



Friday, March 16, 2018  
Public Meeting 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

A regular public meeting of the New Jersey State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) was held on Friday, March 16, 2018, at Sunny Days Early Childhood Development Services in Manalapan, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m. by Catherine (Kate) Colucci, Acting Chair and declared a quorum was present.

**Attendance** - Maintained by the Department of Health

**Welcome** – Kate Colucci welcomed attendees. At her request, SICC members and public members introduced themselves and identified their connection with early intervention.

**Announcements** - Kate Colucci asked for updates from Council members.

Danielle Anderson announced a state conference for homeless youth and extended an invitation to those who are interested in attending. The conference is scheduled for Friday, 3/23/18, at the Princeton Marriot. A flyer will be distributed with a link for registration.

Montclair State University (MSU) has scheduled the annual Todd Ouida Conference for May 10, 2018 which will include a self-reflection and coaching session.

**Approval of Minutes** - The minutes of January 26, 2018 were unanimously approved as previously distributed upon motion by Rosemary Browne and Kim Peto. Two Council members that did not attend the meeting abstained.

**Lead Agency - New Jersey Department of Health (DOH)**

**Terry Harrison, Part C Coordinator for the New Jersey Early Intervention System (NJEIS) presented information on behalf of the Lead Agency.**

1. **Procedural Safeguard Report (PSO)** - The PSO received one (1) formal complaint since the last SICC meeting. There have been 2,697 contacts to date during this current fiscal year starting July 1, 2017. Most informal complaints are related to compensatory services (missed services, services not being provided timely or services that were disrupted) and cost-share. The Procedural Safeguards Coordinator position remains vacant.

2. **Family Cost Participation (FCP)** – SFY 2018 collections through March 5, 2018 processed under CSC (Covansys) for services delivered through November 30, 2017 were included in the FCP report presented. Public Consulting Group (PCG) is scheduled to assume responsibility for billing in April 2018 and a letter will be mailed to families on Monday, March 19, 2018 announcing the FCP changes under PCG including the introduction of a Family Cost Participation (FCP) Portal. Families can continue to receive paper family statements and/or access the FCP portal with an option to decline paper family statements. The FCP portal will also serve to submit family payments on-line.

FCP suspensions due to non-payment of required balances have been placed on hold and all services continued as requested by the family until further notice. This will ensure that families and children continue to receive services during the transition of the Central Management Office from CSC to PCG. In general, there are between 22 to 79 families statewide placed in suspension each month with the average at 50 families a month. Between 80% to 90% of families make payments to get out of arrears. Debt collection is expected to be implemented under the new CMO contract for families with unpaid invoices whose children have exited NJEIS.

The current FCP report was reviewed with the Council members which includes information on the number of families that report they exited NJEIS due to FCP and at what time do they exit including at referral, after eligibility or under an Individualized Family Service Plan including families that exit just before their child's third birthday. The DOH will be reviewing a new reporting format under PCG and the Council members were asked to consider what information they would like to continue to receive. A Council member asked if there was data on families that decline specific services due to FCP, but this data is not collected.

3. **Federal Application for FFY18** - The Part C Application for FFY18 has been posted on the DOH website including a notice of a public comment period. The application was prepared using the FFY 2017 state award amount since there has been no FFY 2018 state budget allocations finalized. Part C funding is distributed to states based on a formula using birth to three population numbers. The application submission date is May 4, 2018 and Public Comment is scheduled through April 30, 2018.
4. **Early Intervention Management System (EIMS) Update** – Information Technology Consultants have been contracted to assist the DOH with project planning, business requirements review and user access testing for the EIMS. A EIMS Dashboard Update has been initiated and will provide weekly updates each Friday to NJEIS stakeholders. NJEIS Regional Early Intervention Collaboratives (REICs), Service Coordination Units (SCUs) and Early Intervention Programs (EIPs) will receive information on Monday (3/19/18) about several fixes updates/changes intended to assist with service logging issues that are ready for release. These include the addition of the ability to access previous and current IFSPs and access inactive children to log IFSP services. Service logging has been extended up to 180 days from the date of service.

PCG has also proposed a plan to import outstanding IFSP service pages for IFSP start dates prior to December 1, 2017. The DOH will be providing further instructions to EIPs on

submitting IFSP service pages that need to be imported into the EIMS. This applies to IFSP services that were not available when data was migrated or have been changed.

Advance Payments – The DOH will be offering a 4<sup>th</sup> advanced payment to EIPs.

### **SICC Member Comments**

- Joyce Salzberg – EIPs continue to provide services but are only receiving about a 50% rate of claims that should be reimbursed. Some agencies have sent notices to their practitioners that they will not get paid until the State of NJ pays EIPs. Frustrations are mounting, and some agencies may experience a crisis with money. Concern with the EIMS process of “impersonating”, may be viewed as fraud by some. This is a serious matter and was brought to the attention of the Deputy Commissioner. Concerns also raised related to the PCG Help Desk responsiveness.

