

**New York State Early Intervention Coordinating Council
Minutes – September 24, 2020**

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action Items																																												
Welcome	<p>The following members/designated representatives attended the meeting:</p> <table><tr><td>x</td><td>Jessica Benton</td><td>x</td><td>Leah Esther Lax</td></tr><tr><td>x</td><td>Marcelle Bichotte-Dunner</td><td>x</td><td>Melissa Puchalski</td></tr><tr><td>x</td><td>Heidi Bond</td><td>x</td><td>Linda Rennie</td></tr><tr><td>x</td><td>Donna Bradbury (late)</td><td></td><td>Cheryl Schaefer Coppola</td></tr><tr><td>x</td><td>Amy De Vito</td><td>x</td><td>Lynn Shea</td></tr><tr><td>x</td><td>Karen Edwards</td><td>x</td><td>Elina Tsenter</td></tr><tr><td>x</td><td>Meghan Glass</td><td>x</td><td>Antonia Weidner</td></tr><tr><td>x</td><td>Steve Held</td><td></td><td>Nora Yates</td></tr><tr><td>x</td><td>Cheryl Hogan</td><td>x</td><td>Marina Yoegel</td></tr><tr><td>x</td><td>Talina Jones (late)</td><td>x</td><td>Kayleigh Zaloga</td></tr><tr><td>x</td><td>Paola Jordan</td><td>x</td><td>Patricia Zuber -Wilson (late)</td></tr></table> <p>Department of Health staff present: Peter Baran, Constance Donohue, Mike Iorio, Kenneth Moehringer, Katherine Reksc, Jessica Simmons, Dawn Smith, Lauren Tobias, Yan Wu</p> <p><i>All references to the Department refer to the New York State Department of Health, BEI to the Bureau of Early Intervention, and EI to the Early Intervention Program.</i></p>	x	Jessica Benton	x	Leah Esther Lax	x	Marcelle Bichotte-Dunner	x	Melissa Puchalski	x	Heidi Bond	x	Linda Rennie	x	Donna Bradbury (late)		Cheryl Schaefer Coppola	x	Amy De Vito	x	Lynn Shea	x	Karen Edwards	x	Elina Tsenter	x	Meghan Glass	x	Antonia Weidner	x	Steve Held		Nora Yates	x	Cheryl Hogan	x	Marina Yoegel	x	Talina Jones (late)	x	Kayleigh Zaloga	x	Paola Jordan	x	Patricia Zuber -Wilson (late)	
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Welcome	<p>Steve Held, EICC Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and thanked Council Members for attending the virtual Early Intervention Coordinating Council (EICC) meeting.</p> <p>The next EICC full Council Meeting is Thursday, December 3, 2020, from 10:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. It will be a virtual meeting. The next Executive Committee Meeting is October 7, 2020.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The next full Council meeting is December 3, 2020• The next Executive Committee meeting is October 7, 2020																																												
Approval of Minutes	<p>Mr. Held informed the Council that the minutes from the June 10, 2020, EICC meeting and the July 30, 2020 Executive Committee meeting were emailed to them.</p> <p>A motion was made by Karen Edwards and a second by Heidi Bond to approve the June 10, 2020 meeting minutes. Seventeen (17) members voted in favor, none opposed, and none (0) abstained. The minutes from the June 10, 2020, meeting passed.</p>																																													
New Business <i>EICC Member Update</i> <i>Bureau Administrative Updates</i> <i>COVID-19 Update</i>	<p>Dr. Donohue reported that there were no changes with the EICC membership; however, there are people being vetted and an update would be given at the December 2020 EICC meeting.</p> <p>Guidance in the form of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) has been issued and is located on BEI’s website. Topics include telehealth and virtual EI visits, re-opening, transition, and resuming in-person individual EI services. There is also updated guidance on delivery of home-based visits regarding COVID-19. Yesterday additional FAQs on resuming group EI services and waivers of liability were approved and disseminated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An update on EICC membership will be provided at the December 2020 meeting• An update on COVID-19 will be provided at the December 2020 meeting																																												

