

**Friday, November 16, 2018, 2018**

**Public Meeting 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**  
***PUBLIC AGENDA***

A regular public meeting of the New Jersey State Interagency Coordinating Council (ISICC) was held on Friday, September 21, 2018 at Sunny Days Early Childhood Development Services in Manalapan, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order at 11:16 a.m. by Catherine (Kate) Colucci, Acting Chair and declared a quorum was present.

**Attendance** – Maintained by the Department of Health

**Welcome** – Kate Colucci welcomed attendees and read the Welcome Statement. On behalf of the SICC members, Kate acknowledged Terry Harrison on behalf of her retirement and for her years of dedication and commitment to the New Jersey Early Intervention System.

**Introductions** – SICC members introduced themselves, followed by the public, and Sandra Howell was in attendance as DOH representative.

**Approval of Minutes** – Joyce Salzberg noted that there was a misspelled name within the September 21, 2018 minutes. The previously distributed minutes of September 21, 2018 were unanimously approved with consideration of noted corrections upon motion. Four Council members that did not attend the meeting abstained. May 18, 2018 SICC meeting minutes will be posted soon.

The overall process for the SICC minutes are as follows:

- SICC members vote to amend or approve minutes at the meeting
- The secretary, Carmela will make changes and emails the final to DOH for posting to the SICC link on the DOH website
- The secretary will send a notice and copy the Chair and Part C Coordinator that the minutes are ready for posting.

**Lead Agency Report :**

1. **Procedural Safeguards Office** – the PSO report was not available at the time of this meeting. A report will be provided at the January 25, 2019 meeting.
2. **State System Improvement Plan (SSIP)** – No new updates were reported
3. **Professional Development** – No new updates were reported.

4. **Family Cost Participation** – Sandra Howell reported that the Department of Health (DOH) is reviewing information in regard to the families who are being impacted by the EIMS billing and their insurance companies. Some data has been collected, but need to collect additional information. Families are contacting DOH in regard to EIMS and their insurance companies. Families need to submit their invoices to their insurance companies in a certain timeframe. Families are not yet receiving all of their Early Intervention (EI) billing invoices. The DOH may talk to insurance providers to inform them about EIMS and how it has prevented families from getting their EOBs and invoices. There is concern that for some families they are not meeting their six-month timeline to claim reimbursement from their insurance. Some insurance companies have restrictions as to when they reimburse families. The DOH is in the process of developing a letter to provide to families to offer to their insurance companies to let them know about the EIMS billing/system errors. Some families do not have reimbursable coverage, but other families do. The DOH is helping those families by providing a letter to their insurance companies about the system issues.
5. **EIMS** – Sandra Howell reported an update on the EIMS. There was a great deal of discussion as summarized below.

**ACTION: Sandra Howell has agreed to release the “Master Plan” of tasks for PCG to accomplish, the timeline of deliverables to the SICC. SICC Members should look for this information and be prepared to discuss at the January meeting.**

There are priority tasks established by DOH and PCG is moving forward on all of the items. PCG is currently working on evaluations.

EIPS have submitted their back service logs (December 2017 through May 2018) to DOH. DOH has reviewed them and triaged the lists to minimize rejections. Most EIPs have had a first upload and are now in the process of the second upload. DOH can correct some items, like formatting, but for other issues they are returned to the REICs. The REICs are entering IFSPs into EIMS. Claims are often not being uploaded, even when correct, due in part that the IFSPs have not yet been entered. The REICs are working on this. For some records, an ID number was not identified with the child and for those claims they will be returned to the EIPs. Service log rejections are organized, corrected and uploaded. Eight (8) EIPs sent their records on paper, those files are less complete than expected and are returned for completion.

Joyce Salzberg asked about the back logs between June and September. Sandra responded that any logs after May need to be entered by the EIPs. At this point DOH is trying to get a handle on what is still outstanding and what else is out there.

Sandra reported that DOH is looking to improve conversation/communication between all stakeholders (REICs, EIPs, SCUs). DOH understands that the conversations have not been optimal.

DOH is trying to gather all the information on what is and what is not working in the system. NJEIS Personnel are out assessing and interviewing providers and service coordinators.