Terry Harrison clarified that the use of “impersonate” addressed EIP administrative staff request that they be able to enter service logs for practitioners. This EIMS process to impersonate is more accountable than the CSC system of EIPs entering all service logs for their practitioners since it will limit the rights to impersonated and track the individual that did impersonate the practitioner. The individual that impersonates is not subject to fraud if they enter what the practitioner has confirmed to be the accurate service log. Data entry errors would not constitute fraud. Fraudulent behavior would be of concern if services were intentional entered to increase reimbursement or paperwork was not available to support the services logged.

- Michele Christopoulos and Kim Peto reported that the EIMS is not working smoothly for the new families referred as of December 1, 2017 because things go missing and IFSPs cannot get finalized. Terry Harrison responded that there are several different possible reasons as to why an IFSP could not be entered. She will be meeting with the REIC Directors to determine the status of backfilling data needed to ensure that IFSPs can be entered.
- Kate Colucci: Questioned what the Federal Government would say about “impersonating” for data entry. Terry Harrison reported that the DOH is responsible to ensure all levels of the NJEIS have fraud, waste and abuse policy and procedures but would not specifically address the terminology or procedures followed for data entry. Terry Harrison agreed that the term “impersonating” could be different but it is the terminology used by PCG. The Deputy Commissioner and Commissioner’s office is being briefed and kept up to date on the Early Intervention Management System issues. Kate Colucci asked what the EIPs propose for resolution and Joyce Salzberg suggested that the EIPs be permitted to send the DOH service log paperwork to get paid.

Terry Harrison reported that the DOH is taking steps to resolve issue and service logging for billing is a highest priority. Joyce Salzberg also raised concerns regarding additional expenses such as those associated with using lines of credit and paying practitioners for back logging of services in EIMS.

5. **State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)**- Susan Evans presented on the SSIP/Annual Performance Report (APR) including the FFY 2016 Indicator 3, Child Outcome performance

and Indicator 11 SSIP to be submitted by April 2, 2018. The SSIP is beginning to document notable improvements regarding social and emotional development.

### **SICC Committees Reports:**

1. **Administrative/Policy** – Susan Marcario reported for Chanell McDevitt, Committee chair. The committee received 10 responses to the online vote approving the Policy 1 – Attendance at SICC meetings; Policy 2 – Committees and Workgroups; Policy 4 – Reimbursement for Expenses and Policy 5 – Council Decision-Making. Three committee members (Chanel McDevitt, Steve Weiss, Michele Safrin and Susan Marcario) volunteered to serve on an ad hoc workgroup to develop a new orientation program for new SICC members. Two additional policies will be presented at the next SICC meeting in May including Policy 6 – Parent Member Stipend and Policy 7 – SICC Protocol on Public Comment.
2. **State Systemic Improvement Plan** – Rosemary Browne reported that Susan Evans and the committee began looking at social emotional factors last Spring, but the committee has been put on hiatus. Rosemary reached out to the REICs earlier this month regarding Targeted Evaluation Teams (TETs). Reviewers (5 volunteers from each region) are needed to review sample IFSPs and determine baseline performance on the social emotional factors. There is a need to understand the definition of social emotional development, key terms and concepts and rubric scoring. Susan Evans explained the “continuity scale” rubric as another tool for use by TETs. The Continuity Scale includes BDI scores, intake, and parent report. The data will be reviewed. Next steps would be to pilot it using the scale and review the outcome.
3. **Service Delivery:** Joyce Salzberg had no updates to report. The committee will be meeting later in March to review and discuss proposing recommendations for NJEIS tele-intervention policies and procedures.
4. **Higher Education:** A February 2018 meeting with higher education was well attended by colleges and universities including Seton Hall University, Kean University, Stockton University, Montclair University, Rutgers University, and Rowan University. Many expressed an interest to continue open communication and collaboration. Kristen Kugelman, NJEIS Personnel Development Coordinator put together a document which will be shared with the SICC members that describes a path toward partnership, building relationships and shared resources. Speakers are being recruited from NJEIS to present on the NJEIS as requested by universities to increase knowledge of and interest in early intervention.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** Kate Colucci requested SICC input for the July 2018 scheduled SICC retreat. Suggested topics included member recruitment, new member orientation and policy and procedure discussion such as whether meeting participation by conference call should be considered for those that are unable to attend in person. Michele Christopoulos, Danielle Anderson Thomas and Kate Colucci volunteered to work on the retreat. The retreat will be held at the Sunny Days Corporate office.

