

NEVADA EARLY INTERVENTION INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL

January 29, 2009
MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Interagency Coordinating Council Members Present:

Jerry Allen	Nevada Division of Welfare, Child Care Financing
Ann Bingham, Co-Chair	University of Nevada, Reno, Dept. of Educational Specialties
Yvonne Brueggert	Nevada Disability Advocacy and Law Center
Alice Chernich	Sunrise Hospital
Paula Crawford	Southern Nevada Early Intervention Services
Dan Olsen for Chuck Duarte	Division of Health Care Finance and Policy
Tina Jeeves, V.P. of Programs	Easter Seals of Southern Nevada
Joyce Larsen	Division of Child and Family Services, Early Childhood Mental Health
Robin Kincaid	Nevada Parents Encouraging Parents
Sherry Manning	Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities
Kristen McIntyre	Parent Representative - South
Kimberly Palma	Parent Representative - South
Johnette Oman	Northwest Nevada Early Intervention Services
Betty Sherwood	Parent Representative - Rural
Sherry Waugh	Early Head Start
Bodi Wallace	Parent Representative – Southern Region

Interagency Coordinating Council Members Absent:

Nora Behrens	Parent Representative – Northern Region
Myra Berkovits	Clark County School District Title I HOPE
Betsey Crumrine	Division of Child and Family Services
Dianne Farkas	Family to Family Connection, Las Vegas West
Pamela McKay	Division of Insurance
Sheila Leslie	Assemblywoman, Nevada Legislature
Shannon Springer	Parent Representative – Northern Region
Michelle Tannock for Nancy Sileo	University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Dept. of Special Education
Mary Wherry	Health Division

Office of Disability Services Staff Present

Wendy Whipple, Part C Coordinator	IDEA Part C Office
Melanie Whitney, Part C Staff	IDEA Part C Office
Eddie King, Part C Staff	IDEA Part C Office
Iandia Morgan, Part C Staff	IDEA Part C Office

Public/Guests Present:

Margot Chappel, Director	Head Start State Collaboration Office
Florence LeRoy	Parent
Janelle Mulvenon, Bureau Chief	Bureau of Early Intervention Services
Jill Bohan	Division of Child & Family Services

CALL TO ORDER

Ann Bingham, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

Public Comment

Florence LeRoy stated her son is autistic and in his early years did not receive early intervention services because services were not available at that time. Her comments and concerns are related to the possible changes to eligibility for early intervention services. She believes that unless functional behaviors of children are detected in all domains and addressed early, these children risk not being at the milestone levels at three or four years of age. Her son did not reach a single four year milestone which now heightens her concerns regarding the policy change in reducing eligibility from 25% to 50%. If the changes were to take place when her son was young, he would not have qualified because children with autism function well in some areas and not in others. She has seen the results of a child receiving no services. .

DISCUSS AND APPROVE ICC'S POSITIONS ON PROPOSED PART C POLICY REVISIONS REGARDING: (a) ELIGIBILITY; (b) ONGOING ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

Yvonne Brueggert stated she is against changing the eligibility criteria at this time and stated several reasons why. She feels eliminating the 25% delay in two categories as an eligibility criterion does not meld with best practices information. Also, she does not believe the informed clinical opinion portion can be eliminated due to the lack of assessment instruments that can accurately reflect developmental levels of a child between birth and two years of age.. The informed clinical opinion really is necessary in determining those children's eligibility. She continued by noting that in the Health Division (HD) proposal given to legislature, the Governor is intending to add additional funding to address some of the issues early intervention is facing. The Legislature has not yet reviewed this information and it is not known what they will decide. Y. Brueggert remarked it is premature to look at this issue at the present time and feels it is against best practices. It is her belief that this should not be done and advises against it.