Joyce Salzberg asked about the communication plan and if there was anything that could be shared at today's meeting.

Sandra Howell responded that fielded positions have been posted for the Part C Coordinator and candidates are submitting resumes. Part-time and temporary positions have also been posted. Nili Gleaton, MS has applied for a position and now works as the Program Compliance Supervisor for NJEIS. Prior to joining NJEIS, Nili was a Service Coordinator in Pennsylvania. She will be working on a communication plan. In addition, her focus will be targeting on the process and management. She has already created a plan and an assessment for Service Coordinators to increase communication. There may be multiple strategies employed.

Susan Evans has been speaking with Service Coordinators in the North. The idea is to increase collaboration at all levels for better communication. Sandra stated that everyone is in this together, not everyone is happy, yet all are one. DOH needs to hear about the issues, in addition to the meetings that are occurring throughout the state. If anyone has collected data, they may share it with Sandra; it will help to understand what is going on and target efforts.

Joyce Salzberg provided Sandra Howell with Sunny Day's list and inquired how long folks in EI need to go through the rough process. She reported that there are still numerous glitches. She stated that DOH may not hear from folks in the field because they are "beaten down."

Sandra Howell specified that there are things that are being worked on every day. The issues will not change overnight. She agreed that there are still lots of things that need to be addressed. However, there are firm deadlines and consistent oversight of monitoring of PCG to ensure they are moving forward. PCG has deliverables set for December 1. There are meetings that continually take place with the commissioners. Note that the critical issues get addressed first.

Joyce Salzberg asked Sandra if PCG communication deadlines and deliverables could be sent to the SICC members.

Sandra stated she could send the deadline and deliverables items to the SICC members.

Kate Colucci asked if PCG had reached their previous deadlines and deliverables.

Sandra Howell responded that PCG had met previous deadlines and deliverables. She stated the company is held accountable on a weekly basis. They developed a path forward being responsible for uploading the back logs.

Kate Colucci asked if PCG met 75% of their requirements.

Sandra Howell responded that PCG has incorporated the path forward first, because it is one of the big items to take care of. Progress is being made. Comparing last February to now, many changes have been made. There are deliverables that may take two months, however there is someone assigned to monitor, that's how detailed they are. Pam from PCG may be available to participate at the next SICC meeting. Sandra is in constant contact with Pam and asks questions about the status of items.

**ACTION: Sandra Howell will see if a representative from PCG will attend a SICC Meeting, potentially in January.**

Kate Colucci asked what is the expected minimum and how many path forwards are expected.

Sandra Howell responded they will have as many as the system needs and requires.

Kate Colucci inquired on the scope of the problem.

Sandra Howell deferred the question to Terry Harrison. Terry stated that there were some major things that were critical for the system to function such as IFSPs and assessments. At this point, assessments are the last major glitch that needs to be addressed. Terry also stated that once the assessments are fixed, the next step to address will be Form 25. There are other things in the system that need improvement, but they have been put on the back burner. DOH needs to look to see what is critical to the system as opposed to what is an enhancement. DOH always hears how things could be enhanced, such as how EIPs and practitioners and SCs are assigned.

Sandra Howell stated that functionality of the system is the priority; enhancements are needed but the functionality of the system needs to come first.

Kim Peto stated that after the evaluation glitches, it is the SCUs that need assistance because everything else within the system and process stems from the units. The system will be wonderful after the glitches are gone. However, Service Coordinators (SCs) have

difficulty with the Help Desk. SCs often get different responses or solutions to things from different people at the Help Desk. For an example, SCs have contacted the Help Desk to assist with entering extensions, however, different people at the Help Desk provide different responses. There is no consistency.

Sandra Howell stated that calls to the Help Desk are not a programming issue.

Kim Peto stressed that the Help Desk staff all need to know how to address and how to fix an extension in the same way.

Sandra Howell has addressed the Help Desk issues in the past with PCG. However, EI personnel need to get a ticket number each time they contact the Help Desk. Help Desk calls have been low, but now they are high. When pulling the ticket number logs, it has been helpful in identifying the issues. Sandra reiterated the importance to keep asking the Help Desk for a ticket number; it is critical.

