

**Early Identification of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Infants Advisory Council**  
**Meeting Minutes Draft**  
**7.29.2022**

**Call to Order:** Meeting called to order at 12pm by Dana Hubbard. A council roll call was completed.

Council members Present: Dana Hubbard, Leigh Anne Norman, Jill Hudson, Shane Bates proxy for Jana Broussard, Caitlyn Robinson proxy for Charleen Long, Gina Easterly, Jill Guidry proxy for Marbely Barahona, Theresa Nicholls, Dr. Natalie Delgado, and Cindy Voelker on zoom

Council Members Absent: Dr. John Carter, Dr. Ellis Arjmand

Guests Present: Terri Ibieta, Danielle Mercer, Amanda Perry, Margaret Berry and Dawne McCabe from the EHDI program.

**Review and Acceptance of Minutes:** Jill Hudson made a change on the draft of the meeting minutes from the April 22, 2022 meeting. She made the first motion to accept the minutes with the change and Gina Easterly made a second motion.

**Dawne McCabe** presented information about the **Hospital Score Cards**. Each year, the EHDI program compiles information from Louisiana's 48 birthing hospitals around the state, and puts together a quality assurance report, a newborn hearing screening program score card, and then a hospital ranking document. This is the assessment of the "1" in the EHDI 1-3-6 program goal. Hospital scores were displayed on the presentation slide. Information obtained from the hospitals included data regarding policy and protocol, calibration of equipment, competency of screener training and information on the hearing screening program supervisor. Parent/guardian signature was obtained or attempted on all the newborn hearing screening forms so that a parent was aware of the screening results. Also, on the back of the newborn hearing screening report, there is information for the parent that could be helpful for them. When a baby's newborn hearing screening indicated "further testing needed", steps were taken to contact that parent to let them know about follow-up opportunities, follow-up appointments that are scheduled, and so forth. Babies who do not pass are ideally scheduled a follow-up appointment before discharge. Birthing hospitals enter newborn hearing screening data into the Louisiana Electronic Event Registration System (LEERS), and it is imported directly to the EHDI database. If a baby transfers out, to another hospital, screening data is reported directly to EHDI since only the birthing hospital has access to a baby's record in LEERS.

Hospital screening data from 2021 was presented. For 2021, 98.58% of the babies were screened by discharge or within one month after birth. Each hospital received their own individual hospital's scorecard, quality assurance report and hospital ranking. The tiered ranking system was reviewed. The purpose of ranking is to identify hospitals in need of improvement. A council member asked a question regarding any similarities between the hospitals in the lowest tier. It was explained that the situations seemed unique to each hospital. Each hospital receives their ranking documents so they can see how they compare to the other 47 birthing hospitals, and receive support from the EHDI Program.

**Danielle Mercer** presented **data on the 1-3-6 goals** for the years 2018-2020. The CDC goal is for at least 98 percent of babies to be screened by 1 month of age. Louisiana generally comes in consistently at or above 99 percent for this; however, we dipped down just a little bit in 2020, likely affected by COVID.

There were several babies that were missed in the hospital due to that. For diagnosis by 3 months of age, the CDC goal is 85%; Louisiana was at 73.4%. For early intervention by 6 months of age, the CDC goal is 80%, and Louisiana was between 60.9% and 64.5% for the years 2018-2020. Theresa Nicholls asked when data from 2021 would be available, and noted that she felt any data from 2020 was likely skewed. It was explained to the council that all the 6-month data has not come in yet from 2021 as the end of 2021 was only 7 months ago.

**Committee Updates:** Leigh Anne Norman gave an update on the Committee for North Louisiana. The committee met via Zoom in May. One thing that was discussed is sometimes it is difficult to pull up a baby's profile in the database because the names are misspelled, or the names may change. The committee discussed some ways that are being considered to try to improve the database searches. They are going to try to get hearing aid fitting information on several babies from Mollie Webb Speech and Hearing. Mollie Webb S&H is also in the process of locating another audiologist. The committee will contact Mollie Webb's part-time audiologist and invite him to their next committee meeting so they can make sure they are linking up the babies that are being seen, and to ensure consistency.

Dana Hubbard and Danielle Mercer provided the update for the CMV Committee: Four hospitals have started the targeted screening program for cCMV. The hospitals send positive results to EHDl. Regarding legislation, it has been discussed a couple of times, and at the last committee meeting in June, the committee members came to a consensus that they were going to delay pursuing legislation until next year. That decision was made in part because there is a great deal of pre-work that would need to be done to start writing up the proposal for that. Dr. Tri Tran, EHDl epidemiologist, did a data match using LOINC codes. They were only able to identify one additional baby that they didn't previously know about, and the match was not timely.