Robin Kincaid concurred with Y. Brueggert and also reminded members that when parents bring their children in to be evaluated they are looking to these professionals for information and listening to them. If the professional says the child is not eligible, or does not meet the criteria for the program, this family will not return to the program. They will be lost completely and we will not have the opportunity to help or reach the child before they enter kindergarten. They may have been told everything is fine at this time and do not understand that Nevada has the narrowest eligibility in the nation. The problem is then being put off until the child enters preschool or kindergarten with the window of opportunity being missed for those children. No one likes that there are children on a wait list but at least the needs of the children can be addressed.

Bodi Wallace stated that changing eligibility is like putting a band-aid on the problem. It might look better on paper but is not helping the children and the families. Wait lists are not popular but he believes the eligibility criteria should not be changed.

MOTION: To advise the Health Division and the IDEA Part C to keep the eligibility criteria as it currently stands.
BY: Y. Brueggert
SECOND: Sherry Manning
VOTE: Motion Passed

F. LeRoy commented that if the eligibility criteria was changed it may look to legislators and the public like the problem has been taken care of when in actuality it has not.

Johnette Oman responded to a question regarding how the decision is made on which children get services. She reported that the children are served by their IFSP date and then on a first come, first served basis. The exception would be if a child presented with an urgent need.

Wendy Whipple stated she will present the ICC's position to the HD and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). She reported she has had discussions with both agencies regarding waiting on making this decision until after the legislative session and both have stated their willingness to wait. The decisions of the Department will hinge on the legislative outcome.

DISCUSS PROPOSED BDRS RELATED TO DISABILITY SERVICES AND DETERMINE WHAT ACTION WOULD LIKE TO BE TAKEN

A. Bingham reported this agenda item is specific to the bill draft request (BDR) supporting insurance coverage of individual children diagnosed with autism. W. Whipple added Jan Crandy had come to the last ICC meeting to ask for support. At that time, action could not be taken due to the agenda showing it as a discussion only item. With this agenda item, it has been broadened to include any BDR dealing with a disability. In this way, if an issue arose and could possibly use the support of the ICC, action could be taken. Although, the main purpose of this agenda item is to take action on Jan Crandy's recommendation that the ICC support the autism insurance legislation. A. Bingham noted a meeting was held with those ICC members who indicated they would like to work on a subcommittee relative to legislative action. The subcommittee was looking specifically to make a provision that early intervention services in Nevada be mandated rather than discretionary. This is still being worked on. She also added the legislative subcommittee is reviewing all legislation dealing with disabilities and thanked Sherry Manning for providing a spreadsheet with a list of BDRs related to disabilities which they are following. A. Bingham noted if they are BDRs the subcommittee feels that the ICC needs to support, they will let ICC members know.

Discussion took place regarding how insurance companies try not to pay for any services provided to a child diagnosed with autism as they would with other physical disabilities. Y. Brueggert remarked as an advocate if the child is diagnosed with autism their medical insurance automatically denies payment whether or not the child was seen for a cold or their disability and that is why this BDR is so important. Dan Olsen spoke regarding the use of transition in the Medicaid infrastructure grant and how AB87 is proposing to fund the medical expenditures for the program which allows an individual who is 16 years old or older and is working to receive full Medicaid benefits. This bill is being supported by the committee on health care.

MOTION: To have the ICC support this BDR.
BY: Kristen McIntyre
SECOND: Y. Brueggert
ABSTAIN: Betty. Sherwood
VOTE: Motion Passed

K. McIntyre stated that J. Crandy has a form which lists the organizations supporting this BDR. A. Bingham volunteered to contact her to find out how the ICC could best show their support and would provide a copy to all ICC members.

Joyce Larsen commented that when looking at services not well covered by insurance companies, autism is one of the categories that fall under mental health and is not covered. It is well known that mental health services and mental health payments by insurance companies are lacking across Nevada and across the nation even though federal bills have been put in place to bring parity so that services are available and provided equitability.

PUBLIC COMMENT
None was given.

ADJOURNMENT
Co-Chair N. Behrens adjourned the meeting at 2:20 p.m.