

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

Minutes July 18, 2019

### **Members Present**

Jennifer Reesman,  
Ph.D., Chair  
Mara Clement  
Margaret Hargrove  
Patty Muldowney  
Kelby Brick, Esq., CDI  
Meagan Ackerman  
Robyn Miller, Au.D.

Marny Helfrich  
Brian Reilly, M.D.  
(Phone)  
Bridgetta Bourne-Firl  
(Phone)

### **Members Absent**

Tina Backe

### **Maryland Department of Health (MDH)**

Tanya D. Green  
Stacy Taylor, JD

### **Guests**

Cheri Dowling  
Olga Polites  
Nicole Salman  
Richard Jeffries, Ph.D.

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Jennifer Reesman at 12:35 pm.

### **Welcome & Sharing of a Story**

Chairperson Reesman welcomed everyone and shared a story about a 16-year-old, hard of hearing child who currently does not use hearing aids. The child's parent had no recollection of the child going through the newborn hearing screening process. The child was fitted with hearing aids at age four. It was later determined that the child was born in a state in which newborn hearing screening was not implemented until 2003. This story reminds us that there are still some students who did not have the benefit of access to early intervention at an appropriate time.

### **Approval of Previous Minutes**

The minutes from the April 18, 2019 meeting were voted on and approved with no corrections.

### **Demonstration: Referral Features of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Early Intervention (EI) Website**

<https://referral.mditp.org>

Marny Helfrich conducted a demonstration of the MSDE EI website. EI referral can now be made online. An account must be set up to allow the capability to make an online referral. Documents can be uploaded (audiological reports, assessment reports) into the system. The website includes downloadable information for families and a physician's guide.

### **Old Business**

#### ***Parent Connections Update***

The grant agreement between the Maryland Department of Health and the Parents' Place of Maryland which included funding for the "Parent Connections" parent to parent mentor program, ended on June 30, 2019. Planning is underway to establish funding for continuing "Parent Connections".

### ***Newborn Hearing Screening Protocols/Best Practices Update***

MDH has reviewed the content of the best practices document and the draft was sent to the MD EHDI Advisory Council workgroup members for review and feedback. MDH is currently reviewing the feedback received from workgroup members.

### ***Membership Update***

Mara Clement joins the Council. She represents the educator from a local education agency position. Her appointment became effective July 1, 2019. Mara has served the Montgomery County Public School System as a teacher of the deaf since 2002. Tina Backe has been reappointed as the MDH representative, effective July 1, 2019. Bridgetta Bourne-Firl's appointment as the Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD) representative ended on June 30, 2019. Bridgetta will continue to serve until MDAD makes a recommendation regarding the position. Jessica Thornton resigned her position as 1 of the 2 parent representatives. The following representatives have terms ending on June 30, 2020: Kelby Brick, Patty Muldowney, and Jennifer Reesman.

### ***MD EHDI Program Update***

Program statistics were provided and discussed. Concerns were raised about babies who are documented as having been identified as deaf or hard of hearing and referred to early intervention services but who are not enrolled in/receiving early intervention services. While there are a number of different reasons why some babies are not enrolled in early intervention (EI) services after referral (medically fragile, unable to contact, family pursued private services but has not provided that information to the State), it was suggested that reasons for declined services should be requested and documented and the State should follow up with families to encourage enrollment in EI services. It was requested that Tanya and Marny consult with one another to ensure that reasons for non-enrollment into EI services are verified and that the non-enrolled families are pursued and encouraged to enroll. Chairperson Reesman requested the Council be provided with data on refusal of services at the next meeting in October.

### ***MD EHDI HRSA Grant Update***

The HRSA grant is currently in year 3 of 3. Recruitment of pediatric practices for participation in the learning community for the final year of the grant will begin soon. There are two prospective practices, one in Baltimore City and one in Prince George's County. The learning community provides pediatric practice staff with information about the EHDI process. Practice staff from the first learning community cohort benefitted from new learning about the EHDI process.

### ***MD EHDI Brochure***

The MD EHDI brochure draft is still under review by the MD EHDI Program and the Office for Genetics and People with Special Health Care Needs.

### ***Annual MD EHDI Stakeholders Conference***

The annual MD EHDI Stakeholders Conference was held on May 9<sup>th</sup> at the Hearing and Speech Agency. Concerns were expressed about the skill level of the American Sign

Language (ASL) interpreters. Council members provided feedback on conference presentations. Council members were encouraged to suggest topics and speakers for future conferences.

***Follow up from previous meetings – Medicaid amplification reimbursement discussion***

There has not been much communication on this topic since the previous meeting, however it was learned that MDH Medicaid was not aware that the Nucleus 5 cochlear implant sound processor is becoming obsolete and Medicaid will need to approve upgrades. Local audiologists have reported that reimbursement has improved but is inconsistent. Concerns are still being reported about children and adults who have Medicaid as their secondary insurance and instances in which neither the primary insurance nor the Managed Care Organization (MCO) will cover hearing aids.

**New Business**

***Request for Council Chair Nominations***

Chairperson Reesman announced that her council term ends June 30, 2020. Nominations for chairperson and vice chairperson are requested.

**Announcements**

**Legislative Updates**

SB 677 - Deaf or Hard of Hearing Individuals - Support for Parents.

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?pid=billpage&stab=01&id=sb0677&tab=subject3&ys=2019RS>

This bill becomes effective October 1, 2019 and will require the Maryland Hearing Aid Loan Bank to distribute videos to the parents that provide information about language and communication. Council member Marny Helfrich stated that MSDE is considering videos to be included for distribution. Council members may contact Marny with recommendations.

**Next MD EHDI Advisory Council meeting:** Thursday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 12:30 PM – 2:30 PM, Hearing and Speech Agency; park in the rear lot.

**Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 PM.