

Friday, January 20, 2023
Meeting Minutes

Public Meeting 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
ZOOM Meeting Platform

A regular public meeting of the New Jersey State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) was held on Friday, January 20, 2023. The meeting was held via ZOOM meeting platform. The meeting was called to order at approximately 9:30 a.m. by Joyce Salzberg, Acting Chair.

Welcome

- I. Joyce Salzberg welcomed attendees and read the Welcome Statement.

Attendance

- I. Maintained by the Department of Health (DOH)

Introductions

- I. SICC members and DOH representatives were introduced.
- II. Quorum requirements were met.
- III. Public members signed their attendance through the chat box in the ZOOM platform.

Approval of Minutes

- I. The November 18, 2022 Minutes were *APPROVED*; 10 Yes, no opposed, no discussion.

SICC Member Updates

- I. Two Council members have retired, Chanell McDevitt and Michele Safrin. The Council Chair and Members publicly shared their appreciation for their service and best wishes.
- II. Nicole Edwards shared that the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) has an executive summary of the racial equity audit. It can be found at <https://www.dec-sped.org/single-post/dec-celebrates-release-of-racial-equity-assessment-executive-summary-september-2022>

SICC Standing & Ad Hoc Committees Reports

- I. **Administrative/Policy Committee**, vacant chair
 - A. Will report at March 2023 meeting.
- II. **Service Delivery Committee**, Virginia Lynn, Chair
 - A. Documents sent out to Council members prior to the meeting.

- B. Virginia Lynn clarified that the opening statement on the document will ensure interpretation is word for word.
- C. The Committee discussed with Kristen Kugelman how to sustain the Learning Management System (LMS) once the American Rescue Funds are depleted, how to encourage staff participation in trainings, and improve the value of our system. The use of Continuing Educations Units (CEUs) was discussed.

III. **Fiscal Infrastructure Committee**, Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen, Chair

- A. The Committee is working on updates to the fraud, waste, and abuse policy.
Susan Evans reminded the Council that this policy is based mostly on Medicaid compliance.
- B. The Family Cost Participation (FCP) Handbook is currently being updated.
- C. Send any SICC Appointees information to Susan Evans.

IV. **Personnel Preparation Committee**, Corinne Catalano, Chair

- A. Kristen Kugelman presented in Corinne Catalano's absence.
- B. Work continues on a statement to provide on each applicant review form the Committee drafts that will explain these forms are not Human Resource (HR) forms and are not formal documents. The intent of these forms is to assist Early Intervention Provider (EIP) agencies in the hiring process.

V. **Family Support & Transition Committee**, Nicole Edwards, Chair

- A. The Sub-Committee has decided to split meetings; one to focus on logistics, the other, transition work.
- B. The child find group is recruiting committee members. If interested, please contact Nicole Edwards at edwardsn@rowan.edu.

Regional Early Intervention Collaborative (REIC) Update

- I. No updates

Lead Agency Report, Susan Evans, Part C Coordinator

- I. Federal Updates
 - A. The President's budget included another \$44 million for Part C programs, but has not release any funding formula changes yet.
 - B. The Biden Administration is tasking states and systems with reporting on how they are addressing equity and inclusion in terms of programs and work.
 - i. Joyce Salzberg suggested an ad hoc committee to address equity.

II. State Updates

- A. Procedural Safeguards Office (PSO) updates
 - i. There were five formal complaints for fiscal year 2023 as of January 12, 2023. All five dispute resolution requests are administrative complaints; four have been resolved, one being investigated.
 - ii. Four allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse against three practitioners reported by three Early Intervention Programs (EIPs) and one Regional Early Intervention Collaborative (REIC) as of January 12, 2023. Three are currently under investigation and one has been substantiated.
- B. There have been massive strides in transitioning from the BDI-2 to BDI-3 system. Striving for a "go live" in March 2023.
- C. The Learning Management System (LMS) is moving forward.

- D. The PCG contract has been extended for this year.
- E. The Letters of Agreement (LOAs) are in final legal review.
- F. DOH is continuing to do a systemic revision of Policies and Procedures.
- G. The Cost Study is progressing and currently moving to the Governor's Office.

