

Friday, July 19, 2019

Public Health Environmental Laboratory

NJ State Police Division Headquarters, 1040 River Road Ewing Township, NJ 08628

PHEAL Auditorium/Media Room/A-204

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, July 19, 2019, at Public Health and Environmental Laboratory (PHEAL) in Ewing, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order at 11:08 a.m. by Joyce Salzberg in for Catherine (Kate) Colucci, Acting Chair. A quorum was declared present.

Attendance – Maintained by the Department of Health

Welcome - Joyce Salzberg welcomed attendees and read the Welcome Statement. Evacuation procedures were not available to read to the public – public made aware of exits.

Introductions - SICC members introduced themselves followed by the public.

Approval of Minutes - Motion from Joyce Salzberg to approve March meeting minutes. March 15, 2019 meeting minutes approved. Michelle Safrin abstained (not present for March 15 meeting).

No approval of May minutes needed (notes only – no quorum present).

SICC Standing & Ad Hoc Committees

1. Administrative/ policy – Chanel McDevitt, Chair – No update
2. State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)/Assessment – Rosemary Browne, Chair – No update
3. Service Delivery – Joyce Salzberg, Chair
 - Joyce Salzberg read minutes from SICC Service Delivery Committee Meeting held on May 16, 2019.
 - Dr. Susan Evans (NJDOH Part C Interim Coordinator) was present for this meeting. (Minutes on file)
4. Higher Education – Kate Colucci, Chair – No update
 - Joyce Salzberg read an email that was sent to Catherine (Kate) Colucci and provided to the council.
 - Danielle Thomas has resigned from the council effective immediately.
5. Lead Agency Report – Susan Evans, Interim Part C Coordinator

- Good News – An article about a family’s involvement in Early Intervention was recently posted on NJMom.com blog site. The writer linked the state website to the blog post. Susan Evans reported that additional communication with the Department was offered to the writer.
- Governor Murphy signed the budget for State Fiscal Year 2020 with an appropriation of \$115.4 million. This is the largest appropriation the program has ever had. For the past several years, \$3-4 million in supplemental appropriation has been requested to close budget gaps. This does not mean that the program cannot request additional funds from the state if needed. New Jersey has an advantage in that appropriation for the program has been very strong and better suited compared to other states. There is a state budget line that the legislature will find money for the program if needed.
- The Federal Part C grant was approved by OSEP and about \$11.5 million was awarded to the program this year. As of today, the program is in good standing financially.
- The Early Intervention program was given a determination of “Needs Assistance.” The program is back in this category with OSEP due to attention to other things in 2017 & 2018. NJEIS slipped in 5 out of 6 determinations. The program has not been provided with any more significant monitoring at this time.
- OSEP conference to be held next week in Washington, DC. 2 staff from DOH, 2 REIC Directors, 3 Family Support Coordinators and SICC Chair Kate Colucci will represent New Jersey. Family Support will spend time focused on how to re-engage with families in the system. There will be a focus on families of today, what that means and how the program will work with young moms and dads. Family Support Coordinators are looking forward to collaborating with other states regarding family engagement.
 - i. Discussion: Joyce Salzberg added that more and more the system is dealing with millennial parents. Telemedicine was offered as a topic to look into as well. Susan Evans responded there is a session during the conference that covers this topic.
- Additionally, OSEP is proposing adjusting the matrix for state program determinations and proposing family outcomes and the SSIP being added to the determination matrix. There will be a listening and feedback session regarding this proposal. We may need to revisit the way the program does things regarding family engagement.
 - i. Discussion: Joyce Salzberg added that in New York there was a system in place where families had to fill out a grid to collect information – it was

like a homework assignment. Hopefully it does not get to a point where it is that specific and becomes a chore for the family.

- Each state has a process for how information is gathered. In New Jersey, the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring (NCSEAM) survey is used to answer the questions the state needs information for. There is a rubric and weight to the determination and this may need to be revisited. This could potentially require a new committee to review this process and how information is collected. It is necessary to wait and see what comes out of Washington, DC. Initially, current data could be assessed using the proposed matrix to see where the program falls.
- The results from the family surveys vary and there is a lot of drill down that happens with those questions. REICs spend a large proportion of time looking at the data trying to determine where the system is lacking. It may be time to revisit or rethink this process of collecting information.
 - i. Discussion: Kim Peto inquired what can be done to increase these scores. Susan Evans responded that Family Cost Share is a big component. Service Coordinators will find over the next 5-6 months an increase in attention to Family Cost and family's rights around Family Cost Share. The additional attention from the system surrounding this area may help with families feeling that this is part of their rights. From this work, the system may see a positive impact.
- FCP Coordinator spent some time focused on developing a response to the OSEP findings from December. In response, the program has set up monitoring around Family Cost Share. This will be shared with unit coordinators at next week's meeting. There will be additional training provided to Service Coordinators as well. OSEP has not officially responded to the program's response, they may have some modifiers – this is not yet known.
- Additionally, OSEP wants the system to maintain families' income information. The Department has pushed back on this request. A plan was provided to OSEP that enables the system to do what it needs to do without needing to maintain that information. Calls were made to other states and it was discovered that many other states do collect and maintain family income information.
- SSIP plan with Monmouth county pilot is moving forward. "Keeping Babies & Children in Mind" and "Parents Interacting with Children" training sessions are being provided to the pilot group. Social emotional development feeds into the state's SSIP.
- The current Commissioner of Health, Dr. Shereef Elnahal, is set to leave office. Commissioner Elnahal requested Sandy Howell and Susan Evans to complete a

final close out report of EIMS issues. Transition notes were left for the incoming commissioner. The new commissioner has been named but a start date has not been announced. Deputy Commissioner will not be named until the new Commissioner is seated.

