

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Advisory Council Meeting Minutes  
1.21.22

Council Members present: Gina Easterly, Dana Hubbard, Natalie Delgado, Leigh Anne Norman, Marbely Barahona, Cindy Voelker, Theresa Nicholls, Ellis Arjmand, John Carter, and Shane Bates was proxy for Jana Broussard.

EHDI Team Members present: Terri Ibieta, and Danielle Mercer

Guests present: Rachelle Boudreaux/Bureau of Family Health, Amanda Perry/Bureau of Family Health, Ernest Garrett/Louisiana School for the Deaf, Nigel Burkhardt/Louisiana School for the Deaf, Nicole Deleon/LA Hands & Voices, Nicky Gillies, Sarah Hart/St. Tammany Parish School System, Beth Holloway/St. Tammany Parish School System, Lauren Jones/St. Tammany Parish School System, and Cassie Guilbeau

Chair Dana Hubbard called the meeting to order at 10:02a.m.

Review of Minutes: Motion to accept October 22, 2021 meeting minutes from Gina Easterly with a second from Ellis Arjmand. Meeting minutes were accepted.

EHDI Program Updates provided by EHDI Coordinator Terri Ibieta. First update: Louisiana EHDI had two abstracts accepted at the National EHDI Conference March 13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>: 1) 'How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected the timeliness of hearing screening follow-up in Louisiana?' by Dr. Tri Tran, and 2) 'Factors Contributing to Late Identification of Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing (D/HH) Children in Louisiana' by Dr. Danielle Mercer. Second update: The National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management, Newborn Hearing Screening Training Curriculum will be completed by all screeners this year. The recommended practices throughout the course are based on the 2019 Joint Committee on Infant Hearing (JCIH) Position Statement. Final update: The EHDI Program developed a brochure for families with babies who passed the newborn hearing screening, but require additional outpatient testing because they are at risk for delayed-onset or progressive hearing loss. In addition, the EHDI program expanded family and physician contacts to now include infants who pass newborn hearing screening, yet have risk factors for late-onset early childhood hearing loss with no follow-up reported.

1-3-6 Progress provided by Danielle Mercer, EHDI Program System Development Coordinator. Data on 2020 births indicate that 96.8% of babies were screened by 1 month of age, a figure that showed only a slight decline from 2019. Of children who did not pass newborn hearing screening, 73.4% received a diagnosis by 3 months of age. This figure is roughly equivalent to 2019, though steady improvements have been observed for several years. Of children identified as D/HH, 54.5% enrolled into early intervention services by 6 months of age, a significant improvement over 2019.

LA Hands & Voices update: LA Hands & Voices Director, Nicole Deleon provided an update on Hands & Voices activities. Parent Guides provide outreach and education to families of children newly identified as deaf/hard of hearing, and connects them to each other through monthly Parent Chats. An open mic night was recently hosted to enable families to talk informally with Parent Guides and Deaf/Hard of Hearing Guides about their experiences on their journey. An advocacy series is currently being hosted for families.

Statewide Outreach Director of Deaf Education, Special School District/Louisiana School for the Deaf, Natalie Delgado provided an update on the Parent-Pupil Education (PPEP) Program activities. The PPEP team will attend the National EHDI Conference, and Natalie will be on a panel of expert Deaf EHDI Professionals. They are currently providing services to 176 students, and trying to hire a teacher in North Louisiana. Upcoming activities and events, such as Family Learning and Fun Weekend, and monthly virtual workshops are all posted on social media. The Deaf Mentor program is waiting on a Medicaid contact to explore funding, and the Early Childhood Program efforts are ongoing.

CMV Committee: Screening protocol and type of screening is being collected from the four LA hospitals providing targeted cCMV screening. The EHDI program is working on a data collection method to obtain data on all infants who test positive for cCMV. National CMV written materials were shared.

New Business: Future meeting dates: April 22, 2022, July 29, 2022 and October 28, 2022

Public Comment: None expressed.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:58am with a motion by Theresa Nicholls, seconded by Gina Easterly.