Kim Peto reported that the Help Desk responders do not always give a ticket number to the caller. In addition, Kim thought the ticket number meant PCG would get back to you and she did not know that a ticket number was needed even when a problem was addressed. She will let her SCs know to obtain a ticket number, even when the problem has been addressed.

Sandra Howell shared that the Help Desk is in more than one location (PCG is a national company). PCG also needs the data because they do not want NJEIS to have that experience either.

Kate Colucci asked Sandra why PCG continually needs prodding from DOH and asked why they are not able to fix and address the issues on their own.

Sandra Howell explained she had been involved with systemic changes and specifically with a hospital system's change and the training for it. She reported that even after a people received the training, individuals still asked how to do things. The Help Desk is the same. They receive the training but they revert back to doing the same things.

Kate asked why PCG keeps such poor performance. She also reported a troubling issue that practitioners deal with using EIMS. Kate stated a practitioner, specifically an occupational, physical, or speech therapist or developmental interventionist cannot view documentation of another practitioner unless they create a report in EIMS which is difficult to create and review as it appears on an excel spreadsheet. Kate stressed the importance of being able to access each other's documentation in order to work as a team. The way EIMS is structured sometimes works against NJEIS philosophy and mission.

Sandra Howell concurred that it is an issue, however, questioned whether it was designed to be that way intentionally, in other words, maybe records cannot be shared. There were bumper-guards put into place in the design of EIMS.

Kate Colucci stated that as a team member, you need to see each other's notes.

Sandra stated need to look at the design versus what is required by FERPA. Once that is clear, then the system can move on to the enhancements. The system needs to work on priorities first before addressing enhancements.

Joyce Salzberg noted the quality of service to families have been affected.

Sandra Howell stated PCG cannot address all the issues (function vs enhancements) at the same time.

Joyce specified that the system needs to care about the quality of service to families.

Sandra stated she wants to hear that type of feedback. The information helps to develop the following steps in terms of next level enhancements.

Kate stated what is being discussed is a function, not an enhancement. Practitioners need the ability to view each other's notes, as a team. Kate argued that hospital staff have the ability to view input from their peers working on their shared patient in order to have a handle on what is happening to their patient. Kate contended that if PCG is in this business, how could they not know that EI practitioners serving the same child need to have the ability to view each other's progress notes.

Sandra responded that not all medical professionals have access to view patient records, such as insurance companies. There are often barriers within systems. Some are due to HIPAA regulations. On the other-hand, pharmacies initially did not share records, but eventually evolved from experience, and now can share information. Sandra acknowledged that the current system is not perfect but it is moving forward. First step is to move to functionality. DOH will continue to find ways to make the system better for EIPs and families. DOH will look at enhancements, but at this time service claims are a priority.

Kate asked the SICC members if they had any questions.

Danielle Anderson Thomas asked to confirm that DOH is working toward completing the functionality before addressing enhancements.

Sandra responded by stating that there are items that had to be tweaked as well as items that are a priority, i.e., what is critical. The DOH is looking between what is needed (critical) and what might be an enhancement. There will be times that both might be able to be addressed at the same time. Each segment is reviewed; it is a complex system with moving parts, and DOH is plowing through the moving parts.

Danielle Anderson Thomas asked how DOH wants the providers to communicate the potential needed EIMS enhancements. For example, the Department of Education (DOE) has a contract with PCG for the migrant and other programs. PCG knew they needed to communicate with DOE on the enhancements well in advance before the roll out. In addition, DOE gives PCG the needed enhancements well in advance for the following year.

Sandra specified that DOH would like to (while increasing communication), create a list of enhancement areas and pull groups together to review the list. If there is an enhancement suggested that all can agree on how it should look, then it can be rolled out. A team will be pulled together to look at an enhancement. First step is to identify the topic (enhancement) then pull people together to review it and then send in a “business requirement” to PCG.

Joseph Holahan asked if the list of enhancements can be gathered and collected by the REICs since they know the system so well.

