



**October 15-16, 2013**

**Ft. Lauderdale, FL**

**Members Present:** Lorraine Allen, Danielle Austin, Kim Carr, Laurie Blades, Penny Geiger, Johana Hatcher, April Katine, Lourdes Quintana, Kathleen Vergara, Carole West for Dr. Monica Verra-Tirado, Cynthia Fuller, Susan Donovan, Arwyn Holmes, Suzanne Mahoney, Sharon Paul, Misty Porter, Ilene Wilkins

**Members Absent:** Jeanne Boggs, Katherine Dagenais, Shan Goff,

**Members Absent with Notification:** Angela Finch, Nathaniel Forbes,

**Non-members Present:** Harry Fogle, Brenda Ham, Lou Ann Long, Annalise Campisi, Ellie Schrot, Randee Gabriel, Kim Werner, Lori Sang, Rebecca Hahessy, Billie Morgan, Lee Tripeck, Katie Williams and Tameka Footman

**Conference Call Attendees:** Gail Underwood, Matt Moore, April Smith

### **October 15, 2013**

**FICCIT Business:** Cynthia Fuller, Acting Chair

9:30 AM- Call to Order and Introductions

Approval of July Meeting and Committee Notes: Motion to approve July Meeting and Committee Notes. Motion carried.

Status Report: Carole West, regarding first item on last page, DOE has in the past funded travel for committee members who are not Council members. She expressed that it is unclear at this point if they will do that again this year. Penny and Carole will discuss the issue upon return to Tallahassee.

FICCIT Chair Vacancy: Cynthia Fuller explained that the position still needs to be filled and that she has not received any nominations to date. She said that the January meeting will be the last one that she will be "Acting Chair." Call for nominations will occur tomorrow morning.

Marketing Committee Presentation: Johana Hatcher presented the draft annual report on the projector. The goal is to have the annual report completed and printed in time for the January meeting. Cynthia Fuller stressed the need for data and it was explained that the data will be added to the report during the Marketing Committee Meeting.

Johana and Lorraine Allen presented the "One Steps at a Time: Activities to get ALL Involved" document to the Council. Ellie Schrot expressed her appreciation to the committee and the LES' for their hard work and said she has already begun using some of the ideas from the booklet. It will be sent out in the ESSO Weekly Memo next week and added to the FICCIT website ([www.floridaicc.com](http://www.floridaicc.com)).

Sunshine Law Overview: Cynthia Fuller referenced the Sunshine Law presentation (with link in the agenda). She explained that all correspondence between Council members must go through Katie Williams, as the FICCIT Liaison, to ensure compliance with the Sunshine Law. When/if someone were to make a public records request, FICCIT must have email traffic, phone recordings, and any other official documentation or discussion available for the public.

**Early Steps State Office Update:**

Due to the meeting running ahead of schedule, Penny Geiger, Bureau Chief, presented the ESSO Update.

- See attached presentation

Budget Discussion: Cynthia Fuller raised the issue of increasing parental stipends. She explained that FICCIT wants to ensure that family members have maximum capacity to attend meetings. Penny will look into breaking this into an additional line item in the budget. More budget discussions will be forthcoming.

Carole West again stated that DOE will pay for the non-agency/non-FICCIT committee members to attend the PDATS committee meetings. They have also paid for other committee members' travel as well. The first two meetings will be paid for by DOE then DOH may pay for the other two meetings. During committee meetings this afternoon, all committee members will be polled to get an accurate number of attendees who would need travel assistance in 2014. DOE, DOH, and FICCIT Executive Committee will discuss both travel and parent stipend issues.

**Tour of Gold Coast Local Early Steps, Children's Diagnostic & Treatment Center**

**1:30 PM- Call to Order**

**Presentation: 2-1-1 Broward and the Special Needs Helpline Palm Beach County**

*Presented by Randee Gabriel and Billie Morgan*

- See attached presentation

**Public Comment:**

Lee Tripeck with a local Early Learning Coalition – commented on House Bill 7165 and that the formula to determine what families receive school readiness funding needs to be addressed. She stated that special needs children are now at a lower priority level.

Ellie Schrot proposed that FCAIT take this issue on as part of their legislative platform for special needs children. Added value on collaboration verbiage will be added.

Penny Geiger reminded the Council that FICCIT members are educators, not advocates.

**Committee Meetings:**

The Personnel Development and Training Supports (PDATS), Marketing & Partnership, and Executive Committees met for the remainder of the day.

