



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

MISSISSIPPI FIRST STEPS EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) Meeting

July 13, 2018

9:00 am-4:00 pm

Table with 4 columns: Present, SICC Members, Affiliation, Role. Lists attendees such as Shirley Miller, Linda Shivers, and Kara Butler with their respective affiliations and roles.

Additional Attendees:

- Miranda Richardson, MSDH, Early Intervention Data Manager
Pamela Kendrick, MSDH, Early Intervention Monitoring Coordinator
Stacy Callender, MSDH, Part C Coordinator
Valecia Davis, MSDH, Early Intervention Division Director
Debra Koonce, MSDH, Early Intervention Quality Technical Assistant Southern Region
Carey Bates, MSDH, Early Intervention Quality Technical Assistant Central Region
Anissa Pace, MSDH, Local Early Intervention Program Coordinator
Marty Chunn, MSDH, EDHI Learning Community Facilitator
Gwen Woodard, Division of Medicaid
Mary Katherine Ulmer, Division of Medicaid
Valarie Linn, Magnolia Speech School
Michael & Florance Bass, Parents of Child in EI
Quantikki Martin, JMMF

## MINUTES

### **Welcome/Introductions (B. Herrington)**

B. Herrington opened the meeting at 9:26 am. She welcomed all SICC members and attendees. All participants provided brief introductions.

### **Review and Approval of Minutes (B. Herrington)**

Minutes from the April 6, 2018 meeting were reviewed and approved as written by the SICC (motion by L. Shivers and second by N. Thompson).

### **Committee Reports (B. Herrington)**

The following updates were provided on the work of the committees:

- ***Personnel Preparation Committee:*** J. Parker, Chair, provided updates for the state team who attended the Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC) Leadership Institute in Avon, CT. Mississippi has applied for and been approved to receive intensive technical assistance from ECPC focused on developing our Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD). C. Allgood, Child Care Licensure, provided an update on the resource directory being developed which will include trainings provided in the state to families and professionals who work with early childhood programs. The directory will have a companion master course catalog for all training topics provided in the state. Trainings to be included must be reviewed to ensure their quality, alignment with standards, and provision by qualified personnel. C. Allgood also reported on meeting with the Department of Human Services about funding for training for early childhood providers and programs, including those for children with disabilities.
- ***Public Awareness Committee:*** L. Rolison, Chair, reported the Public Awareness committee had not met. This committee reaffirmed their intent to prepare the First Steps annual report to the Governor.
- ***Transition Committee:*** C. Taylor, Chair, reported the Transition Committee had not met. This committee reaffirmed their intent to prepare an early childhood transition guidance document for families enrolled in the First Steps transitioning to special education services.
- ***Retention/Recruitment:*** M. Ulmer, replacing Dorthy Young as Chair, requested clarification and provided updates.
  - A. Pace, LEIP 9 Coordinator, shared that low reimbursement rates have had a negative impact on recruiting and acquiring providers especially in Programs that border other states or in metro areas. She also shared about the difficulties LEIP Coordinators had experienced in recruiting Service Coordinators due to the limited number of acceptable degrees included in the Targeted Case Management (TCM) administrative code. M. Ulmer reported Medicaid could review the degrees required for Service Coordinators who provide TCM.
  - M. Ulmer and L. Shivers asked S. Callender how MSDH set service rates; however, S. Callender reported MSDH Human Resources was unable to determine the process but would inquire with the Mississippi Personnel Board. S. Callender reported First Steps rates have not been reset in more than 10 years, with the most recent changes resulting in decreased reimbursement rates. She further reported that First Steps does not have set rates for early intervention services beyond service coordination, special instruction, and occupational, physical, and speech therapy. A study of reimbursement rates for

early intervention service delivery with neighboring states was proposed to collect data to develop recommendations for service provision rates.

- M. Ulmer agreed to do a cross-walk of rates and provide update at next SICC meeting.
- S. Callender noted increased reimbursement rates would likely need increased funding for the EI Program. R. Blakeney asked for the annual EI budget. S. Callender provided the current state and federal allocations (\$1.3M and \$4M respectively) and the earnings from TCM (\$3M annually).
- N. Bennett asked if First Steps could deny services because of contractual concerns. V. Davis and S. Callender explained the use of contracts as the mechanism for reimbursement and the process for contractual disputes.
- S. Callender reported efforts with HR to determine ways to limit the difficulty of processing contracts annually (e.g., multi-year contracts). L. Shivers asked if Medicaid could approve providers for more than one year. M. Ulmer agreed to look into it and provide committee with update at the next scheduled meeting.
- S. Perigoe suggested ways to incentivize the billing process. S. Callender provided detailed process of how billing is submitted and process through MSDH/EI as the Payor of Last Resort (POLR).
- R. Blakeney gave an overview of changes to insurance plans and limits on policies, skyrocketing premiums and high risk pool access. R. Blakeney explained how process should work.

#### **SICC Business:** (B. Herrington)

K. Smith was appointed as an Ex-officio member of the SICC by the Executive Committee.

S. Callender noted the need to elect a Vice-Chair. B. Herrington and L. Shivers asked interested parties to email the Executive Committee. Any nominations submitted will be presented to the SICC for a vote at the next meeting.

#### **Public Comments:**

M. Bass and F. Bass shared their experience with the MSFSEIP and the impact of failures to follow Federal regulations and State policies and procedures their child and their lives. They expressed the potential and real benefits of early intervention services and requested program improvements to ensure other families are not placed in similar situations.

#### **Program Update**

**Policy Updates:** S. Callender reported the development of a formal document regarding eligibility criteria.

**Critical Shortage of EI Personnel:** S. Callender reported on EI personnel shortages due to the loss of several Program and Service Coordinators while experiencing increasing enrollment numbers into the MSFSEIP. Some service coordinators (SC) have caseloads over 100 families (exceeding the maximum caseload of 50 for a dedicated SC). She noted the State has a new grant promoting developmental screening which could further increase the number of referrals to the EI Program.

**State & Local Determinations:** M. Richardson shared the current state and local EIP determinations and reviewed the process for making the determinations. She noted the Lead agency was aware of trends that negatively impacted the determination, namely timely services, and was exploring ways to address these concerns.

**EI Monitoring Updates:** P. Kendrick informed the committee that all programs had cleared their previous findings with the exception of LEIP 5, which has long-standing noncompliance related to timely services. The LEIP 5 has a current Corrective Action Plan (CAP) and the MSFSEIP has been working with national TA to determine how to assist the program correct the situation. V. Davis provided the committee with a schedule of the upcoming program and subgrant monitoring visits to be completed by the end of October 2018. There will be onsite Monitoring visit of Region 3 LEIPs 8 & 9. The other LEIPs in Regions 1 & 2 will self-assessments.

**EI Training Updates:** V. Davis provided the SICC with dates for the upcoming Local EIP Orientation in late July and EI Provider Orientations in August.

**EHDI Updates:** S. Callender informed the committee she is now the EHDI Director due to recent staff resignations and reassignments. She provided an overview of the EHDI Program activities including the establishment of the *Guide By Your Side* Program to provide peer-to-peer support for families of children who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH). She provided an overview of the EHDI follow-up and referral process.

### **Adjourn**

The SICC Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.