Sandra agreed with the suggestion. She also stated that she is still learning about NJEIS and trying to better collaborate and communicate with stakeholders. She stated that it will also help with transparency in the field.

Kate Colucci reiterated what Joyce Salzberg had requested. She asked to be able to view the master plan (for more information) on what the subsets are (functionality and enhancements) so that people can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

### **REIC Update:**

1. Carmela Balacco, Lead Family Support Coordinator (FSC) for Family Link REIC presented a PowerPoint presentation for Early Intervention (EI) Week 2018 on behalf of all the FSCs throughout the state. The presentation demonstrated the variety of organized activities that took place statewide. It also included excerpts from selected family essays, goodie bag items provided to participating families and prizes for selected essay winners.

### **SICC Standing & Ad Hoc Committee Reports**

1. **Administrative/Policy:** Chanel McDevitt, Chair reviewed SICC Policy-07 and the changes that members requested during the September 2018 meeting. The suggested changes were made and the revised policy was emailed to the members.

Kate Colucci mentioned that language contained within SICC Policy-07 coincide with the statements within the SICC Welcome Statement. Kate asked if anyone had any questions or discussion on the policy. There was a great deal of discussion as noted below. In the meantime, public comments will continue to be recorded in the minutes and SICC members must review before the next meeting and be prepared to discuss if a response or action is need by the SICC.

Joyce had a question on SICC Policy-07, C. She stated that she had received comments from the public that they never get a response from the SICC and feel that they “hang out there in limbo.” Joyce suggested that the Public get a response, although it might not be want they want to hear.

Joseph Holahan agreed and stated that there needed to be a more formal mechanism in place, a system that provides a response to the public’s comments.

Kate reminded the SICC members that public comments are recorded in the minutes and that all SICC members are responsible to review the minutes. It is not feasible for the Chair person to respond to each comment in writing. She asked if there were any SICC members that would be interested in taking on the task of responding in writing to public comments.

Joyce Salzberg asked if everyone would be comfortable if one person responded to inquiries. She also agreed that there needs to be a formal way to respond, but did not have a suggestion at the time. She did feel that it is polite to respond, even a “thank you” in writing.

Joseph Holahan suggested a committee be developed to consider how to respond to items that had been brought up and to make a decision as to the type of response.

Michelle Safrin noted that the SICC members are charged to bring recommendations to DOH for action, however, the SICC do not have authority to respond to public comment. It the role of DOH; the SICC is an advisory board. The members can elect to pass [comment] along or not pass it along.

Kate Colucci chimed in and stated historically that was what the SICC had done. However, since EIMS, the SICC members got more involved.



Michelle Safrin stated in the past the SICC did not respond to the public, however, was required to write an annual report about preventions and other suggestions.

Kate Colucci thought that perhaps having an annual report and a committee to organize it might be a solution.

Sandra Howell stated that she did not think that every question needed a follow-up response, perhaps in some circumstances a “thank you for your comment” would be appropriate. If however there was a question/comment that required more thought and/or discussion, that would be the kind of thing that should be put on the agenda for the following meeting.

Kate Colucci stated that the meeting minutes are posted. It was the reason why Jackie Cornell had been invited to the SICC meetings.

Kim Peto shared that the SICC committee has become more interactive than in the past and have responded and have been responsive to the public.

Kate Colucci stated that the SICC-Policy 07 leaves it open for public comment but not every comment will receive a response. In the past Terry Harrison responded to inquiries and council members took notes and followed-up with DOH. Kate asked Chanell how she wanted to proceed.

Chanell McDevitt suggested that SICC members vote on Policy-07 as is but develop a committee to discuss a formal procedure on responding to public comment.

Kate Colucci stated that Policy-07 is about taking comments and put a motion on the table about a procedure on responding to public comment.

Chanell stated to vote on Policy-07 and motion about a procedure on responding to public comment.

Kate Colucci motioned to vote on Policy-07, seconded by Kim Peto followed by Danielle Thomas Anderson and unanimously carried.

