



MEETING SUMMARY March 27, 2009

A regular public meeting of the New Jersey State Interagency Coordinating Council was held on Friday, March 27, 2009, at the Medical Society of New Jersey Conference Center in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order at 11:10 a.m. by Katherine Doyle, Chair, who presided and declared a quorum present.

ATTENDANCE – Attached

WELCOME/CHAIR'S REPORT

1. Ms. Doyle reviewed the *SICC protocol regarding public comment*, printed on the SICC agenda made available to the public.
2. At Ms. Doyle's request, SICC members and 44 public members introduced themselves and identified their connection with early intervention.
3. The Governor's Appointments' Office confirmed the mandatory retirement of William Agress, former SICC Chair (12/3/99-12/9/05) and parent representative (11/23/98-3/27/09) whose son had "aged out" of the system. SICC members offered individual tributes to Mr. Agress. In behalf of the Council, Ms. Doyle presented an inscribed book and expressed deep appreciation for Mr. Agress' many years of dedicated service, including achievement by legislative action of Early Intervention Week in June of each year and his "perfect attendance."
4. Ms. Doyle continued to reach out to the *Governor's Appointments Assistant Director Amber Oakley* in the ongoing efforts to fill the now three parent representative vacancies on the Council, as well as other unresolved issues. Assistant Commissioner Celeste Andriot Wood will lend her support by also contacting Ms. Oakley. Meanwhile, Chair Doyle continued to encourage the public at large – and especially service coordinators – to submit resumes for membership on the SICC.
5. The minutes of the *February 24, 2009 Executive Committee* were unanimously accepted as distributed in advance (attached to file copy of minutes). Ms. Doyle reported the disposition of individual public comments made at the January 23rd meeting, as reflected in these minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The *minutes of the January meetings* were unanimously approved as distributed:

- January 23, 2009 (closed SICC session) – upon motion by Warren Moore, seconded by Chanell McDevitt and carried.
- January 23, 2009 (public meeting) – upon motion by Joseph Holahan, seconded by Mr. Moore and carried.

SICC ADVISEMENT COMMITTEES

1. **Administrative** – Annette Ristoro, Chair/Michele Christopoulos, Vice Chair

(A) The committee is working on the *SICC budget for next year*. Committee Chairs who have special requests for funds should send them to Ms. Ristoro.

(B) The expenses of the *website* are higher than anticipated, so the committee is looking into another site.

2. **Family Support** – Norman Rosenblum, Chair/Joseph Holahan, Vice Chair

(A) The committee continues its efforts to bring some *early intervention services into community settings*, and to encourage children with disabilities to attend different community settings, spending time with their peers. The main focus, considering the stringent budget, is to seek help from the early intervention system to make the transition to community settings more open to children with disabilities, especially in the underserved population.

(B) The committee reviewed their *charges from the 2007 retreat*: (a) Physician training has greatly improved pediatricians' timely referrals to early intervention. There are continuing proposals to work on short training sessions for physicians. (b) Awaiting report of committee's advisement that NJEIS remove the correction for prematurity from eligibility determination (amendment to NJEIS Rules (NJAC 8:17)). (c) Awaiting SICC website where parents can make comments about early intervention, the SICC or their own concerns. (d) Awaiting distribution of statewide and county data from the NCSEAM Family Service and REIC surveys to identify community supports and services.

(C) The committee asked Mr. Agress to serve as *consultant/liaison to SICC activities for the 2009 Early Intervention Week*.

3. **Service Delivery** – Steve Weiss, Chair/Joyce Salzberg, Vice Chair

(A) Mr. Weiss gave an overview of two meetings – *January 5, 2009 corrected and February 20, 2009* (distributed in advance/attached to file copy of minutes). Since advisements to the Lead Agency are made by the Council and not by individual committees regardless of circumstances, questions arose concerning the committee's taking decisions/actions on committee deliberations directly to the Lead Agency without prior review/action by the Council. The documents and committee recommendations in question will be sent to the entire Council, for action at the May 15th meeting. Discussion focused on the Lead Agency's time constraints

for action on issues between meetings of the Council. The Chair outlined procedures that could remedy this need: Council telephone conferences, SICC vote by mail ballot and calling of special meetings in dire circumstances with substantive issues.

(B) The Council approved – upon motion by Mr. Weiss, seconded by Ms. McDevitt and carried (Ms. Wood abstained) – the committee’s recommendation that the

Department conduct a “cost-time analysis” to determine if the current bill rates paid to agencies should be decreased, stay flat or increased.

It was reported that the last study was conducted in 2002 and implemented in 2004, at a cost of approximately \$30,000.

4. **State Performance Plan** – Terry Harrison for Warren Moore, Chair

The committee reviewed (a) Jill Simone’s report on *Early Intervention and Medicaid Waivers* and recommendation that the issue not be pursued; and (b) Lowell Arye’s *EIPA Briefing Paper on Early Intervention and Medicaid Waivers*. The committee agreed to reach out to Mr. Arye to confirm the questions in his paper and to pursue the questions with Dr. Simone.