Department of Health (DOH) presentation of the Annual Performance Report (APR)

- I. Indicator documents previously sent to Members
- II. The APR Indicators 1 through 11 were presented and reviewed. The SICC Council had a chance to comment and ask questions, as did the Public.
- III. The Indicators are:
 - Indicator 1 – Timely Services
No Provider Available (NPA) affected the Timely service data.
 - Indicator 2 – Natural Environments
Primary setting is the location where the child receives most services.
 - Indicator 3 – Child Outcomes
Data completeness had an encouraging rebound to 44.57%
 - Indicator 11 – State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)
Creating a more comprehensive and modern process of professional development.
 - Indicator 4 – Family Involvement (formerly known as Family Outcomes)
The system took the recommendations of the stakeholders and moved to a new survey tool called ECO Revised that should be more family friendly.
 - Indicator 5 – Child Find (Birth to One)
Exceeded the target of .69% with a .76%
 - Indicator 6 – Child Find (Birth to Three)
Exceeded the target of 3.4% with a 4.99%
 - Indicator 7 – 45 Day Timelines
New Jersey's compliance was 99.69%; the target is 100%
 - Indicator 8 – Transition
New Jersey's compliance was 100% for 8A, 99.62% for 8B, and 98.33% for 8C; the target is 100%
 - Indicator 10 – Mediations

MOTION: Council Members were asked to vote on the content of the APR to be submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The content is acceptable to submit as presented. Motioned by Kimberly Peto, seconded by Sandra Howell.

DISCUSSION: Discussions occurred during the presentation of each Indicator.

On Indicator 1, a question was asked about why Atlantic County FFY 2021 percentage was much lower than other counties.

DOH Response: Atlantic County was given a finding for not following procedures for NPA processing and the Southern counties historically have a higher number of NPAs.

A concern was mentioned regarding a large NPA list.

DOH Response: Every state is in a similar challenge right now with providers and in terms of NPA. The State is looking for ways to address the situation.

For Indicators 3 and 11, a question was asked about sustaining the fiscal components.

DOH Response: The State will look towards where infrastructure funds, depending on what the federal increase allocations may be.

Nicole Edwards commented on incentives for new hires regarding a training process and praised the work being done by Kristen Kugelman and her team.

Susan Evans mentioned the language change in the Indicator 4 title from Family Outcomes to Family Involvement. Looking to include more categories for additional patterns to disaggregate.

Virginia Lynn commented that she is glad to see a change in Indicator 4 for the better.

Nicole Edwards asked if there was county breakdown data for Indicators 5 and 6.

DOH Response: The county information isn't available at this point. The source for the population data does not include the county information.

APPROVED: 8 approved, no opposed, 2 not present during the vote.

New Business

I. Future Meeting Dates:

March 24, 2023

May 19, 2023

September 22, 2023

November 17, 2023

Retreat April or July TBD

II. March 24, 2023 SICC Public meeting will be held virtually.

Council Members continue to prefer the virtual meeting format which has increased the number of public members and stakeholders who attend and participate. Discussed the retreat being in-person with a possible virtual option.

Old Business

I. NPA TaskForce / Data Committee discussion

A. Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen suggested creating an No Provider Available (NPA) TaskForce to look at the NPA issue and possibly create an action plan to address the issue.

Several other Council Members agreed.

DOH Response: Susan Evans stated we may be able to get external assistance from the National Technical Center and will bring the topic up to the PSO and Assistant Commissioner.

II. Michele Christopoulos requested clarification regarding whether email and text is no longer an acceptable signature to verify telehealth services and only an original signature is valid.

DOH Response: The acceptance of email and text as signatures was a temporary COVID policy.

Susan Evans will get clarification.

Public Comments

The following comments were made by members of the public:

David (Kenneth) Holmes, ABCD EIPA –

- Supports an action plan for the NPA issue.
- Are there major changes in the LOAs?

DOH Response: The major change in the LOAs will be the billing cycle moving from 90 days to 60 days. This will also affect the Family Cost Participation (FCP). There will be stronger language

around the Early Intervention Providers' (EIPs) accountability and general supervision plans.

- Any collective data on cancellations and no shows yet?
DOH Response: This data has not been pulled yet.
- Awaiting the results of the Rate Study.

Karen Olanrewaju, Sunny Days –

- Can the DOH take into consideration some sort of technology app that practitioners and EIPs can use to send to families prior to scheduled appointments that the family can confirm the appointment on?
DOH Response: Susan Evans stated the EIPs may employ that at their expense.
Karen Olanrewaju clarified that this possibly be in place through PCG to make it more systemic.

Sima Reisner had placed a comment in the chat stating, "Not sure of the process for public comment, but I need to leave now but would like to be part of the discussion re 'no males' in certain parts of certain counties...if that discussion happens." (03:12:34).

When asked to speak, she was no longer present.

Joyce Salzberg requests Sima Reisner send her comment in writing to the Council.

Julie Robbins –

- Requests the system emphasize that when children are eligible in Communication, this does not necessarily mean Speech services are needed.

Greg Beben –

- Is there a plan for bidding out the data system after this year?
DOH Response: Susan Evans replied yes. A Request for Proposal (RFP) is drafted and being sent to Treasury.

There were no additional public comments.

The Public can submit comments to the Department or in the Chat Box which are recorded for the Department.

The next SICC public meeting is March 24, 2023, 9:30 a.m.

MOTION to adjourn the meeting by Virginia Lynn and seconded by Catherine Colucci.