Kate Colucci motioned to develop a subcommittee on a process to respond to public comment with the goal to develop policy and procedure. Susan Marcario and Chanel McDevitt believed that a procedure to respond to public comment was already addressed in SICC Policy-07 but was not specific. Kate asked Joe Holahan and Joyce Salzberg if they would like to work together on the development of a procedure. Joe stated he would not be available in January. Kate stated they can work on it when they are ready.

**ACTION:** The SICC members, through discussion, recommended a subcommittee to review and recommend a procedure for responding to public comment. Joe Holahan and Joyce Salzberg has agreed to take on the task, however, a timeline has not yet been established.

**ACTION:** Each SICC member must review public comment prior to the next scheduled SICC meeting and be prepared to discuss if a response or action is needed by the SICC.

2. **State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP):** Rosemary Browne, Chair – No updates.
3. **Service Delivery:** Joyce Salzberg, Chair, commented and provided a written report also on file.
  - a. The committee met on October 17, 2018. The RFA efforts are on hold due to EIMS. EIMS must be operational before designing the parameters of the RFA
  - b. Service Coordination Units (SCUs) and Early Intervention Providers (EIPs) have been stretched to their limits. SCUs have lost staff and maintain caseloads that exceed best practice. EIPs continue to struggle with cash flow. The REICs have taken on the additional responsibility to work on backloging service logs. EI personnel are leaving the system.
  - c. The committee discussed adding SCUs to the composition of the Services Delivery Committee
  - d. The committee discussed the Pyramid Model as a tiered public health approach to providing wellness to children, targeted services to those who need more support and intensive services to those who need them. The committee will be reconvene to discuss.

**ACTION:** Kate Colucci commented that the plan seems to be more of a function versus an improvement and perhaps needs to be sent to the committee. Joyce agreed.

4. **Higher Education:** Kate Colucci, Chair met with members and unfortunately have not yet been able to move forward due to EIMS. However, Kristen Kugelman received notice that New Jersey was one of only six (6) states that was selected to receive TA from the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovation (NCPMI). In addition, there are a few higher education institutions (Kean, Stockton and Rowan Universities) that may be interested in collaborating with Early Intervention. Universities might have the potential to provide continuing education to EI practitioners. Summit Education has online continuing education courses. Kristen asked the EIPs present at the SICC meeting if they host and train intern students. Joyce Salzberg stated Sunny Days always recruit college interns.

Kate Colucci thanked Joyce and Sunny Days on behalf of the Higher Ed. Committee.

A. Sloan Anderson of Archway reported that over the summer, her program had an OT intern.

Kate Colucci also reported that the New Jersey Institute on Disabilities had a student majoring in speech pathology serve as an intern.

### Old Business:

1. NJEIS Mission Statement - Kate stated DOH needs assistance and asked for a few people to volunteer to move the mission statement forward.

**ACTION: Danielle Anderson Thomas expressed interest in assisting DOH with the mission statement. Danielle will review the mission statement and report back at the January 2019 meeting.**

2. SICC Appointments – the State’s liaison reported having collected nine (9) cover letters, one of which is a parent. Kate Colucci stated more parents were needed. Sandra Howell discussed the review process in acquiring SICC members. A candidate’s application is first reviewed, then sent to the commissioner followed by the Governor. It does not take DOH long for their review; however, it generally gets tied up at the Governor’s office, where a candidate is approved. DOH has no influence to get an application approved.

Kate Colucci asked Sandra if she would be able to convey to the Governor’s office that the SICC is in need of new members so to expedite the appointment promise. Kate also suggested to Jackie Cornell that the SICC needs a legislator representative on the committee.

Sandra Howell stated that the Governor’s office will essentially appoint when they are ready and there is little DOH can do to expedite the process. She also reported that Maria Del.Cid-Kosso is the only individual allowed to speak to and reach out to legislators.

Kate Colucci noted that Jackie Cornell and Maria Del Cid-Kosso will review applications together.

Terry Harrison mentioned that a legislator needs to be an elected official.

Sandra Howell stated that she will relate what Terry Harrison had stated to Maria Del Cid-Kosso.

### New Business

1. As a follow-up to a public comment made during the September 19, 2018 meeting in regard to SICC members voting on EIMS issues, Kate Colucci asked the SICC asked the SICC members for discussion on that specific public comment, i.e., should SICC members vote on EIMS issues.