**October 16, 2013**

**FICCIT Meeting Continued**

**Nominations for FICCIT Chair Continued:**

Cynthia Fuller called for FICCIT Chair nominations. No nominations were offered. Ilene Wilkins asked that Cynthia briefly explain the roles and responsibilities of the Chair. Cynthia explained that the main responsibility to represent the Council. The Chair is also responsible for all transmittal letters, participating on the Executive Committee (conference calls and meetings), monitoring and responding to emails, and approving agendas and other meeting materials. She explained the time commitment varies and is more prior to and immediately after the quarterly Council meetings.

Special Presentation: FICCIT member, Sharon Paul, was the recipient of the ITCA Regional Parent Leadership Award and was invited to the ETCA National Conference in Washing, D.C. to accept the award. Because Sharon was not able to attend the conference, Penny Geiger accepted the award on her behalf. Penny presented the award to Sharon.

### **Agency Updates:**

#### Department of Education:

*Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS) - Carole West*

- Please see attached written report

*Homeless Education - Lorraine Allen*

- No written report

#### Department of Children and Families:

*Office of Child Welfare/Prevention - Johana Hatcher*

- Please see attached written report

*Office of Child Care Regulation and Background Screening - Debby Russo (not present)*

- Please see attached written report

*Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health – Laurie Blades*

- Please see attached written report

Agency for Healthcare Administration – Gail Underwood

- Please see attached written report

Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) – April Katine

- Please see attached written report

Office of Early Learning – Matt Moore

- No written report available

Office of Insurance Regulation – Cynthia Fuller

- No written report available
- Affordable Care Act Discussion – Penny explained that the State Parent Consultants will send out information to parents about the impact on Early Steps. Related information will also be included in the ESSO Weekly Memos, and webinars will also be offered for Local Early Steps staff and FICCIT members.

### **Public Comment:**

Rebecca Hahessy, Program Director at Deliver the Dream gave a brief description of her organization. Please see attached information for details.

**Committee Reports:** *All committee reports are attached below.*

## Highlights from Reports:

- Executive Committee, Cynthia Fuller:
  - Discussion about meeting at CMS offices instead of paying to use hotel conference facilities for quarterly FICCIT meetings. More research and discussion is needed.
- Personnel Development Training & Support (PDATS), Lourdes Quintana:
  - Early Steps Training Unit update is attached.
- Marketing and Partnership, Johana Hatcher:
  - The annual report will now be turned over to the State Office to decide final data points. Report will be distributed for full Council approval by October 31<sup>st</sup>.
  - The Committee will prepare discussion topics for LES's when holding focus groups with parents and families. The Committee plans to formalize a recommendation to FICCIT to use these groups to satisfy requirements of CAPTA Citizens Review Panel.
  - Danielle Austin will reach out to legislators for FICCIT membership
  - The "One Step at a Time: Activities to get ALL Involved" document will have one more review for edits before posting. Eliana Tardio has volunteered to maintain the document on an ongoing basis.

### **Special Discussion:**

Margaret Hooper from the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) explained the FDDC movement to make the IFSP the authorizing document for Medicaid services.

Motion made and accepted to endorse FDDC's request of policy makers/state leaders to require that the Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP) be recognized as the authorizing document for medical necessity and Medicaid reimbursement for Part C Early Intervention Services.

April Katine will send out the new position paper to members prior to the January meeting.

### **FICCIT Business:**

**ISSUE:** Habilitative Services Essential Benefit required under new Affordable Care Act health insurance plans. What constitutes a habilitative service/treatment?

**DISCUSSION:** Cynthia Fuller responded: Federal regulations have not set forth specific requirements for the scope and inclusion of specific services and treatments that would be considered "habilitative" services. Currently, in the absence of a state law requiring and defining habilitative services – which may have specific requirements – the federal regulations permit health plans to provide coverage for habilitative services similarly to those provided for rehabilitative services. Cynthia also noted that Florida insurance regulators in IOR do review contract provisions for compliance with federal guidelines – but in this case could not impose or interpret specific benefits if the carrier (as most do) is using similar language as that used to provide rehabilitative service benefit.

**MOTION:** Penny Geiger, Bureau Chief, will send a letter to the Deputy Insurance Commissioner of Life and Health Insurance (Wences Troncoso) to request 1) any information the Office of Insurance Regulation has about habilitative services and 2) if there is no summary of how Florida health plans are complying with this essential health benefits, could Early Steps get a list of health plans (carriers) to survey those carriers. Motion passed.