NJ DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

Celeste Andriot Wood, Assistant Commissioner; Terry Harrison, Part C Coordinator

1. (A) Ms. Wood outlined the *procedure in which the Early Intervention System has budgeted on an accrual basis* and roll forward of federal Part C funds into the next state fiscal year. However, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) expects that the budget will be on a cash basis. Within this context, OMB took back \$18 Million in early intervention funding in this fiscal year, thereby reducing available funding for the SFY 2010. The federal stimulus funds from the American Recovery and Reimbursement Act for Part C will help to cover the growth for SFY 2010. New Jersey Part C allocation is \$10,799,688 over the two year funding period. The NJDHSS is expecting budget language that will allow a written request for additional funds based on growth and expenditures from the OMB without going through the legislative process.

(B) Ms. Wood provided an overview of the competitive *Service Coordination Request For Proposal (RFP)* that will be issued in April. The SICC Service Delivery Advisement Committee provided input for the RFP, but it is not something that will go before the SICC for review or advise. The NJDHSS, as Lead Agency, is responsible for the RFP and grants/contracts. (Details in SDA minutes previously distributed to SICC members.)

(C) *Amendments to NJEIS Rules (NJAC 8:17)* have been drafted. Substantive changes must go out for public comment.

(D) A *Procedural Safeguards Coordinator* has not yet been hired because of budget constraints and uncertainty of position insecurity with talk of possible state layoffs.

2. (A) Ms. Harrison reported on the progress of the *Part C FFY 2009 application*, which was distributed to the public as of March 18, 2009. The application will be published for 60 days (March 18 – May 17, 2009, and the DHSS will accept written public comment for 30 days (April 10 – May 10, 2009). The proposed grant application can be viewed during the public comment period online at <http://nj.gov/health/fhs/eis/index.shtml> and at the Regional Early Intervention

Collaboratives and County Service Coordination Units. Written, email and facsimile comments will be received through May 20, 2009. The application due date is May 18, 2009.

(B) Ms. Harrison reviewed *Family Cost Participation statistics* (supplied in advance/ attached to file copy of minutes): revenue by statement date, suspensions by month the delinquent letter generated, exists by month the child exited early intervention, by month the child exited early intervention with FPL.

UPDATE FROM REICS

1. The REIC Directors reviewed a detailed list of *activities in each region for Early Intervention Week* (distributed/attached to file copy of minutes). The Council was greatly impressed, and complimented REIC Directors on their leadership role in promoting Early Intervention Week.
2. The REIC Directors distributed (attached to file copy of minutes) their *2nd Quarterly 2009 Family Support Activities*

NEW BUSINESS

1. The Chair will testify at the *public hearing of the Assembly Budget Committee* starting at 9:30 a.m., April 2nd, at the State House Annex in Trenton. Since she could not get a place on the Senate Budget Committee agenda, she will submit a written statement for the record.
2. The Chair referred to the *SICC Committee Restructuring* adopted by the SICC on April 24, 2006 (previously distributed/attached to file copy of minutes). The Council agreed that this document should be re-visited at the July 24th SICC retreat, where results will be evaluated, time-lines and priorities established, the effectiveness of the Council measured, advisement committees possibly realigned for a more balanced work distribution.
3. In response to the Chair's request to the Council for ideas for the *retreat agenda*, (a) members agreed the above comments regarding SICC Committee Restructuring should take priority. (b) Ms. Wood asked that the retreat agenda include consideration of her request for people with specific knowledge, experience and expertise to whom she could turn for operational needs of the State requiring immediate response that come up from time to time; should she look to the SICC as a resource or does she need to create another group. (c) Ms. Salzberg asked that the agenda include more effective communication among SICC members. (d) Chair Doyle's request is that more SICC members speak out on issues at meetings; that they find their voices to further the SICC mission statement.

It was agreed that the retreat required a facilitator, which will be discussed by the Executive Committee at its next meeting.

4. Ms. Wood informed the Council that May 22nd, the original date for the next *SICC meeting* is a "furlough day" weekend for her division. **The Council set Friday, May 15th, for its next meeting** – upon motion by Celine Fortin, seconded by Mr. Agress and carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. In response to a request at the January 23rd meeting, public members who want SICC *agenda/relevant attachments* may request them in advance of meetings by emailing Terrie Goeke at tegoeke@verizon.net.
2. *Pam Schachter of UMDNJ ...* Alleged that, in her experience with parents, pediatricians' knowledge of early intervention is inaccurate; outreach could be used to increase their understanding of updates/changes in the Early Intervention System, including cost share.
3. *Anne Bennett of SCHS/NIRNS ...* Requested that the Lead Agency announce when an action has been taken (i.e., Procedural Safeguards Coordinator) as opposed to projecting repeatedly when it will/might happen/be accomplished.
4. *Elizabeth Thomas of Cumberland County SCHS ...* Requested that the Lead Agency be sensitive to time-lines for coordinators who must write RFA, et al, within a brief period.
... Stated that it would have been more cost effective if the Lead Agency had sent out details of RFA proposal and tell (us) what is happening.

ADJOURNMENT – 1:30 p.m.

Upon motion by Dr. Holahan, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum and unanimously carried.

APPROVED

5.15.09