

Friday, May 20, 2022
Meeting Minutes
ZOOM Meeting Platform

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

A regular public meeting of the New Jersey State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) was held on Friday, May 20, 2022. The meeting was held via ZOOM meeting platform. The meeting was called to order at approximately 9:30 am by Joyce Salzberg, Acting Chair.

Attendance

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

Welcome

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

Introductions

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

Approval of Minutes

- I. Michele Christopoulos motioned to approve the March 18, 2022, meeting minutes;
Seconded by Kimberly Peto.
- II. The March 18, 2022 minutes were *APPROVED*; 8 YES, no opposed, 2 Abstained;
no discussion.

SICC Member Updates

- I. Michele Safrin shared that the Office of Training and Professional Development is resuming the training for DCP Case Workers regarding the referral and consent process.
- II. Corinne Catalano shared that Alexis Zeigler has resigned from her position. Corinne Catalano also shared that the Department of Education (DOE) is going to be revising the Autism Quality Indicators.
- III. Joyce Salzberg shared she attended an Autism Summit.

SICC Standing & Ad Hoc Committees Reports

- I. **Administrative/Policy Committee**, Chair-Chanell McDevitt
 - A. Chanell McDevitt was not present, but previously shared the SICC 2023 draft Budget at the March 2022 meeting for Member review and consideration.

MOTION: Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen motioned to approve the budget as presented.
Seconded by Dr. Joseph Holahan.

DISCUSSION: Thomas Lind questioned the budget that is planned for in person meetings given the virtual meetings that have been in place.

Susan Evans replied the Council should return to in person at some point. Susan Evans reminded the Council can provide stipends to parent members for babysitting in order to attend the meeting.

Nicole Edwards asked if the budget is fluid.

Joyce Salzberg replied that budget modifications can be made.

APPROVED; 10 approved, no opposed, no abstained

II. **Service Delivery Committee**, Chair-Virginia Lynn

A. Virginia Lynn was not present. Cynthia Newman presented for the Committee.

B. Cynthia Newman shared that the Committee is looking at translation procedures, both oral and written. Reviewing the Code of Ethics and Federal Requirements in terms of native language requirements. Looking at Personnel Standards for Foreign Language Interpreters and Translators.

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

A. Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen shared:

- i. The Committee thanked the DOH state administration for submitting the change request to PCG updating the options in the dropdown menu for service logging to include non-emergent missed sessions.
- ii. The Committee continues to work on a missed session policy regarding non-emergent sessions.

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

A. Corinne Catalano shared:

- i. The Committee will be piloting the Applicant Review Forms for the Single Point Of Entry (SPOE) Service Coordinator position and Ongoing Service Coordinator position as guidance for agencies.
- ii. The Committee will be focusing on developing a similar form for the Child Development Specialist position next.
- iii. Joyce Salzberg asked about formatting and Corinne Catalano responded the format will be looked at as the forms are piloted and can be revised as needed.
- iv. Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen shared co-treatment/co-teaching ability is still a viable option as long as it is in the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and mentioned the co-treatment/co-teaching model may help with the shortage of practitioners.

V. **Family Support & Transition Committee**, Chairs-Nicole Edwards & Alexis Zeigler

A. Nicole Edwards shared:

- i. The Committee is focusing on how to improve birth to one referrals. Three Sub-Committees are looking at:
 1. exemplars Part C program in the United States who have good birth to one referral numbers,
 2. investigating the data for NJ to determine if there are exemplars in parts of the state, and
 3. understanding the roadblocks that exist in NJ.
- ii. Possibly connecting with Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU) and possibly adding an “at risk” category.

B. Dr. Joseph Holahan asked if at-risk may be a consideration.

Susan Evans responded that yes, it could be looked at by the State with many considerations including an amendment to the definition of developmental delay in the NJ rules and statutes.

Regional Early Intervention Collaborative (REIC) Updates

- I. Nancy May shared the Regional Early Intervention Collaborative (REIC) activities for Early

Intervention (EI) Week.

- A. Topics were presented in-person and virtually from all four Collaboratives. Some topics were Brain Development, Inclusive Education, Benefits of Reading to young children and the use of bilingual books, and Considering a Family's Culture.
- B. Dr. Joseph Holahan mentioned a well-done video regarding how beneficial Early Intervention has been to families. Susan Evans has stated the video is still available and housed with the southern region.

The link to the video as written in the chat is

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WY5rJ4FKAlc&t=21s>

Lead Agency Report, Susan Evans, Part C Coordinator

I. Federal Updates

- A. Applied for Federal Funds to the Part C Program. This year the Federal Government provided New Jersey with \$12.4 million as the award allocation. Received a supplemental award of approximately \$638,000 for the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds.
- B. Federal language in Biden Administration FFY22 Budget doubles the Part C Funding and includes several policy recommendations. Still needs to go through Congress.
 - i. Proposed Policy changes include:
 - 1. A State Improvement Grant (SIG) to states to include children "at-risk" in their Part C population
 - 2. A change to the allocation formula funding; 85% of the funding would be based on relative population of the 0-3 population and 15% based on the relative share of individuals that live in poverty
 - 3. Flexibility for states to use Child Find funds for outreach to individuals who are expecting to be a parent of a child with a disability
 - 4. Requiring all states to reserve at least 10% of annual allocations to develop and implement an equity plan approved by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)
 - 5. Require states to provide at least 24 months advanced notice prior to changing eligibility requirements
 - 6. Prohibition on states collecting family fees.
- C. The Annual Performance Report (APR) was submitted and Susan Evans will report on New Jersey's determination at the September meeting.