**MOTION:** Send letter to Medicaid to ask how it defines "habilitative services" and what services/treatments are coded under that designation. Motion passed.

Discussion: As families transition to Part B and use the McKay Scholarship, one of the barriers in areas that don't have good transportation is getting their child to the private school. Suzanne Mahoney will send email to FICCIT to then send to the Department of Education expanding on this concern. Gail Underwood said she sent an email to the Part B person at Medicaid to see if there is any transportation support from Medicaid.

2014 Meeting Locations and Dates:

- January 14-15 or 22-23 (alternative) in Tallahassee
- April 29-30 in Pensacola
- July 8-9 in Tallahassee
- September 23-24 or October 7-8 (alternative) in Gainesville

Status Report/Action Plan - Katie Williams will send out to Council for updates

**Meeting adjourned.**

# Agency Updates

## --Florida Department of Education--

### *Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS)*

- On September 17, 2013, the State Board of Education appointed Pam Stewart commissioner of the FDOE. Pam brings a broad range of educational experience and perspective to her role as commissioner.

Commissioner Stewart began teaching in Hillsborough County in 1975 before moving to Marion County where she spent 25 years in education. She rose from Ward-Highlands Elementary School teacher in 1981 to guidance counselor, to district testing and research specialist, assistant principal and then principal, first at Reddick-Collier Elementary in 1996 and later at Vanguard High School in 2000.

In 2004, Pam was named deputy chancellor for Educator Quality at the FDOE. She served in that position until 2009 when she moved to the St. Johns County School District to become deputy superintendent for Academic Services overseeing curriculum, learning, planning and accountability, federal programs, instructional materials, leadership training and exceptional student education.

Pam returned to the department in 2011 as chancellor of Public Schools. She oversaw K-12 student achievement; curriculum, instruction and student services; school improvement; and educator quality. She also oversaw the management and delivery of such affiliate programs as K-12 Race to the Top projects, Just Read, Florida!, the Office of Early Learning and Florida's Virtual Education Program. These areas and programs provide support for Florida's PreK-12 education system, which serves more than 2.7 million students and 192,000 educators.

Congratulations, Pam!

- Kathy Hebda was named chief of staff for the FDOE, effective August 7, 2013. Kathy brings a wealth of experience that will prove beneficial as the department moves forward. Kathy has worked for the department for more than 20 years, serving as a program specialist, policy coordinator and administrator of the District Certification Partnership Training Program. In 2003, she was a policy analyst for the legislative director in the Division of Public Schools, and she was selected as chief of the Bureau of Educator Recruitment, Development and Retention in February of 2005.

She has served as the department's deputy chancellor for Educator Quality since 2009. Under her leadership, the division provides resources to school districts, universities and individuals to help ensure that the state's educational workforce is of the highest quality possible. Kathy is well respected within the FDOE as well as throughout the state and can provide the stability and foresight FDOE needs. Welcome, Kathy, to this new position!

- Effective August 9, 2013, Sandy Smith was named the Technical Assistance and Training System (TATS) project director. Prior to coming to TATS, Sandy was the supervisor of the Prekindergarten Exceptional Education Program for Pinellas County Schools for eight years with responsibility for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) section 619 grant, evaluation/eligibility and program development. Sandy's past experience includes teaching prekindergarten in the areas of behavior disorder and autism spectrum disorder, as well as serving as a resource teacher for students with autism spectrum disorder, prekindergarten-12. Sandy can be reached at [sandy.smith@ucf.edu](mailto:sandy.smith@ucf.edu). Welcome, Sandy!

### **The Children's Registry and Information System (CHRIS) Project**

- The purpose of the CHRIS Project is to expand and improve the capability and use of the CHRIS database as the tracking, reporting, case management and planning tool for IDEA Part B Child Find

activities. Information stored in CHRIS is used to project the needs of the service delivery system to ensure adequate capacity to help children entering the public school system during preschool. CHRIS is also used to create reports for BEESS and to provide information to service providers. The data provided in CHRIS assist in the provision of educational opportunities in the least restrictive environment that are focused on improved academic performance and successful school completion.

Visit the CHRIS website for additional information about the project as well as a brief interactive training that provides an overview of the database at <http://www.chris.miami.edu>. Please contact the CHRIS Help Desk at 800-231-5747 with any questions.