**Dr. Natalie Delgado shared some information about PPEP program** in response to a question posed by Theresa Nicholls at the previous meeting about the decrease in the percentage of enrollment. The program reported a new staff member joining them for North Louisiana. At the time of this meeting, the PPEP program reported a total of 161 kids that they were serving throughout the state who have accepted services or who they were trying to reach out to accept services, including some students they got referrals for prior to the summer break. They are still working with the LDH trying to start up the deaf mentor program. They are continuing with their play group. Staff members are still doing play groups every other month throughout the state and host play groups on campus (LSD) as well in between months, which are shared via the website and social media pages. LSD is also trying to add additional staff to the family and science program offered through their ASL coordinator. The school director and admissions coordinator, as well as parent representatives and other people, will be traveling throughout the state to host learning sessions, meet and greets, story times, crafts and activities, and other ongoing projects to increase family engagement and awareness of LSD programming. Family workshops are also ongoing. There will be professional development opportunities virtually once a month for anyone interested that is working at a school with any deaf or hard of hearing children. A desire to be invited to more IFSP meetings was communicated. Dr. Delgado reviewed reasons why the EHDl data might not be reflective of the amount of and timeliness of the provision of PPEP services. A question was asked regarding referrals in May that are not seen for their first visit until August. Dr. Delgado reported that one year they did an SOU (statement of understanding) with staff to make contacts through the summer, but this year referrals were held until August. Council member

asked if a referral had been given in May, would the family have been seen prior to August? Concerns were expressed regarding the loss of intervention time from referral to initial support

Gina Easterly pointed out the LDOE oversees services from Birth to 5 and services are provided year-round. She brought up that maybe the program could somehow transfer under LDOE so that services were not interrupted or not initiated within a timely fashion or at least there be a development of collaboration and communication between the two programs. The participants of the meeting brainstormed various ways that staff could be compensated for and be allowed to work some days over the summer months so that families that wanted to get started with direct services or continue with services were able to in the months of June and July. Margaret Berry, from EHDI, clarified that referrals were made to the secretary of PPEP before this summer; however, they were held from being given to the PPEP teachers.

**EHDI Program Updates:** Terri Ibieta provided updates. She reported that she and Danielle Mercer presented at the Childhood Powering Up Conference last Friday. The goal of their presentation was to explain why providing hearing screening during the early language learning years is critical for helping more children receive the benefits of early identification and early intervention. Next, she announced that there is a successful collaboration between the Louisiana EHDI program and the Louisiana Hands and Voices program, which ensures early family engagement, and this was highlighted in the EHDI family leadership language and learning third quarter newsletter. Discussions of early language learning continued, and Terri shared that EHDI has been collecting data from Early Steps and PPEP regarding language outcomes. PPEP uses the Ski-Hi Language Development Scale (LDS) and Early Steps utilizes the Battelle Developmental Inventory. She asked the council for their recommendation on a possible committee to look at these. Theresa Nicholls proposed that the council reinstate the language committee, maybe call it the early intervention committee or the language committee and know that they will be looking at overall early intervention and language development. Theresa Nicholls made an official motion to reopen the language committee of the council and have its charge not only language development but early intervention. A vote was taken and there were unanimous “yeas”. The language committee, focusing on early intervention, was re-opened.

**Jill Guidry, from Hands and Voices,** provided the council with an **update on the Guide by your Side program.** The program currently has seven parent guides and three Deaf guides connecting with families through their virtual parent chats. They are also back to face-to-face gatherings as well. Their most recent one was held in Reine, Louisiana, at Katie Cottage, and was successful, with Deaf children ranging from 18 months through 7 years in attendance with their families. One of the Deaf guides was in attendance, and many parents took the opportunity to engage. GBYS has slated dates for later this fall in Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and Shreveport, and will be making those connections in groups as well as continuing to reach out to families individually. The FL3 newsletter featured the collaboration between Hands and Voices, our Guide By Your Side program, and the EHDI team. Dr. Delgado asked about the number of active Deaf guides, to which it was shared that there are 3 active Deaf guides, with a new prospect for a fourth. Dr. Delgado asked where the Deaf guides were located within the state; Ms. Guidry shared that Guides are currently located in the Lake Charles, Lafayette, and New Orleans areas.

**Public Comment:** Misty Flowers (PPEP) asked who would be on the language committee. Will there be any Deaf adult representation on the committee, and how can she sign up? Rachael Nelson (PPEP) also

noted she's interested in knowing if EHDl can make a pointed effort to include Deaf and hard of hearing adults on this language committee.

Mr. Bates shared that the Louisiana Council for the Deaf is meeting on August 26. The location is not yet disclosed. There will -be a Zoom link for that as well.

**Adjourn:** Dana Hubbard made an announcement that the next meeting will be held on October 28, 2022. Location was to be determined.

Gina Easterly made a motion to adjourn, and Shane Bates seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 1:58pm.

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