## Public Comment:

- **Patti Ciccone** reported that Dr. Joseph Holahan, Desiree Bonner, Family Support Coordinator and Terry Harrison have drafted an article about NJEIS for the American Academy of Pediatrics. It is in final review and should be ready shortly.
- **David Holmes** remarked that he appreciates that the DOH is listening and discussing the issues related to EIMS, but he reported that the system is in crisis. There are some agencies that may be on the brink of closure (one to several in the next few months) if they cannot make payroll which is approximately 70% of EIP budgets. Employees are being lost due to enrollment and nonpayment. He stated that the SICC should do more to bring the issues to the DOH Commissioner and encouraged the SICC to put in writing what they observed and heard at the meeting today.
- **Kathleen Henniger Cohen**, ARC of Essex County speaking on behalf of the ARCs reported that ARC agencies are in crisis but committed to make it work. She agreed that impersonating is not fraud but suggested replacing the term “impersonating” with “surrogate data entry” as used with another state program. She also requested practitioners receive compensation or recognition for their extra efforts.
- **Maria Emerson** – Virtua (Camden & Burlington) provide services to 600 children and stated that numbers and data speak volumes. During the 15 weeks working on EIMS she has been unable to rectify all claims, enter service pages or adequately address questions, concerns through the PCG help desk. She also raised concerns including that families are not receiving bills; enrollment of new practitioners is taking up to three weeks; there is no access to 220 children; 3,000 service sessions cannot be entered; and additional time is required to back log service sessions at a significant cost.

Terry Harrison clarified that families have received their explanation of benefits and billing statements through February 2018 representing services through November 2017 on schedule. Delays will be experienced until PCG releases a new Family Cost Participation Portal scheduled for April 2018.

- **Roni Scheuering**, Innovative Interventions EIP wanted assurance that all old authorizations for services will be entered in the EIMS and available for billing. Terry Harrison reported that the REICs and temporary help provided by the DOH are working to backfill data entry. In addition, a plan is in place to import IFSP services that were not available to migrate so that practitioners can enter service logs. A pilot will be conducted before releasing. Assurance was also stated that services will be able to be logged on children that turn age three.
- **Cynthia Newman**, MJREIC, reported challenges to backfilling data including that not all children migrating with an IFSP had an Ongoing Service Coordinator assigned and illegible hand-written documents are time consuming for data entry.
- **Mary Krupp**, Progressive Steps EIP thanked the DOH for bringing on additional IT consultants but is concerned that the inability to bill for services is getting worse due to IFSPs needing periodic or annual reviews. Concerns reported about making payroll and reimbursing advance payments.

- **Tracy Puglia**, Shirley Eves Developmental & Therapeutic Center reported that the EIP is facing a financial crises and loss of practitioners. Requested that DOH consider additional training when EIMS is fully operational since so many changes have occurred since the initial EIMS training. Terry Harrison stated that the DOH recognizes the need for additional training and new trainings will be developed, including guidance for families on family cost participation.
- **Tomas Chadwick**, TheraCare of NY shared similar concerns that hundreds of thousands of dollars owed to EIPs. He reported that PCG is also involved in Connecticut (CT), and can reconcile payment with services provided to children, but not in New Jersey (NJ). Issues with Medicaid and insurance companies in CT may come our way in NJ. Terry Harrison explained that CT only uses the PCG fiscal portal and is set up differently where agencies must chase public and private insurance before receiving state reimbursement. In NJ EIPs are paid and the DOH chases public insurance and family cost participation. Concern was also expressed regarding the approaching end of the SFY and being paid for services. Terry Harrison reported that services are paid based on claims submitted and not on service dates so claims from SFY 2018 will be paid into SFY 2019.
- **Kathleen Henniger Cohen**, ARC of Essex County recommended that the DOH consider monetary compensation to EIPs for the extraordinary time required to address EIMS issues.
- **Doreen Glut**, Rutgers University reported that consultants are not willing to back-enter information. She also reported concerns about ongoing glitches with EIMS and asked the SICC to advise and make a statement of some sort to DOH.
- Additional comments included a request for EIPs to provide input directly to the IT consultants. Terry Harrison responded that the IT consultants are reviewing and monitoring help desk calls to follow stakeholder issues and consideration may be given to additional stakeholder input as needed. At this time, the IT consultants are focused on reviewing and addressing priorities set forth by the DOH. The EIMS Dashboard only lists the top priorities and calls to the Help Desk gets prioritized.
- **Kate Colucci** asked if the DOH has enough IT consultants. Terry Harrison explained that the consultants just started and ongoing IT support will be reviewed as progress is made to addressing EIMS fixes.

Kate Colucci asked the SICC members how they recommended reviewing the public comment heard today in their role as advisors to the DOH as the lead agency. Joyce Salzberg stated that further discussion by SICC members about the public comment is needed and suggested that SICC members communicate by email. Kate Colucci asked how other members thought about how to communicate. Danielle Anderson Thomas suggested to discuss this issue in a closed meeting. Michele Christopoulos second the suggestion and Joyce voiced concern that there was no parent-representation today and recommended that others need to be there. Kate also shared that those not in attendance did not hear public comment as well and asked for suggestions from the committee members. Kim Peto suggested staying after the meeting to discuss and then filling in the absent Council members through email or a conference call. A decision was reached for available Council members

to meet today and decide on a conference call. Kate Colucci reminded everyone that the SICC serves as an advisory council to the DOH and concluded the meeting.

**Adjournment: 1:30pm** upon motion by Michele Christopoulos, seconded by Joyce Salzberg and unanimously carried.

Next Meeting: May 18, 2018  
Sunny Days Early Childhood Developmental Services

**Approved – May 18, 2018**