### **Developing Quality Individual Educational Plans (IEPs): Online Training Now Available**

- A new online course has been developed by the Accommodations and Modifications Project in conjunction with the Florida Center for Interactive Media (FCIM). The course provides an introduction to the process of developing quality IEPs for eligible students with disabilities. Information includes responsibilities of each member of an IEP team, characteristics of quality present level statements, characteristics of quality measurable annual goals, requirements for transition planning and much more.

This course accompanies the manual *Developing Quality Individual Educational Plans: A Guide for Instructional Personnel and Families* (found at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/QualityIEPs.pdf>). Located on the CPALMS website, the course takes around five hours to complete, though it can be done in increments to accommodate busy schedules. A certificate is available to print after the completion of the course.

To participate, log in or sign up and create an account at <http://www.cpalms.org/login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fportal%2fdefault.aspx>. The course is found under "My Programs"; click on "Display" and select the "Professional Development Directory." In the search box type "Quality Individual Educational Plans." For additional information, please contact Bethany Mathers at [bethany.mathers@fldoe.org](mailto:bethany.mathers@fldoe.org) or 850-245-0475.

### **Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Impaired (FIMC-VI)**

- Florida's FIMC-VI is a statewide resource center designed to assist schools in obtaining specialized materials for students with visual impairments. The Quality Programs for Visual Impairments offered through the FIMC-VI help to strengthen your evaluation process to determine the need for braille for students with visual impairments. Through this program, teachers of the visually impaired are trained to perform detailed functional vision evaluations and learning media assessments.

FIMC-VI will be hosting webinars on transition decisions related to moving students with deteriorating eye sight from print to braille, as well as how to assist students who will continue to use both print and braille simultaneously.

If you need further information regarding training, please contact the FIMC-VI at <http://www.fimcvi.org>, or call 800-282-9193.

### ***Disability Awareness through Language Arts and Literacy Resources for Prekindergarten and Elementary School***

- This guide was created for educators and families to promote positive attitudes toward, and facilitate successful inclusion of, students with disabilities; increase respect and acceptance of individual differences; increase understanding of disabilities and related social issues; and facilitate the development of literacy and language arts skills through activities about disability awareness.

The guide includes recommended books at the prekindergarten through fifth-grade level that include characters with developmental disabilities, lesson plans at each grade level and resources for summer reading and activities for families. Please visit the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council website at <http://www.fddc.org/publications> to order your complimentary hard copy. To download a copy in English, go to <http://www.fddc.org/sites/default/files/file/publications/English%20Disability%20Awareness%20Guide>.

[pdf](http://www.fddc.org/sites/default/files/file/publications/Spanish%20Disability%20Awareness%20Guide.pdf). To download a copy in Spanish, go to <http://www.fddc.org/sites/default/files/file/publications/Spanish%20Disability%20Awareness%20Guide.pdf>.

### **Specially Designed Instruction for Students with Disabilities within a Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS)**

- The document “What Is Special about Special Education? Specially Designed Instruction for Students with Disabilities within a Multi-tiered System of Supports” was developed to clarify the relationship between specially designed instruction, core instruction and interventions within an MTSS for educators developing, improving and maintaining systems of support for all students.

The document is available at the websites below for review and for sharing with colleagues and parents.

- Florida’s MTSS website: <http://www.florida-rti.org/educatorResources/documents.htm>
- Student Services Support Project website: [http://sss.usf.edu/resources/topic/ps\\_rti/index.html](http://sss.usf.edu/resources/topic/ps_rti/index.html)

For further information, contact Heather Diamond via email at [heather.diamond@fldoe.org](mailto:heather.diamond@fldoe.org).

### **2013 Legislation – Senate Bill 1108**

- The FDOE has issued a memorandum regarding Senate Bill 1108. The memorandum may be viewed at <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6804/dps-2013-105.pdf>.

### **Technical Assistance Paper (TAP) – Assistive Technology for Students with Disabilities**

- The FDOE has issued a TAP regarding Assistive Technology for Students with Disabilities. It may be viewed at <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6801/dps-2013-65.pdf>.