Joseph Holahan recalled the person asked if the committee would make a formal vote on EIMS;

Sandra Howell commented that the DOH has a locked-in contract with PCG and that it is legally binding; it is not something that the DOH can disengage from without a due diligence between the State and vendor. The vendor has been given items to complete and thus far has complied to those demands and deliverables. PCG has made good faith efforts in the progress in a forward-moving direction.

**Alvin Caballero** accountant from TheraNorth stated that is understood that the contract is legally binding, but was asking the SICC to take a stand on the matter.

Joyce Salzberg reiterated the SICC's role, i.e., to listen, advice and assist DOH. She also stated they had a conversation with Jackie Cornell, prior to Sandra Howell joining, about suing PCG and a year later there may not be a purpose of suing PCG, although they have been by others [States].

Kate Colucci asked the SICC members how to respond to the initial question.

Michele Safrin stated she believed the SICC members already provided feedback to DOH about EIMS and they are providing feedback to the public.

Some SICC members had already met with Jackie Cornell three (3) times due to the urgency felt from the Public and by March, the SICC responded immediately and appropriately. The SICC tried to bring the concerns as detailed as possible to DOH and the Assistance Commissioner.

Kate Colucci responded that the concerns are documented in the meeting minutes, however, it seems that Mr. Caballero is expecting a different type of response in the future.

Joyce Salzberg stated that the SICC is working to make things more transparent.

Kate Colucci also stated that DOH is making efforts. They have appointed Nili Gleaton for communication between all stakeholders.

Danielle Anderson Thomas stated that Sandra Howell ensured she would provide the timeline of deliverables to the SICC members and to the EIPs.

Joyce Salzberg asked if DOH could sue PCG for damages because the EIPS have suffered financially due in part to a system that was not working properly. For example, employees have had to work overtime and EIPs have had to tap into their own line of credit. EIPs have suffered financial damage directly caused by PCG.

Sandra Howell responded and stated that she was not sure if DOH can sue PCG. But there is a concern for the EIPS. Sandra requested that EIPs provide clear-cut, precise information/descriptions of the lines of credit that had to be utilized. Sandra needs details.

Kate Colucci stated that this issue had already been raised time and time again. Sandra Howell responded that rather than EIPs stating they lost money, specifics are need to understand the nature and the scope of what EIPS experienced. Detailed information will help DOH respond based on what the scope of the issue and also how to remediate them.

2. SICC retreat proposed date is July 19, 2019. Kate Colucci reported that some individuals stated that mid-July is generally not a good time for SICC members to meet. Kate opened the topic up for discussion and to make a decision on the date.

Joyce Salzberg asked if anyone proposed another date. Joyce stated that was a time of year she generally goes on vacation

Kate Colucci stated to Joyce that she is needed at the retreat.

Kim Peto suggested looking at the quorum which is needed. The month of May might not be a good time to have the retreat either.

Sandra Howell asked if new members attend the retreat, if so, it may be a good idea for new members to attend. She stated that it might be helpful to let the Governor know that the new members would be invited to participate during the July retreat.

Kate Colucci suggested to keep the July date as a tentative date. She asked if an evening in June might be better.

Joseph Holahan noted that daytime would be better due to travelling.

Kate Colucci responded to review the matter again at the January meeting.

**ACTION: SICC members be prepared to discuss the SICC retreat date at the January 2019 meeting**

3. New SICC meeting location – vote needed. Kate Colucci publicly thanked Joyce Salzberg and Sunny Days for holding the past SICC meetings.

Kate reviewed the proposed meeting locations that were previously emailed. There were two (2) locations with a reservation, the Division of Children and Families (DCF) in New Brunswick or the Public Health and Environmental Laboratories (PHEAL) in Ewing. Kate also asked if the SICC reviewed the other potential locations that were previously emailed. She suggested, however, that the SICC try one of the two locations that were already reserved for one (1) year and then revisit the location again.

Michele Safrin stated that the parking at DCF can be a challenge. Individuals can take a bus or shuttle, but cannot guarantee if anything should go wrong.

