



State of Louisiana
Louisiana Department of Health
Office of Public Health

**ADVISORY COUNCIL
FOR THE EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INFANTS**

**Friday, July 24, 2026
12:00-2:30 p.m.**

Bienville Building, Room 372 628 North 4th Street Baton Rouge, LA 70802

The Bureau of Family Health is committed to promoting transparency, accessibility, and public engagement in all board, commission, and council meetings. As part of that commitment and for the convenience of members of the public, access the meeting online using the provided link.

Meeting Registration Link

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_vbf6PwAbRMy5ZwEK045UoQ

- I. Call to Order at 12:15 p.m. – Susannah Boudreaux, Secretary
- II. Roll Call – Susannah Boudreaux, Secretary
 - a. Council members present: Cindy Voelker, Paul Remedios, Deborah Cowan, Jana Broussard, Natalie Delgado, Lauren Jones, Jill Hudson, Kristen Williams, Susannah Boudreaux, and Marissa Ramos
 - b. Council members absent: John Carter (Adam Master), Ashley Argrave-Smith, and Caitlyn Robinson
 - c. Council member vacancies: Hospital Administrator
 - d. Quorum established
 - e. Bureau of Family Health staff present: Dana Hubbard, Terri Ibieta
 - f. Caroline Oglesby-Nailor (EarlySteps), Ivette Perez
(Guidance, Outreach, and Language Development – GOLD)
- III. Council membership – Susannah Boudreaux, Secretary, reviewed new Council seats to be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate pursuant to Act 517, effective August 1, 2026. The new member seats are listed below.
 - a young adult (18-26 years of age) who is d/Deaf, DeafBlind, or hard of hearing (d/D, DB, HH);
 - an early intervention provider who works with children who are d/D, DB, HH and their families;
 - a person who is d/D, DB, HH and is the parent of a child who is d/D, DB, HH;
 - a parent of a child who is d/D, DB, HH and currently enrolled in early intervention;
 - a representative from a Louisiana-based family support organization serving families of children who are d/D, DB, HH;
 - a representative from Louisiana Part C;
 - and a representative from the Governor's Advisory Council for Disability Affairs.

Boudreaux also reviewed the positions of members whose terms have expired and who are still serving because the Governor has not appointed or reappointed anyone for those specific positions, as well as positions that are currently vacant on the Council. Interested applicants are encouraged to contact the Louisiana Early Hearing Detection and

Intervention (LA EHDI) program at LaEHDI@la.gov regarding the application process.

IV. Mandate review – Dana Hubbard, Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program Manager reviewed the statutory duties of the Advisory Council, including consultation with the LA EHDI Program regarding statewide newborn hearing screening, early identification, diagnostic follow-up, early intervention, family support, quality improvement, and coordination of services for infants and children who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing.

V. Public Comment

- a. No public comments were submitted prior to the meeting.
- b. No public comments were made during the meeting.

VI. Approval of Agenda and Minutes (vote) – Susannah Boudreaux, Secretary

- a. July 2026 Agenda presented by Susannah Boudreaux. Motion to approve the July 2026 agenda made by Deborah Cowan, and motion seconded by Jana Broussard. Motion passed unanimously by voice. July 2026 agenda approved.
- b. April 2026 Minutes motion to approve the April 2026 meeting minutes made by Deborah Cowan, and motion seconded by Jill Hudson. Motion passed unanimously by voice. April 2026 meeting minutes approved.

VII. EHDI Program Updates – EHDI Program Staff

- a. Family support – Dana Hubbard, EHDI Program Manager provided an update regarding the status of the Hands & Voices family support contract. The program is making requested revisions from the Office of Public Health leadership and plans to submit the changes for review on Monday, 7/27.
- b. LA EHDI Regional Collaborative Meetings – Terri Ibieta, EHDI Program Coordinator provided an overview of the program's Regional Collaboratives. The objectives of the collaboratives focus on sharing regional and statewide achievement of the EHDI 1-3-6 goals, provide an opportunity for families and providers to work together, and work to improve early intervention and language outcomes for children who are d/DHH. Ongoing efforts to strengthen collaboration among audiologists, early intervention providers, educators, and community partners to improve statewide EHDI outcomes related to early intervention enrollment were discussed. The regional collaboratives will resume meeting according to the projected schedule as follows:
 - September 2026 – Regions 3, 9;
 - November 2026 – Regions 2, 4;
 - January 2027 – Regions 7, 8; and
 - March 2027 – Regions 5, 6.