### **Frank Porter Graham (FPG) Child Development Institute Opens New Professional Development Center**

- On August 19, 2013, the FPG Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill opened a new Professional Development Center at <http://pdc.fpg.unc.edu> to provide administrators, faculty, researchers, evaluators, specialists, teachers and professional development providers a variety of opportunities to expand their capacity, knowledge and skills in areas related to child development and learning. Current continuing education options include institutes and intensive workshops, free online learning, technical assistance services and more. Some of the subject areas to be covered include evidence-based practices, research and evaluation methodologies and systems building and change.

### **Alexander Graham Bell (AG Bell) 2014 Convention**

- The AG Bell 2014 Convention will be held in Orlando, Florida, June 26-30, 2014, at the Walt Disney Swan and Dolphin (<http://www.swandolphin.com>). Pre-convention workshops will take place on June 26, 2014. Content for pre-convention workshops will provide evidence-based research, practice or information pertaining to one or more of the following nine listening and spoken language (LSL) domains of knowledge, with presentations that reflect and convey the Convention’s overall theme — “Magic Made Real: Celebrating Our Heritage, Transforming Our Future.”

LSL Domains of Knowledge:

1. Hearing and Hearing Technology
2. Auditory Functioning
3. Spoken Language Communication
4. Child Development
5. Parent Guidance, Education and Support
6. Strategies for Listening and Spoken Language Development
7. History, Philosophy and Professional Issues

8. Education (The focus of this domain is on the development and expansion of the auditory and language skills that underlie and support the child's progress in the general education curriculum.)
9. Emergent Literacy (The focus of this domain is on the development of the auditory and language skills that underlie and support the acquisition and advancement of literacy.)

Held every two years, the AG Bell Convention brings together a diverse community that is committed to LSL for children and adults who are deaf and hard of hearing. You are invited to join more than 1,200 families of children who are deaf and hard of hearing, adults who listen and talk and the professionals who support them.

The convention will demonstrate the commitment to children and adults who are deaf and hard of hearing, their families and the professionals who support them; it will also highlight the innovative and dynamic trends that are shaping the future for our community. For more information, go to <http://www.listeningandspokenlanguage.org/2014Convention>.

## **--Florida Department of Children and Families--**

### ***Office of Child Care Regulation and Background Screening***

- The Office of Child Care Regulation and Background Screening is pleased to announce the formation of the Background Screening and Child Care Training Information Call Center, which opened officially on Tuesday, September 3rd as an expanded version of the original call center. The Call Center staff assists customers with inquiries relating to Background Screening (Foster Care, Child Care, Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), Relative/Non-Relative Caregivers, Substance Abuse and Mental Health) as well as Child Care Training matters (credentials, transcripts, mandated training and exams). There are several bilingual Call Center Staff members on hand to assist Spanish-speaking customers. The toll-free number for the Background Screening and Child Care Training Information Call Center is: 1-888-352-2842.
- September was PREVENT Obesity month. The department shared daily tips on obesity prevention through Facebook and held a Challenge for providers to enter videos to get their children moving!!!
- The Office of Child Care Regulation is in the process of creating a new web based licensing application to be used statewide. Our goal is to both meet and exceed the functionality used in the existing licensing application. The purpose is to:
  - Create a more staff friendly web-based application using more modern technology than existed when our application was designed in 2001.
  - Work to bridge the child care training application with the licensing application in an effort to streamline processes and create one record for each child care personnel.
  - Reduce contract costs to be reinvested in the program to develop or create other program efficiencies.

#### **WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE PUBLIC:**

- Once the inspection upload feature is built, the public will be able to view the inspection files online.
- Online application for all providers will be available in the coming months, beginning with a remodel of Religious Exempt and Registered Home application forms.

### ***Office of Child Welfare, Prevention, and Independent Living (IL)***

- We are very pleased to announce that in spite of a 5% reduction in Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) federal grant awards, Florida fared well. We received a \$34,406 increase to our award over last year's award totaling \$115,809 more income than anticipated. This is attributed to the amount of leverage monies we submitted! Various initiatives within the Department were reviewed for impacting the reduction of child abuse maltreatment, although not the primary intent. The state dollars used in identified initiatives demonstrated commitment towards child abuse prevention on behalf of the state. A hearty thanks to the Family and Community Services program directors, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program Office and Family Safety Budget staff for their assistance in the

Prevention Unit's review and grant submission. The grant funds statewide primary and secondary prevention efforts.