Kate Colucci stated that the SICC also need to consider the public and asked the members to vote on one (1) of the two (2) proposed locations.

Sandra Howell mentioned that parking at the East Brunswick Library parking can be difficult. The Public Health building in Ewing is new and is accessible.

Kate motioned a vote in favor of moving forward with either of the two (2) reserved options.

Kim Peto mentioned that the proposed locations will add a half hour more to her commute.

Sandra Howell stated she believed the PHEAL building is the best choice at this time.

Kate motioned a vote in favor of DCF.

In favor was Kim Peto and Michele Safrin.

Kate motioned a vote in favor of the PHEAL building.

In favor was Rosemary Browne, Joseph Holahan, Chanell McDevitt, Joyce Salzberg and Danielle Anderson Thomas; three (3) abstained (not in attendance). This will be the new location beginning January 2019 as per majority vote of SICC.

Kate opened meeting up for Public Comment.

**Public Comment:**

**Cynthia Newman**, MidJersey Cares REIC – raised a concern with the newly released Early Intervention (EI) poster now on DOH website. She stated that the initial EI poster worked and questioned why it was replaced. Cynthia reported that the new poster states that a family does not need a doctor’s referral to EI and has misinformation on developmental milestones. For example, the poster states that evaluations are “free.” Evaluations are not free, they are at public expense. In EI, there is also an eligibility criteria. *Act Early* as mentioned on the poster is also associated with Autism. She suggested that if anyone is interested in redesigning the EI poster they should confer with the individuals with years of experience. Cynthia also noted that she was not sure who developed the revised poster.

Sandra Howell, DOH, responded that the poster emanated from a County Council for Young Children (CCYC) meeting that was held months ago. Jackie Cornell and a few families were present at the meeting. The families there explained that their children did not get EI because their pediatrician did not refer. Due to that, the poster was changed. It was meant to be a media campaign letting families know that they do not need a doctor’s referral to contact EI. Sandra and others met with the media people and expressed concerns about the message the poster conveyed on free evaluations and the errors about the developmental milestones. There is concern about the mixed messages made with the new poster.

**Cynthia Newman** stated that she was also concerned about relationships with physicians caused by the poster. She also reported that the folks from the American Association of Pediatrics (AAP) are concerned about the poster. Cynthia also explored other states and their EI posters. She suggested that people who make decisions about EI should talk to the people who have worked in the system.

Joe Holahan echoed Cynthia’s concern with the poster. He acknowledged that there may be a few physicians that do not refer families to EI, but it was rare.

Michele Safrin stated that some families do not send their children to pediatricians.

Sandra Howell stated the poster was meant to direct families to make their own referral. Sandra also noted that the poster was not a paid media campaign. She is opened to getting letters with suggestions.

Kate Colucci asked Cynthia to forward her summary of concerns and it will be shared with DOH. Joe agreed to draft a letter on behalf of the SICC to DOH. Joe is expected to report back on this at the January 2019 meeting of SICC.

**Phil Antman**, comptroller for Sunny Days, inquired about advanced payments for December and forward. He stated that the collectible rates have increased (6-8 weeks), but not yet at 100%. He wanted to know about advance payments.

Sandra Howell stated that DOH is looking at the claim rates and will compare that data to the previous year. Some agencies claims are at 100% from last year. With advance payments, DOH reported a large number of agencies at 100% compared to last year. Some collected qualitative data denotes some EIPs are over the 100% mark; DOH is also looking at that data. Due to the back logs, claims are in and reimbursement rate has increased as a result. AP-11 was initiated because the rejections were greater than expected. DOH is now reanalyzing the data. The Department looks at claims weekly as well as advance payments to determine whether or not DOH needs to schedule additional advancement payments. At this time, there is no set schedule for advance payments. The first step is to see how the back logging is going and how reimbursement is going. Some EIPs no longer want advance payment.

**Phil Antman** discussed the retroactive service logs from December 2017 to the end of May 2018. DOH indicated for those rejected claims (through no fault of the EIP), are returned to PCG or consultants to remedy or process to address some fixes so that the agency can get reimbursed. He asked Sandra when EIPs can expect to receive feedback about this process (i.e., rejected claims that need to be processed and paid).

