

Friday, March 18, 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, March 18, 2022. The meeting was held via ZOOM meeting platform. The meeting was called to order at approximately 9:35 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. Catherine Colucci motioned to approve the January 21, 2022, meeting minutes;
Seconded by Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen.
- II. The January 21, 2022 minutes were *APPROVED*; 8 YES, no opposed, 1 Abstained;
no discussion.

SICC Member Updates

- I. Joyce Salzberg shared that the Women's Business Collaborative CEO was asked to ring the bell at the Stock Exchange.

SICC Standing & Ad Hoc Committees Reports

- I. **Personnel Preparation Committee**, Chair-Corinne Catalano
 - A. Corinne Catalano shared updates regarding the Applicant Review Forms previously shared with Members. The goal of the forms is to assist and support agencies in answering the question: Does this candidate have the degree, coursework, and experience to support the skill set for this position?

MOTION: Corinne Catalano motioned that Council recommend the idea of the forms be sent on to DOH for review.

No discussion

APPROVED; 8 approved, no opposed, no abstained

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

- A. Virginia Lynn shared the Committee is reviewing Interpreter Competencies in Early Intervention (EI)
- B. Susan Evans requested the committee also look at translation procedures in getting more documents translated for families in their native languages.

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

- A. Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen shared that the Committee is working on the ongoing development of a survey regarding the Early Intervention Management System (EIMS) and missed sessions by families.
 - i. Committee recognizes 4 main areas regarding no-shows:
 - 1. The current EIMS does not capture non-emergent no shows
 - 2. Lack of continuity for children's services and the impacts on developmental goals
 - 3. Operational impact for providers and practitioners
 - 4. Financial impact on providers and practitioners
 - ii. Maria Emerson discussed a visual shared regarding family cancelled and missed sessions. A non-emergent no show is a missed session that happens consistently and the same day as the service was to occur.
 - iii. Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen summarized Committee:
 - 1. Hopes the rate study addresses a possible compensation for family no-shows
 - 2. Recommends Council recommends the State add a drop down selection in the EIMS to capture non-emergent family cancelations, and
 - 3. Would like to develop a policy/protocol for handling non-emergent no-shows similarly across the state.
- B. Formal motion unable to be voted on, however, Susan Evans added the Department will take the suggestion to amend the EIMS to capture non-emergent no- shows by families as a data point.

IV. **Administrative/Policy Committee**, Chair-Chanell McDevitt

- A. Chanell McDevitt was not present, but previously shared the SICC 2023 draft Budget for Member review and further discussion at a later date.

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

- A. Nicole Edwards shared the Committee is looking at how to improve birth to one referral rates and barriers to the early referrals.
- B. Joyce Salzberg asked if the Committee is looking to address mental health support for families.
- C. Susan Evans added the Regional Early Intervention Collaboratives (REIC) Family Support Specialists, along with Montclair University, are providing a program and training on Positive Solutions for Families, focusing on infant mental health and early relational health.

Lead Agency Report, Susan Evans, Part C Coordinator

I. Federal Updates

- A. New Jersey Application for federal funds is posted on the department's website for public comment.
 - i. The final federal allocations have not been released therefore the application budget is based on last year's allocation amount.
 - ii. At this time, there will be no federal policies that require an equity plan, a two-year notice needed before restricting eligibility, or prohibit collection of family fees.
 - 1. The DOH will not reinstate the suspension policy for Family Cost Share at this time.
 - iii. OSEP has provided States the ability to use Part C funds to continue offering Early Intervention for children who turn three years old over the Summer until in the beginning of the school year following the child's third birthday. DOH has not yet considered this new flexibility.

II. State Updates

- A. Governor's proposed budget has an increase which is intended to support Service Coordination

- and Regional Early Intervention Collaborative (REIC) Single Point of Entry (SPOE).
- B. DOH is analyzing the current intake processes and procedures that take place for a family during the Inquiry-Referral-Evaluation for areas of improvement.
 - C. Octavia Wilson, Data Analyst for the Northeast REIC, and Theresa Mulstay, Data Analyst for Family Link REIC, described the NJEIS Funnel Chart, visual example shared, showing the Referral Process from Inquiry to Exit.
 - i. Susan Evans added that a child is not referred until the family provides consent. Each region has a system outside of the EIMS to track inquiries.
 - D. The New Jersey Early Intervention System (NJEIS) expects to maintain the current reimbursement rates to providers through SFY 23.
 - E. Rate Study
 - i. Advisory Group meets monthly.
 - ii. There is an 84% return rate for the cost study from providers.
 - iii. Time Study is progressing on schedule.
 - iv. DOH discussing how to provide funds/a stipend for practitioners who participated in the rate study.
 - F. Indicator 4 Family Outcomes Sub-Committee reviewing survey tool and its distribution process. Looking at development of a flyer to share with families to increase participation and awareness and researching how EI can increase participation by expanding on what families will receive the survey, when and how the survey will be distributed.
 - G. Procedural Safeguards Updates
 - i. Complaints are tracked including informal, majority related to missed services not being provided and did not starting timely, disruptions in services due to cancellations from practitioners, and/or miscommunication with scheduling.
 - ii. Actively in process of hiring for vacant positions
 - H. Early Intervention Week
 - i. Week of May sixteenth. Planning for a half day virtual conference. REICs will have additional activities.

Regional Early Intervention Collaborative (REIC) Updates

- I. Information shared during the State Updates

New Business

- I. Members discussed various meeting options. May 2022 SICC meeting will be virtual. Discussed possibly having retreat in person to discuss future meeting options and locations.

Old Business

- I. No updates

Public Comments

David Holmes, ABCD Early Intervention Provider Association, provided the following comments: Thanked DOH for the 7.5% rate increase for Practitioners. Mentioned stipend for rate study participants. Concern for increase in gas costs affecting practitioners, especially when the session is cancelled by the family. Suggested DOH consider a gas allocation.

Sarah Bilyj, DOH shared her challenging experience with rescheduling services as a working Mother involved with Early Intervention several years ago. Susan Evans mentioned virtual and in-person services will continue to be an option for families.

Susan Evans announced the retirement of Deb Massey, the Service Coordination Unit Coordinator of Essex County.

The next SICC meeting is May 20, 2022, 9:30am.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Kimberly Peto and seconded by Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen at approximately 12:05 pm.