- Proposed rules are still in draft with public hearings occurring last month. Revisions are underway to 65C-28 Out-of-Home Care, 65C-29 Protective Investigations and 65C-30 General Provisions.
- 65C-13 and 65C-14 will be re-opened to address Extended Foster Care which was passed in the last legislative session.
- On 7/30/2013, continued to negotiate with Administration for Children and Families (ACF) regarding the terms and conditions for the renewal of the Title IV-E Waiver. ACF is agreeing with Florida about language for the terms and conditions that will identify triggers where the state may wish to renegotiate the maintenance costs. For example: an increase in the out-of-home care population by 10%.

#### ***Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health***

- The purpose of Florida's Project LAUNCH is to promote the wellness of young children from birth to 8 years by addressing the gaps in existing prevention and targeted intervention services in 5 high need zip codes in Pinellas County and to strengthen the partnership between state and local agencies serving young children and their families. Florida LAUNCH Project is a partnership between the Department of Children and Families, Department of Health, and Pinellas County, Florida. The project is aimed at preventing youth substance abuse and mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders by improving family function and the quality of the parent-child relationship through parent training and skill building; and selective interventions for young children.

#### **Update on the Project LAUNCH grant since last meeting**

- Strategic plan and updates completed and sent to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)-state plan has been accepted and local plan is currently being revised
- Evaluation Plan submitted and being revised to reflect local strategic plan
- Workgroups have begun there are 4 state workgroups and 5 local workgroups
- LAUNCH has a new PI (Laurie Blades) and State Level Director (Phyllis Stolc)
- A Department of Health (DOH) partner has been hired – Cindy Hutchens-Gueth
- Developed connections with Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV), Help Me Grow, and Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) to leverage efforts

### **Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA)**

On March 26, a federal judge ordered Florida Medicaid to cover Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) for the treatment of autism spectrum disorders for children under the age of 21, effective

April 2, 2012. The Agency for Health Care Administration appealed this ruling. The Agency lost part of the appeal. The AHCA General Counsel is working with Medicaid to help direct how the Agency

will proceed. As of October 7, 2013, AHCA has received 4,236 requests to provide ABA services to Medicaid eligible children diagnosed with autism.

There are over 3.2 million Florida Medicaid recipients.

Florida Medicaid continues to move forward with Statewide Medicaid Managed Care (SMMC). Melissa Verguson, AHCA Administrator, will be presenting information on Medicaid Managed Care at the November statewide meeting in Orlando.

The 1115 Medicaid Managed Assistance (MMA) waiver is the largest contract procurement in Florida History. 14 plans were chosen to participate, with a comprehensive plan available in all regions except Region 2. There is at least one Provider Service Network (PSN) in each region throughout the state. A number of protests have been filed, and a roll out schedule has yet to be determined. The 1115 Medicaid Managed Assistance waiver has a natural expiration date of June 30, 2014, but Florida is gearing up for activity around the renewal of this waiver. A waiver extension request will be submitted by November 22, 2013.

The Medicaid Early Intervention Services handbook update/promulgation process continues. Although an October 2013 effective date was expected, it will now take place at a later date.

I have included the following in the packet:

- o Florida told to pay for therapy that may aid autistic kids, Miami Herald, Sept. 23, 2013
- o 2 Public Companies Score on FI Medicaid, Carol Gentry
- o Florida To Seek More Federal Dollars For Hospitals Treating low-Income Patients, Health & Science
- o In Florida, navigators will undergo state scrutiny, Miami Herald, Sept., 23, 2013
- o Sobel blasts Florida House on health care before U.S. House, James Call, Sept. 18, 2013
- o Seblius vs. Scott: Public "at Risk", Carol Gentry, Sept. 18, 2013
- o Dentist accused of physically, verbally abusing children he treated, Orlando Sentinel, September 22, 2013

## **Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC)**

### **Early Steps Fund Development**

It has been determined that developing a strategic plan for fund development for the Early Steps program is not viable and could not achieve the expected outcome for this initiative. This is due to restrictions against fund raising for Part C programs at the state and federal levels.

A final report will be completed which summarizes all activities of the project, information obtained, decisions made based on the information obtained, and an analysis of any future potential for fund development activities for the Early Steps program.

### **Early Steps Evaluator Credentialing**

The RFP has been released and scored. We are currently in contract negotiations with the winning offeror. The project should begin shortly.