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<p><i>Telehealth Update</i></p> <p><i>Transportation Guidance Document</i></p> <p><i>Open Discussion</i></p>	<p>In response to a question related to the EI re-opening guidance for group services, Dr. Donohue clarified that EI's guidance aligned with reopening of schools in a municipality to allow time to amend individualized family service plans (IFSPs) prepare provider sites, train providers on updated health and safety protocols, and arrange transportation services as needed. Further, waiting until 30 days after schools open (either for in-person learning or a hybrid of in-person and virtual learning), provides some visibility regarding whether hotspots or increases in reported cases of COVID-19 would occur. Another factor is the transition of children from Part C early intervention to Part B preschool programs and services. In the case of closures, the EI Program, preschool and schools would be following the direction of the local health department or the State Department of Health.</p> <p>Dr. Donohue further noted that telehealth remains an option for children and families during the declared state of emergency for COVID-19. Standard telehealth consists of an audio and visual component. Guidance on teletherapy without a visual component can be found on BEI's website.</p> <p>At the EICC meeting in June there was a vote to add telehealth as a charge to the Provider Workforce Capacity Task Force and an update will be provided later in the meeting.</p> <p>Dr. Donohue provided an update on the Transportation Guidance Document (see presentation). Effective November 1, 2020, counties may add in the use of a Medicaid Transportation Manager (MTM) for transportation of children who are Medicaid eligible. Effective on the date of Go-Live for the EI-Hub, EI transportation will be reimbursed for each one-way trip at the rates established under the Preschool Supportive Health Services Program (PSHSP). These rates are included in a approved SPA 18-39 for use for Early Intervention (EI) transportation. These rates will be updated upon completion of a transportation cost study by PCG, reviewed by the Department, and approved by the Division of the Budget. Claiming for transportation services provided using the MTM would be done outside the EI system. Claiming for transportation services provided under the EIP will be done through the EI-Hub after Go-Live. Additionally, counties can continue to contract with vendors at a negotiated rate. Reimbursement for transportation services will be on a fee-for-service basis for each one-way trip after the launch of the EI-Hub, at an established rate.</p> <p>Skilled nursing is not reimbursable under transportation.</p> <p>Reimbursement methodologies were discussed.</p> <p>Ms. Jordan commented that some families are trying to do their best to do telehealth via a smart phone because they have no other way to access the service. Also, parents are choosing to close their EI cases because of a lack of accessibility to technology to access teletherapy. Dr. Donohue responded that in the short term that children and families who are struggling with technology, should be considered first to resume in-person services if health metrics indicate it is safe to do so, and guidance is in place to help providers and families resume in-person services safely. Additionally, guidance on teletherapy without a visual component may provide a helpful alternative for families. In the longer term, the Department is working with the Justice Center to be able to loan equipment to families that need it through a lending library program, Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities (TRAID), that is in every region of the state. Ms. Jordan elaborated that she is concerned more specifically about minority groups, such as families whose primary language is Spanish.</p> <p>Dr. Donohue suggested that it would be appropriate for the Provider Workforce Capacity Task Force including Telehealth to explore if there is a universal way to provide equipment to children and families for EI programming. Ms. Jordan inquired about who would provide technical support for iPads. Ms. Tobias mentioned that there is a Medicaid Telehealth workgroup</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An update on Telehealth will be provided at the December 2020 meeting • An update on Transportation will be provided at the December 2020 meeting