Sandra Howell responded that data is kept on the claims that have been rejected. Rejected claims get back in cue for reloading (for those that get fixed); for those that cannot be fixed, are being sent to the REICs. Often times the issue or cause for rejection is that the IFSPs need to be entered and that is what the REICs are doing.

**Cynthia Newman** explained the process at MidJersey Cares REIC. She stated that once all the IFSPs and other events are entered, then the agency can enter their logs. It is time-consuming for the IFSPs to be entered and they need to be done in the correct order. Sometimes an error occurs, such as the wrong date on the IVFs and it can delay the process.

**Susan Marcario**, Family Link REIC commented on the process at her office. She explained that the Data Department receives spreadsheets and they are prioritized by date. When a child's record is being updated, the entire record gets updated. For example, if the December IFSP needs to be entered, then any other event that occurred after also gets entered.

**Cynthia Newman** reported having to hire additional people and extend hours of her data department to enter as many documents as possible. Each record takes time to be entered into EIMS.

**Phil Antman** asked if DOH anticipates an internal determination that all that can be done has been done for December 2017 and January 2018 and looking forward to the next few months.



**Cynthia Newman** explained that her region handles 21 EIPs. If a document is missing the data department reaches out to the SCUs to request that record to be entered in hopes of moving it forward.

**Terry Harrison** explained that once an IFSP is entered, and there is another event, that is entered too, unless there is a problem with an event.

**David Holmes**, ABCD, first acknowledged Terry Harrison. He thanked her for all her efforts and years of experience that she brought to NJEIS. He expressed his deepest respect for her and acknowledged her passion for serving families and their children in EI. He wished her the very best.

For his public comment David stated that he felt very hollowed by SICC's lack of response to his comments, however, in the past six (6) months the SICC now advocates on behalf of the public and their efforts have been deeply appreciated. He noted that his members look to the SICC to support the EIPs, families they serve, and the SCUs. At this point, there are two (2) issues related to damages and advanced payment Number12, both, of which are critical to EIPs and their ability to function. EIPs are in a financial hole; many had to seek lines of credit and have had to hire additional staff. Equally important is that the EIPs need payments - it is their survival. David had requested Sandra Howell to advise the commissioner on these two major, top priority issues. He asked that on behalf of the EIPS, that she be their voice to the commissioner; they would be very grateful for that.

Kate Colucci asked David what he meant by "hollow" and asked what question was asked that was not responded to.

**David Holmes** explained that in the past, no one from the SICC had ever gotten back to him.

Kate Colucci stated that the SICC had him provide a presentation.

**David Holmes** responded, yes, but the group (SICC members) did not come to a decision. He stated that perhaps he saw the SICC's role differently than he. He stated that no-one has had an increase for more than 10 years.

Kate Colucci stated that the SICC did not ignore comments or questions, but responded differently. Kate also mentioned that new SICC members are to come on board.

**MaryJane Navin**, Ocean County Special Child Health Services, stated the importance of having parental involvement on the SICC. She inquired about what the family member stipend would be for families that serve the SICC.

Kate Colucci stated that Susan Marcario will email the SCUs with the parent stipend information. Kate asked if there were any other public comment.

Kim Peto again reiterated that each person at the Help Desk will often times give different answers to the caller for the same issue; different responses to the same question.

Kate Colucci suggested that representatives from PCG be invited to a SICC meeting.

Sandra Howell stated that they meet with PCG every other month. The next planned meeting will occur in January 2019 in New Jersey. Sandra stated any meeting with PCG needs to be coordinated since PCG meets with several other stakeholders.

Kate Colucci requested that Sandra coordinate it.

Sandra Howell replied that she will make the request to coordinate the meetings. She is expected to report back on this at the January SICC meeting.

Joyce Salzberg suggested meeting via video conferencing.

Kate Colucci concurred with Joyce's suggestion (video-conferencing). She concluded the meeting and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

**Adjournment:** 1:30 pm upon motion by Kate Colucci, seconded by Joyce Salzberg and unanimously carried.