### **Support Early Steps, Florida's Part C/Early Steps Program**

**The Council supports increased funding for the Early Steps Program which serves over 42,000 children and is celebrating 20 years of service to our youngest Floridians.**

**The Council urges policymakers to require that the Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP) be recognized as the authorizing document for medical necessity and Medicaid reimbursement for Part C Early Intervention services.**

Early Steps is administered by Children's Medical Services (CMS) in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C. The Early Steps Program provides Florida's infants and toddlers, from birth to 36 months, who have a developmental delay, or a condition that places them at risk for developmental delay, with early intervention services and supports that improve a child's chances to develop to their full potential by achieving their developmental milestones. Research shows that achieving these milestones is essential to developing a child's ability to learn, speak, and move at optimal levels later in life. Early intervention is designed to support families and caregivers in developing the competence and confidence to help their child learn and develop. Families and professionals work together to develop an Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP) that is based on the unique needs of the child and the child's family

In 2012-13, Florida provided these essential early intervention services to 42,243 children. This meant that an average of \$1267 dollars was spent per child. In 2013, \$3 million dollars was appropriated to pay for an increase in referrals of children with complex delays and disabilities. While the amount of spending per child has increased recently, Florida is still well below the national average of \$3,000 per child annually. This year the Council is going to ask legislators to increase funding to include more services for more children.

Stretching the dollars of Early Steps has been a challenge in the last several years. The program relies on being the payer of last resort, and looks to private insurance companies and Medicaid to pay for infant therapy services that are frequently included in a child's Individualized Family Support Plan. Federal regulations for Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

(IDEA) require that Early Steps pay for the services identified on the IFSP within 45 days of the documented need.

Approximately 70% of the children enrolled in Early Steps are Medicaid eligible and many may have therapy services that are documented in their IFSP that can be paid for by Medicaid. Medicaid services are offered through individual providers or Medicaid health plans. Medicaid will cover all medically necessary services for children under the age of 21. The therapies recommended go through a prior authorization process and may be denied if the services do not meet Medicaid's medical necessity definition. Currently, the IFSP is not recognized by Florida's health plans as an authorizing document. Early Steps' regulations prohibit any delay in therapies, so there are times when Early Steps pays for Medicaid-eligible services. **Designating the IFSP as the authorizing document will greatly increase the ability of Medicaid to pay for the medically needed services for children eligible under Medicaid.**

Cost-benefit analyses show that investing in early intervention services has measureable positive outcomes, with a rate of return as high as a seven dollar return on every dollar spent! For example, if school outcomes improve, fewer resources may be spent on grade repetition or special education classes. If improvements in school performance lead to higher educational attainment and subsequent economic success in adulthood, the government may benefit from higher tax revenues and reduced outlays for social welfare programs.

## Committee Reports

### **-Marketing & Partnership Committee-**

Attendees- Lorraine Allen, Danielle Austin, Laurie Blades, Johana Hatcher, Arwyn Holmes, Lou Ann Long, Sharon Paul, Suzanne Mahoney, Misty Porter, Ellie Schrot, Eliana Tardio, Katie Williams, Ilene Wilkins

#### **Travel Compensation:**

Johana inquired as to the need for non-council members to receive travel compensation as supported by the Department of Education. Lou Ann Long responded affirmatively.

#### **Facebook and Internet:**

Johana spoke with Jeanne Boggs and we would lose viewers if we pulled the Facebook page entitled Save Early Steps. The Facebook page has been updated to reflect Early Steps Saves, as previously recommended. However, the actual page address or search reads Save Early Steps. Johana tested and either search name gets to the correct page. It was recommended to leave the page as is. A new administrator for the page will need to be named. Jeanne will share all the administration particulars.

#### **Best Practices Guidebook:**

The "One Step at a Time: Activities to get ALL Involved" document will have one more review for edits before final posting. Eliana Tardio has volunteered to maintain the document on an on-going basis.

#### **Annual Report:**

The rest of the committee meeting was devoted to discussing the annual report and deciding on data points. Much of the desired data is still outstanding from the state office. The annual report will now be turned over to the State Office to decide final data points. Report will be distributed for full Council approval by October 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **-Provider Development and Training Supports Committee-**

Attendees- Annalise Campisi, Kim Carr, Sue Donovan, Harry Fogle, Cynthia Fuller, Penny Geiger, April Katine, Lourdes Quintana, April Smith, Liza Smith, Gail Underwood, Carole West

Guests- Brenda Ham, Kim Werner

## **Minutes from July Meeting**

Approved

### **Optimizing Funding**

The Optimizing Funding inquiry to the Office of Insurance Regulation was discussed. Cynthia Fuller stated that the OIR has not yet provided a written response, and Penny Geiger stated that once this is received, Sally Golden-McCord/ ESSO will take the lead on the issues.