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	<p>which is looking at what Medicaid services via telehealth look like currently, but also post pandemic, and the issue of lack of equipment for telehealth services should also be referred to them for consideration.</p> <p>Further conversation about telehealth and families being able to access telehealth services ensued. Topics focused on assistive technology and providing equipment.</p>	
<p>Report of Task Force Activities <i>Provider Workforce Capacity Task Force including Competency-Based Training and Telehealth Update</i></p>	<p>Linda Rennie, EICC Provider Member, EIO Nassau County & Marina Yoegel, EICC County Member, EIO Westchester County, provided an update on the Provider Workforce Capacity Task Force activities (see presentation). The Task Force is working to revise its charge to include the addition of the Telehealth subgroup and to develop Telehealth questions to be used for surveys and focus groups with parents and EI providers to assess readiness for evaluations, technology and services.</p> <p>In addition, the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee (Telehealth group) will develop recommendations to the Task Force to address capacity. Task force members are reviewing the six (6) proposed Foundational Core Competencies and hope to present them at the December meeting.</p> <p>Regarding the survey, questions will be addressed to obtain feedback from providers and families. Developing questions to obtain feedback from administrators, agency owners and directors is being considered. Ms. Jordan also inquired about developing questions that could address providers' behaviors and perceptions about delivering services in certain homes or in certain zip codes. Dr. Esther-Lax offered to share the names of some parents who would be able to translate the survey questions into other languages. Dr. Donohue thanked her and informed the Council that the Department uses a translation service for this purpose, but it is helpful to have people to serve as a resource to review translated products.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task Force update will be given at the December 2020 meeting
<p><i>Social-Emotional Guidance Document Dissemination Workgroup</i></p>	<p>Rochelle Macer, Workgroup Chair, provided an update on the Social-Emotional Guidance Document Dissemination Workgroup (see presentation). She reviewed the guidance documents, the Workgroup's purpose and goals, its projects and progress as well as next steps.</p> <p>The Social-Emotional Guidance Document is available on the DOH BEI website. Major projects include a reference guide, e-learning, and a webpage for families. Desk guides/aids are currently under development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work group update will be given at the December 2020 meeting
<p>Report of Additional Department Activities <i>State Systemic Improvement Plan</i></p>	<p>Jessica Simmons, of BEI's Training, Technical Assistance, and SSIP/Outcomes Unit, provided an update on the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) iFact - Improving Family Centeredness Together. This year's SSIP focus has included the development of thirty trainings on family-centered practices and findings from the learning collaboratives. All training will be available on the Department's learning management system and a link to the training will be on the Department's website.</p> <p>Training developed by each UCEDD will be available on their specific learning management systems and website or YouTube channel. The Department will send stakeholders a list serve announcement to share the training information.</p> <p>Maria Elena Ramos, MS, Rose F. Kennedy Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Patricia Patrick, Dr., PH, Westchester Institute for Human Development, and Kelly Yost, Ph.D., The Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities at the University of Rochester Medical Center, provided an update on the University Centers of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities' (UCEDDs) work (see presentations). They provided an overview of the teams they supported, highlighted some</p>	

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	of the county projects, discussed challenges and successes to project implementation, and reviewed the family-centered trainings they developed.	
Lunch Break	<i>1:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.</i>	
<i>EI-Hub Update</i>	Jim Bryant, Project Manager, NYSTEC, and Ryan White, PCG, provided an update on the EI-Hub (see presentation). Paula VanMeter, Joe Baile, Schemicah Alexander, and Sherree Sinclair provided a demonstration of the EI-Hub. Cathy Mayfield shared some enhancements to EI Billing with the Council. The frequency of the Hub Club newsletter has increased. Documents (attachments) in NYEIS will not be migrated to the EI Hub. NYEIS will remain read-only until September 1, 2021, and then it will be decommissioned. Key dates: Launch of EI-Hub LMS – Spring 2021; EI-Hub Go-Live – May 2021; Deadline for downloading files from NYEIS – September 2021. There was discussion about allowing families to access the EI-Hub in the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on the EI Hub will be given at the December 2020 meeting
<i>PCG (State Fiscal Agent) (SFA) Update</i>	Paula VanMeter and Cheryl Carlisle provided an update from PCG (see presentation). The top denial reason for insurance claims processed January 1, 2020 - June 30, 2020 was still authorization. It dropped three percent, maybe in part due to restrictions that were lifted by payers due to the pandemic. Denials in the EI program include co-pays, deductibles, and coinsurance, as well as many of the prior authorizations going out-of-network. Many services are being covered during COVID; co-pays and deductibles are not being applied. In addition, many services are being covered currently with people being allowed to go out-of-network. Total calls at the Call Center per quarter decreased to 2,005 during the second quarter, likely affected by COVID and the decrease in services. The Medicaid Sweep process was explained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCG Update will be given at the December 2020 meeting
<i>Fiscal Agent Payment Data Update</i>	Ken Moehringer, Fiscal Planning and Policy Unit Manager, presented an update on the Fiscal Agent Payment Data (see presentation). Topics discussed included enrollment, provider capacity, timeliness of payments and insurance and Medicaid reimbursement. The number of children enrolled with an IFSP declined seven percent (7%) from program year 2018-2019 to program year 2019-2020, most likely due to the COVID pandemic. There has been a reduction in claims, and, therefore, a reduction in services and a reduction in claims submitted to Medicaid. There has been a decrease in the reimbursement rate from Medicaid.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal Agent Payment Data Update will be given at the December 2020 meeting
Public Comment	Public comments were submitted prior to the meeting and read aloud. The following comment was received from Scott Mesh, PhD, CEO – Los Ninos: My agency provides toddler developmental groups and I am concerned that the groups have not yet been approved to begin. I would appreciate hearing about the proposed reopening date, if available.	
Future Agenda Items	Agenda items suggested by EICC members for future EICC meetings include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telehealth • Health Homes • Family directed assessments • Budget proposals • COVID-19 	
Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned by Talina Jones at 2:57 p.m.	