- The Department has added five new staff to the Early Intervention office. Carmela Hanna and Audrey Searles are in temporary positions. The Department is continuing its search to secure key team members for the Part C Coordinator and PSO Coordinator positions.
- The PCG and DOH Resolutions Plan from April is being executed. The PCG training offered in June for Service Coordinators was part of that plan. Additional back end process to address claims for children who have aged out has been piloted with one EIP. A meeting with PCG and Department leadership has been postponed until the new Commissioner is onboard. The Department's Part C staff meets and communicates with PCG daily.
- Beth Lohne will be out of the office for a period of time. Barbara King, along with support from the Department leadership and REIC staff, will be responding to PSO requests during this period. There are a number of families asking for a complete accounting of their bills. The importing of backlogs increases these requests. Karen Gruber along with another staff member from the SNJREIC is working on completing these requests. Another staff may be requested to join this team. Majority of families have stated they will pay their bills but are frustrated over the time it is taking the system to generate complete bills.
- There are currently two due process hearings related to family cost share.
- There is a large fraud investigation currently taking place including 6 agencies and 10 practitioners.
- The following **Procedural Safeguards Office (PSO)** report through June 28, 2019 was shared: There has been an increase in families calling with regard to billing issues. The Department does not send families into collections – some of the calls from families surround this issue. The New Jersey Department of Treasury does not allow the program to clear debts to the state. The Department is working to see what other options are available. Suspension of services is still not in place.
 - i. Discussion: Joyce Salzberg commented on the commitment of the EIPs to providing services through all of the challenges with EIMS since families are only now becoming aware of billing and backlog issues. Not sure how the New Jersey Treasury works with all of the past debts that are still on the books.
- Medicaid recoupment is up 30%.

- i. The Medicaid recoupment was a boost to the overall budget and allowed liquidity to continue to pay Early Intervention Providers (EIPs).

Guest Speaker – Michele Tyler (Family Engagement Facilitator), SPAN

- Michele Tyler presented on the SEVA program. SPAN Resource Parents are trained and linked with families to provide in-person support to prepare families for IEP meetings and build knowledge and skills to help families and youth advocate on their own.

New Business

- **SICC Meeting Location:** Council considering new meeting location. Idea was floated to return to the Sunny Days (Manalapan, NJ) location in the interim. A meeting space at Mid-Jersey CARES has been offered. After brief discussion, council agreed to move to have rooms reserved for future meeting dates at the Mid-Jersey CARES location.
- **SICC Meeting Dates:** Switching meeting times were discussed as well as considering different days of the week. It was decided council wanted to stay with Fridays. Dates for SICC meetings are set until the end of the calendar year. Dates would need to be set for next year in order to coordinate with reserving space at Mid-Jersey CARES.

Old Business – Joyce Salzberg read NJEIS Mission Statement forwarded to the council.

- Following a discussion of the statement it was suggested the council provide individual feedback at the next SICC meeting. It was agreed this would be tabled and to have more members review before voting on this.

Public Comment –

David Holmes, ABCD – Would council be willing to invite new commissioner to the next meeting to experience what we are dealing with? There is a need for additional members on the council. Agreed with the idea of having more members look at the mission statement and offered to help with developing mission statement.

Susan Evans responded that inviting the new commissioner to the next meeting would be an easy request to complete as there is a form on the department website that can be completed. The request gets documented officially. This message can also be provided to Kate Colucci to invite the commissioner and offer two future dates in September and November.

Mary Thalacker, Warren ARC – Our county is a mixed region (rural /urban) and we still have some problems with connectivity. Some families can't use their phone unless they stand in a specific part of their driveway. Could we think about a platform where we (Service Coordinators) could load it (IFSPs) and save it and upload to EIMS once we got back to the office? This request was noted by Susan Evans.

As a result of the prior discussion regarding OSEP and more of an emphasis on family outcomes, it should be known SCs are not able to finalize IFSPs in EIMS with just a family outcome. The system required both family and child outcomes to finalize – not sure if this is still the case.

The SC training from PCG should have had more advanced notice. Susan Evans discussed that the Department was receiving multiple, ongoing inquiries as to when this training would be completed – as a result the set-up for the training needed to move quickly.

It was also added that the electronic onboarding training will not be face-to-face and will likely be more of a webinar based training. It is likely the training will be rolled out the end of September – the Department is hoping to share those dates sometime in August. For those unable to view during the scheduled dates, the Department will share links to the webinar for viewing.

Aileen McCullough, Southern NJ Perinatal Cooperative – Following the EIMS training provided for Service Coordinators there was feedback that was collected, what will happen as a result of the feedback?

Susan Evans shared that the feedback regarding the actual training would go to PCG for their internal review. The feedback from the wish list and their rankings will be reviewed by the Department to determine which ones can be quickly resolved and put into production. There may be some items ranked high that may take too long to resolve or may not be worth the effort. There will be a report provided to Service Coordinators from the feedback provided.

Patricia further noted the ratings for PCG would be poor overall, however, she looked forward to electronic signature and uploading capabilities in EIMS. Perhaps a platform would be helpful as well. These two capabilities will impact use in the system and more time should be considered as well as a couple of series of tests before being put into production. SNJPC has a subsidiary available to assist PCG with this process as the system SNJPC uses currently has uploading capabilities.

Adjournment - 12:56 PM upon motion by Joyce Salzberg, and unanimously carried.

Next Meeting: September 20, 2019



Central Jersey Family Health Consortium
Mid-Jersey Cares, REIC
30 Silverline Drive, Suite 1, 2nd floor
North Brunswick, NJ 08902