

Maryland Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (MD EHDI) Advisory Council

Virtual Meeting Minutes
October 21, 2021
12:30 pm – 2:30 pm

Members Present	Members Absent	Guests
Patty Muldowney, Chair	Allison Balsley	Jennifer Willis
Robyn Miller, Au.D.	Danielle Previ, Ph.D.	Cheri Dowling
Marny Helfrich	Catherine Paige	Nina DeSell
Kelby Brick, Esq., CDI		
Tina Backe		
Margaret Hargrove	Maryland Department of Health (MDH)	
Jonathan Walsh, MD	Stacy Taylor	
Mara Clement	Erin Filippone	
Brian Reilly, MD	Florence Harvey	
	ASL Interpreters	
	Anna Rose	
	Pat Berry	

Call to Order

Chairperson Patty Muldowney called the meeting to order.

Welcome and Meeting Etiquette Reminders

Chairperson Muldowney shared meeting etiquette reminders.

Approval of Previous Minutes

Council members were given July 2021 meeting minutes in advance for review. Chairperson Muldowney noted that Ruth Marin's name was spelled differently in the guest and discussion areas. Marny Helfrich moved to approve minutes as amended. Tina Backe seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion was approved with the correction of Ruth Marin's last name.

Continued Business

MD Department of Health (MDH) Updates

Membership Updates

- Stacy Taylor shared she is substituting for Tanya Green in her absence. The council has full membership. Dr. Jonathan Walsh is the new physician member and there is a new parent member who was unable to join the meeting today. Dr. Walsh introduced himself and gave a brief background.

MD EHDI Program Updates

Statistics

- Infant Hearing Program follow up statistics were shared for review. Kelby Brick asked what is being done to close the gap and catch up on the backlog for L2 and L3 screenings. Erin Filippone, from the MD EHDI Program, responded that follow up coordinators are doing what they can to get children in for screening. More families are willing to go in to have the screenings done but due to previous delays from COVID, there is an appointment backlog. Marny Helfrich asked for clarification of L2 babies. L2 have either not had an inpatient screening or did not pass the screening, so they need to finish their screening process. L3 needs a diagnostic evaluation. Chairperson Muldowney asked if the Council could help in any way. The biggest problem is a shortage of pediatric audiologists and those available are overwhelmed. Dr. Walsh asked the ages of the 700 in progress at L2 and L3. Erin Filippone noted that age information is known. Dr. Walsh noted a backlog of ABR appointments as well.

HRSA grant

- The ad hoc advisory committee is working on a partnership assessment. There are also plans underway to fulfill the family support and engagement requirements.

CDC grant

- There is a data report due tomorrow (October 22). There is a data use agreement with the MDH Vital Statistics Administration in place that will be very helpful. Modifications to the follow up database vendor contract are being worked on and will be coming soon.

New Business

Open Discussion

Chairperson Muldowney opened the discussion on reopening since the end of the COVID-19 state of emergency. Chairperson Muldowney shared successes at Maryland School for the Deaf (MSD). Classrooms are back in person, the Diagnostic Audiology Center is open and running again, home visits are available in person, and virtual visits are still available. Some challenges include distancing and masking with young children, illnesses leading to potential quarantine and absences.

Marny Helfrich shared that the experience of the Maryland Early Intervention system

has mirrored what Chairperson Muldowney is experiencing at MSD. Public awareness has been important to let people know that Early Intervention was still open and critical for kids. Numbers of referrals to early intervention have been increasing. They are thrilled with the resilience and flexibility that providers across the state as well as families have demonstrated.

Mara Clement of Infants and Toddlers, Montgomery County shared they are back in person since July and some families do have the option to be virtual. Over half of the families are in person. There has been success in bringing families in for a modified playgroup, which was well attended. Some challenges have been technology for families choosing to remain virtual, masking, and getting back into the childcare centers because not all centers are allowing visits.

Kelby Brick asked how programs are staying in contact with families that do not have broadband connections and if there is a plan to catch those families up who are missing services because of the broadband issues. Ms. Clement responded they have been able to provide Chromebooks and mobile hotspot devices to families that need them to access services. They are reviewing each child's case file to see where they are and scheduling make up services where needed. Ms. Helfrich mentioned there were some creative efforts in place to reach families in different ways if virtual was not an option, such as coaching over the phone and outdoor visits.

Chairperson Muldowney asked Ms. Clement if guidelines would be updated to ensure Infant and Toddler provider access to daycare centers or if it is an individual day care decision. Ms. Clement replied that in her experience, individual daycare centers are following CDC guidelines. Robyn Miller of Montgomery County has seen a much faster process from referral to IFSP creation. The backlog is about 50% caught up.

Dr. Walsh said that, from the hospital perspective, they are struggling with families coming back in 8 months to a year behind. Hospital staff is very low and there is a shortage of Audiology and OR times.

Kelby Brick asked that MDH create a strategic plan to close some gaps. Stacy Taylor responded she and Dr. Jed Miller have scheduled some meetings to talk independently, as well as with Tanya Green and Maternal and Child Health Bureau leadership to brainstorm strategies to get kids in for screening, diagnostic testing and any follow up early intervention services.

Virtual State Stakeholders Meeting

Cheri Dowling gave details for the upcoming State Stakeholders meeting. The meeting is co-sponsored by NCHAM again this year. Approved for ASHA credits and no charge

for anyone that needs those credits.

Discussion: Council Input on Date/Format of Future State Stakeholders Meetings

Chairperson Muldowney asked council members for their input on timing and format of future State Stakeholder meetings and an open discussion followed. Many considerations in determining the time of year and the format of future state stakeholder meetings were noted and discussion, all of which the MD EHDI Program will take in consideration in future planning.

Announcements

Jennifer Willis shared that the Hands and Voices EHDI Parent to Parent Committee just finished a guide for children who are deaf or hard of hearing plus (DHH with additional conditions). She shared the direct link with the council.

https://handsandvoices.org/resources/pubs/DHH-Plus_connecting-families.pdf

Next MD EHDI Advisory Council meeting: Thursday, January 20, 2022, 12:30 PM – 2:30 PM; meeting will be virtual

Adjournment

Dr. Walsh moved to adjourn the meeting. Tina Backe seconded the motion. Motion was approved. The meeting was adjourned.