II. State Updates

- A. Assistant Commissioner, Lisa Asare, will be moving to Department of Human Services (DHS) as the Deputy Commissioner at the end of May. Nancy Scotto-Rosato, the current WIC Director, will step in as the Interim Assistant Commissioner for Family Health Services.
- B. SICC Appointments - If you know of individuals interested in being Members, they can send resumes to Susan Evans (susan.evans@doh.nj.gov) and Rajneet Goomer (rajneet.goomer@doh.nj.gov).
- C. NJEIS Rules expire on September 6, 2022. The Department of Health (DOH) is proposing to adopt technical amendments to the current rules to meet the September deadline. Additional rule making with substantial updates will continue and another set of rules will be needed in the next year.
- D. DOH has prepared an updated Letter of Agreement (LOA) for the Early Intervention Provider Agencies (EIP) and has forwarded it to the legal team for review. Current EIPs will be asked to update their LOA with the DOH and indicate their intent to continue as an EIP. Re-compete for EIPs should wait until new rules are adopted.
- E. Rate Study update - Stipends are almost ready to go out. 1,500 practitioners submitted data. EIPs and participating Practitioners will be receiving information soon. Stipends will be \$100 per practitioner and an administrative fee of \$12.00 per practitioner

will be added.

- F. PCG updates on New Jersey Early Intervention System (NJEIS) Rate Study Project:
 - i. Advisory Group - Facilitated monthly advisory group meetings in November and April
 - ii. Cost Study - Complete
 - iii. Time Study - PCG received about 31% of EIP practitioners, which exceeds both statistical threshold and PCG's experience in conducting similar time studies across the country. PCG has completed 80% of its QA process for the packets as of 5/12/2022.
 - iv. All direct service personnel, administrative personnel, and operating costs will be factored into the rate calculations.
- G. Early Intervention Management System (EIMS) Updates:
 - i. PCG will meet onsite with DOH on Monday, May 23, 2022
 - ii. Updating the drop downs for "emergent cancellations" is in progress
 - iii. Updating the Re-referral sections of the system is in progress
 - iv. 5,900 inactive families with a remaining balance received a paper statement in April and May reminding them of their outstanding balances.
New business rules for sending paper statements are in process.
- H. Procedural Safeguards Office (PSO):
 - i. NPA continues to challenge all parts of the system with evaluations and services. Paperwork to fill 3 PSO positions has been filed and 1 has been posted.
 - ii. Two Formal Complaints received since March 11, 2022; both administrative complaints; both under investigation
 - iii. Two Fraud, Waste, and Abuse (FWA) allegations that were reported and substantiated and 1 new additional FWA under investigation.
 - iv. 898 informal complaints received since March 11, 2022; 143 informal requests for assistance by families and/or the NJEIS, 750 hours of compensatory services, and 5 Family Cost Participation (FCP) and billing disputes.
- I. December 1 Data - Child Count Data. Steven Gwozdik presented the information that was Submitted to OSEP.
- J. Referrals back to pre-COVID numbers. The Regional Early Intervention Collaboratives (REICs) are experimenting with online referral forms in addition to the Ring Central phone number. DOH and the REICs will continue the referral discussion with the Single Point of Entry (SPOE) Service Coordinators to find modern and efficient methods to the intake/referral process.
- K. Financial Relief for gas prices - DOH is actively considering options; further communication will be provided once the details are determined and approved.
- L. DOH-EIP Provider Meeting will be scheduled in June to discuss No Provider Available (NPA), Practitioner enrollment and clean up, and Overall EIP operations, including co-treats.
- M. Susan Evans shared the video from the Early Intervention Week remarks from the First Lady, Tammy Murphy.

New Business

- I. Members discussed various future meeting options.
 - A. Vote - Should Council have a July Retreat?
Unanimously voted no July Retreat.
 - B. September 16, 2022 SICC meeting will be held virtually.
 - C. Future SICC Meetings:
November 18, 2022, January 27, 2023, March 24, 2023, and May 19, 2023
Decide at a future meeting when to begin in-person and/or a hybrid version

Old Business

- I. No updates

Public Comments

The following comments were made by members of the public:

Patricia Carlesimo, Executive Director of LADACIN and Board Liaison for ABCD Early Intervention Provider Association – No Provider Available (NPA) list concern.

Willing to help with data collection or in any way possible. Patricia Carlesimo had questions regarding the allocation of stipends for practitioners who work for more than one agency.

SICC Response: DOH has a spreadsheet sorting this information that will be sent to each agency.

David Holmes, ABCD Early Intervention Provider Association - Thanked the Department for the movement on the gas stipend and the stipend for practitioners who participated in the Time Study. Mentioned his concern with practitioner recruitment and retention. Asked that consideration be given to 100% virtual evaluations. He expressed his concern with the number of children waiting for services (NPA).

SICC Response: Kimberly Peto responded that Bergen and Passaic Counties have caught up with their evaluations backlog.

Cynthia Newman, Mid-Jersey CARES - Would like telehealth to be more accepted as an option.

SICC Responses: Sandra Howell – The New Jersey Early Intervention System (NJEIS) could possibly look at data points to share with families regarding the positive outcomes of telehealth.

Susan Evans stated that is the reason the video listed above was made.

Nicole Edwards - The rapport/connection with the family and conveying the model of Early Intervention that is important, whether services are provided in home or virtually.
Division for Early Childhood Conference in September

Dr. Joseph Holahan added Early Intervention is a parent training model whether services are in-person or virtual.

There were no additional public comments.

The next SICC meeting is September 16, 2022, 9:30am.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen and seconded by Michele Christopoulos at approximately 11:50 am.