VIII. Old Business

- a. Law Workgroup – Jana Broussard, Workgroup Chair provided an overview of changes related to Act 517. These included renaming the law as the Newborn Hearing Screening Law, modernization of terminology, definitions, and alignment with current EHDI and Joint Committee on Infant Hearing standards. Additionally, Act 517 strengthens statewide reporting and quality oversight and expands family education, follow-up, early intervention and support services language. Council membership is expanded from 14 to 21 members. Act 517 is effective on August 1, 2026. At this time, it was determined that the current work of the Law Workgroup has concluded. Discussion related to revision of

the rules and regulations that guide implementation of the LA EHDI program may be considered in the future.

b. EHDI Program Infrastructure – Dana Hubbard, LA EHDI Program Manager

- i. The following updates were provided for the assessment of language in eligibility evaluations and ongoing services in EarlySteps and collaboration with Guidance, Outreach, and Language Development (GOLD) program:
 - i. Additional teachers of the d/Deaf, who have experience working with d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing (d/DHH) children have enrolled as service providers (special instructors) in EarlySteps, and eight of them are engaging in special training provided by EarlySteps leadership to become evaluators and ongoing service providers for children who are d/DHH and their families. The goal is to assess all children who are d/DHH enrolled in Part C EarlySteps using the Developmental Assessment of Young Children – 2 (DAYC-2) and the MacArthur Bates Communicative Developmental Inventories – III (MBCDI-III) upon intake into Part C and an annual basis for language monitoring.
 - ii. The GOLD program will begin utilizing the MBCDI-III in addition to the Ski-Hi Language Developmental Scale (Ski-Hi LDS) at the start of this school year for children who enroll in non-Part C GOLD. This will ensure that children who are only enrolled in non-Part C are assessed using this tool as well. At minimum, this assessment will be conducted at the beginning and end of each school year. The Ski-Hi LDS is utilized quarterly.
 - iii. Assessment of language acquisition for children who are d/DHH who are not enrolled in Part C or non-Part C continues to be a challenge. The LA EHDI program will continue to contact these families to discuss the importance of early intervention and encourage enrollment, in addition to talking with the child's audiologist and pediatrician.
- ii. Language Outcomes Workgroup met on July 13 and decided they would meet once per month until the scope of work is defined. Then, the work group will meet every six-to-eight weeks. A poll of potential priority areas is currently open and includes system of accountability, data, resources for supporting families and providers, timelines, needs assessment, transition after age three, support from age 3-5, and Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids (LEAD-K).

VIII. New Business - no new business was provided prior to the meeting or requested for addition prior to voting on the agenda.

IX. Partner Updates –

- a. Ivette Perez provided an update regarding the GOLD program current staffing (imminent retirement of north Louisiana teacher) and developing plan for statewide service coverage.
- b. Caroline Nailor-Oglesby, Part C Early Intervention Program Manager, shared that the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) has been renamed the Office for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (OIDD) and provided brief program updates.
- c. Marissa Ramos shared information regarding a mobile application available to families to support American Sign Language (ASL) acquisition and early language development. The app is titled "Sign and Say," and will be free for families whose children are d/Deaf and hard of hearing. The app was developed in collaboration with the Regional Early

Acquisition of Language (REAL) project through the Clerc Center at Gallaudet University.

- X. Public Comment - no public comments were offered.
- XI. Adjournment - Motion to adjourn made by Deborah Cowan, and motion seconded by Dr. Natalie Delgado. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:49 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 23, 2026, from 12:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. and will be held at Benson Tower in New Orleans.

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