized. I think is important for us to also talk about the easiest of ways to kind of set up these contributions into a plan. How much easier can it be than if it is automatic? You set it and forget it. People say that all the time. I would like to say set and forget it, but actually don't forget it. We want you to remember your continuously contributing to your ABLE account. Again, right online if you go into your system right here we are looking at ABLE United system. Someone could go and he was an account owner you can go and set a specific amount that you want to have come from your banking account or credit union account. Goes into your ABLE account on a regular basis. Let's say it once a month. Every month on the physical the month you get to decide which day automatically will move money from your bank or credit union into your ABLE account. That constant flow of money is coming in. You don't want to forget it. There's opportunities if you may want to increase that amount. You might want to decrease it for a short amount of time. Either way you can set it up so it is automatically happening all the time. It is an important way for us to think through maximizing is setting a set amount even if you have automatic contribution set up it does not mean you cannot put in additional money. This is one of the ways in which you could do it. I think another important part for us to discuss especially since we are talked about work payroll direct deposit. He had less well for the sake of today make sure you go into the system and see the other incredible opportunities we have for automatic money coming into your able account. If you are working or authorized representative is working you can have that money goes straight into your able account Fred that is okay can still set up that payroll direct deposit. What payroll direct deposit means is automatically some of your earnings from your company will go straight into your ABLE account. Depending on how much you want to have going there. You can set that up so automatically happens. It is really easy to establish. You go right online you get the set up process all set up. It was a little bit of information you pass on to your employer. Then you're done. Automatically every time you get paid the amount you want to get moves right into your ABLE account is direct deposited. Again, perfect way to maximize your savings opportunities or contributions. You can go in and change this at any time. You can adjust it put a temporary stop on it. This is a great way to maximize that savings. This next one I said I was going to try to be very broad for all savings programs across the nation I am trying hard to do that this one is very specific to the states I have listed before the one were vast well is the program manager I am bringing up savings managers so I can tell you about this exciting feature part of the Vestwell plan for them also bring it up because there might be very unique and very creative ways for your other ABLE accounts as well. Make sure you are diving into your with savings posters this is pretty cool this is a brand-new feature we are launching for all of our ABLE plans and some of our savings plans this summer. What does this mean what is the savings booster? We are going to start by launching the weather booster part of savings posters and the launch additional ones down the road. When savings posters are the weather booster is are launched. Here is what this will allow people to do. It is a fun creative really engaging way to put small amounts of money into your ABLE account. What you do is select an amount. It could be a really small amount. It could be one dollar to dollar five dollars you decide you select where that money is coming from. You link it to your bank account or credit account. Then select a ZIP Code. Any time any day that there is a rain and not ZIP Code we will automatically move that dollar that two dollars whatever the amount is set will move it to your able account talk about our rainy day fund. It is a fun and engaging way if you are the account owner or a parent of a child you can work with them and have fun setting it up for the micro deposits into your ABLE account. Those can add up. That is a fun way to engage with their ABLE account. One way to maximize your savings potential. Again these are very specific to Vestwell managed plans. Please look for your ABLE plan if you're not working with only a Vestwell plan see if there is an exciting creative way to be able to save through that plan as well. I would say I mentioned it before. One of the best ways to save for the future is by having other people do it for you. We have all enjoyed having other people give us money for birthdays, holidays or to help us with the savings goal. You can do that with ABLE as well. All ABLE plans that I know about have some sort of a gifting function included. Make sure you are utilizing it. Here we are looking at Hawaii's ABLE gifting page beta looks very similar for the other plans they were cooked as well. Basically this is how works. Which randomly allow you to set up a gifting page. So, you as the account owner gets to set up a page that looks, feels, sounds like you. You can adjust it for your own personality. You said that page. An important piece of the puzzle you allow that to set a special gifting limit on the amount coming in through gifts. Why is this important? Why would you want to limit what is coming in through gifts. Why not let people give all that we can print and keep it to the annual contribution limit. Widow $18,000 of other people coming and you have no more room in your ABLE account. Set limits on how much money you're allowing to come in from gifts. That is something we built into the gifting platform a real tool for you it is a gifting maybe you have a graduation coming up or another life events. Maybe it is an easy way for you to put out the fact that your loved ones and family members can help you save. You set up your gifting page. Usually send it out to your loved ones via email or social media. Then they simply click on the link and are able to gift right into your ABLE plan. It is a great tool for you and your families to utilize when you're looking to save for your future. The last set of suggestions that we have when it comes to really maximizing contributions and then I am excited to open up opportunities for questions and answers. His other just additional creative contribution options. It is considered found money. And a lot of different spheres. One of the areas for which you can find money available for your ABLE plans. I think keeping an open eyes the biggest suggestion here. You see some that are listed here on the screen. For certain individuals. You can use those credits, those money back for the federal credit and put them into your able plan. This could be the earned income tax credit you might getting money back you can put that back into your ABLE account as well. There are actually some states that offer special credit tax credits or deductions Princeton organ has a refundable tax credit it is up to $180 for a single tax filer or 364 a joint tax filer. That is basically credits you get for putting into your ABLE account. When you get that tax credit back put it right back into your ABLE account. In that amount of the new contribution will account for your next tax year tax credit. It is an easy way to continue to build your contributions into your ABLE account. There are other ways. You may have just received a tax refund recently from the taxes that you filed or a loved one received a refund. They can put some of those monies into icy questions coming in that for individuals that were attending today. They were all around the use of a special needs trust. And a ABLE account. I think these are both incredible savings tools. They actually work really really well together. There is a broad way to answer the questions that came in their ABLE accounts are set up to a lot allow for special trust money to come from the trust and be placed into the ABLE account. You do need to make sure that your special needs trust was set up in a way that that money is allowed to move over. But I wanted to make sure that everyone is on the ABLE cited is allowed to come in and collect there in the ABLE account. For instance, you may have a special needs trust. You may want to move a portion of that money into the ABLE account. Why? Once it's in the ABLE account not only is it very easy to use. I know we spent more the time talking about maximizing contributions. It is really easy to get money out of your ABLE account. It might be a way for you to make the money that was in your special needs trust now in your ABLE account a lot easier to access. It also means once the money is in the ABLE account. All of the qualified disability expenses for ABLE now apply. That includes some things that were not allowed in the special needs trust. This may sound too good to be true, but it is the case bid will ABLE Jody did a great job explaining his pay those qualified disability expenses. Basically, the broad stroke of that is if it helps improve the quality of life, the health, the independence of the account owner themselves. Then it is a qualified disability expenses that includes food and housing. Education, medical, so much more. So, really when it comes to maximizing your contributions. Which I've said so many times today. That was the focus of the discussion are really getting creative with the contribution options. My real thought here is to really focus on the ABLE plan that you have and really understand how you can use it. You don't want to have this great tool and only use it for so much. If you have all these opportunities. Then, find those ways and see what fits best for you. You don't have to use all of the contribution options that I mentioned today. But I definitely want you to know that they are there available for you when you do need them or would like to utilize them. So, Jody think you for this opportunity. I hope people learned a little bit more about ABLE plans holistically. Ways to maximize them. I know that myself and others are here to answer any questions that people have. If we have the opportunity.

>>JODY ELLIS: Thank you so much David