Cynthia Fuller stated that insurance carriers typically accept credentials as recognized by each state, so it is highly unlikely for provider types to be recognized until there is statutory recognition of the provider type. Another issue is that Florida chose to default to the federal definition of habilitative and rehabilitative services, but there really is none, so insurance carriers have been able to define on their own. Cynthia Fuller recommends that Early Steps reviews how these are defined by the insurance carriers. Penny Geiger stated she will email the Office of Insurance Regulation to request this information. Once this information is known, Early Steps will be better prepared to identify the suggested next steps. Cynthia Fuller also recommended that Early Steps shares Medicaid guidelines for ITDS reimbursable services.

**MOTION:** Request Penny Geiger, Bureau Chief, to contact the Office of Insurance Regulation to ask for the state insurance carriers' definitions of habilitative and rehabilitative services.

### **ESSO Update**

Liza Smith shared information from the Training Unit (see handout).

**Partnering for Success Statewide Training Event-** The meeting is November 13-15<sup>th</sup> in Orlando. National speakers have been secured, and there are various topics and breakout sessions for participants to choose from. Penny Geiger stated that the topics were determined based on the general, philosophical approach of Early Steps due to local variances; suggestions for future meetings were discussed. The Florida Children's Forum is coordinating registration and fees; the hotel reservation deadline is October 18<sup>th</sup>. ESSO is working with CMS to videotape some sessions for future training opportunities. Full attendance will provide approximately 13 CEU/ inservice hours.

**Autism Navigator-** Unit 4 has been released. Monthly webinars will be provided for users to discuss and share the training experience. ESSO will work with local Training Coordinators to identify participants for the next round. Penny Geiger would like every provider in the Early Steps system to complete the training over the next 3 years. The About Autism training is available for families and is free of charge. The Autism Navigator for Primary Care Physicians training will pilot in January 2014. This will also be a good training for Service Coordinators to complete.

**Training Page on CMS Website-** ESSO has identified resources to post for the LES and providers. ESSO is also planning on including resources specifically for families in the future.

**BDI-2 Video Project-** Video recordings have been received and reviewed by the UM Measuring Outcomes Project, and participants are in the process of reviewing and providing feedback. Timely feedback to evaluators is important.

**Service Coordinator Apprenticeship Training-** Updates are pending to reflect policy updates from July and October 2013, and January 2014. Local programs are encouraged to send edits and/ or suggestions to Liza Smith.

### **Provider Re-enrollment**

Liza Smith shared the Renewing Providers flow chart from another state for general discussion. There was brief discussion related to the number of CEU/ inservice hours required for re-enrollment. Suggestions included 30 hours over a 3 year period, or to be in line with current therapy licensing requirements. There was also discussion of an "Early Steps 101" and annual refresher trainings provided by ESSO in some format (such as recorded webinar). Image API will handle the process based on parameters identified by CMS/ ESSO. Sufficient prior notice will be given to individual providers, who will be responsible for their own process (not agency-level).

### **Regional Training Process**

Due to variances in local Early Steps implementation, it may be beneficial to coordinate some trainings at the regional level. It was discussed how this is already occurring with the FRS's and that Sue Cannon may be able to provide some input on how regions were determined.

#### **ITDS Coursework & Credentialing Process**

Rusty Gremillion, University of West Florida, requested consideration for the ITDS coursework to be adapted from graduate to undergraduate coursework. One benefit would be lower tuition and fees. Discussion included how this would impact the DOE PreK Endorsement/ credentialing, as this is to occur post-degree. Additional discussion occurred related to Medicaid implications, if any. It was agreed that additional information from Rusty Gremillion is needed prior to further discussion. Sue Donovan agreed to participate in this discussion as needed. It is also unclear which universities are currently offering the ITDS coursework.

**MOTION:** It is recommended that a group reviews which universities are offering ITDS courses and to speak with UWF to better determine their plans for coursework adaptation.

#### **Evaluator Credentialing**

April Katine shared that she will soon begin working on the contract for the Evaluator Credentialing process. Complex Systems Inc. received the award.

#### **Membership**

A brief discussion occurred, to identify membership based on FICCIT member and non-FICCIT member membership.