

MINUTES**January 13, 2011 – Marlboro, Massachusetts**

Members Present: Tara Casanas, Jennifer Chabott, John Garcia, Jen Greco, Crystal Hebert, Kate Hogan, Peggy Lee, Madeline Levine, Margaret Mahoney, Anne Marsh, Paul Melville, Maura Murphy, Jennifer O’Leary, Arlene Tannenbaum, Pam Wildnauer, Peggy Winsman, Alden Wood.

Members Absent: Jennifer Amaya-Thompson, Faith Behum, Richard Breault, Kristin Britton, Kelly Ann Coyne, Sandra Daly, Jen DerBegosian, Janet George, Karin Lifter, Neal Michaels, Sara Miranda, Evelyn Nellum, Kathie Rose, Ronna Schaffer, Nancy Schwartz, Joanne Williams, Corey Zimmerman.

Non-Voting Committee Chairs in Attendance in addition to those listed above: Zulmira Allcock, Peter Woodbury.

1. Welcome: Margaret Mahoney opened the meeting and introduced Tri-Chair Jennifer O’Leary; Joanne Williams was unable to attend. Margaret introduced three new ICC members who were in attendance: **Madeline Levine**, representing the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; **Tara Casanas**, MetroWest Parent Representative; and **Maura Murphy**, Central Provider Representative. Another new member, **Representative Kate Hogan**, Legislative Representative to the ICC, will also be attending today.

Approval of Minutes: The Minutes of the meeting held October 21, 2010, were approved as written.

2. Director’s Report – Ron Benham, Director of the Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition, Massachusetts Department of Public Health: Ron gave the following updates and responses to members’ questions:

- House One, the Governor’s budget proposal, will be issued the last Wednesday in January. The state faces serious budget challenges for FY 2012, the state fiscal year that begins 7/1/11; a shortfall of about \$1.8 billion is anticipated.
- Public Hearings on the Department’s 25th Year Part C funding application to OSEP are being held this week, including one at the close of today’s ICC meeting. In order to be ready for the state fiscal year that begins 7/1/11, the hearing process must begin now; however, there is no plan to implement any of the proposed system changes before July 1.
- ARICA, the state legislation that makes intensive services for children on the autism spectrum reimbursable by insurance, rolled out 1/1/11, but there is not yet complete clarity as to the scope of what will be covered. Guidance from the Division of Insurance indicates that coverage includes – but is not limited to – ABA services.
- Discussion with MassHealth continues regarding submission of a waiver request to CMS to enable MassHealth to cover autism services.
- In FY 2011, the current budget year, the state’s Early Intervention program is operating within budget largely because of an additional \$2.5 million received via the Supplementary Budget that was recently passed.
- While it is not the Department’s first choice, a bifurcated EI system may be necessary in order to stay within budget. This would mean a narrowly prescribed Part C program, and a second system in which children with less significant needs would be involved in a state program that is subject to availability of funds with no guarantee of service.

- It is not yet clear how insurers may go about providing services to children with an autism diagnosis. If MAHPs – the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans – chooses to create a separate system for providing services, then they will have to decide how to cover co-pays and deductibles, what to do about medical necessity criteria and utilization review, and whether families could simultaneously receive services from certified EI programs. Some providers think that a lot of families would choose EI because of its more comprehensive and integrated approach to providing services, along with the fact that there are no co-pays or deductibles.
- EI has tremendous political support, and there is a long road ahead. The Department intends to take a thoughtful approach and be as fair as possible. It is necessary to put the structure in place that would allow the system to react in the best interests of children and families, without waiting and possibly having to break into it in June or July if Massachusetts EI is not fully funded for FY 2012.

3. State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Review – Patti Fougere, Assistant Director of Early Childhood Programs: Patti distributed a handout, *MA DPH Early Intervention Services – Annual Performance Report Data Summary*. She thanked Katee Duffy, Jean Shimer, and providers for all their hard work to make this report possible. Each state participating in Part C has to meet measurable and rigorous targets, and the SPP documents our performance. Patti requests feedback from providers which will help develop targets for the next two years. As usual, there are 14 indicators. Seven are compliance indicators for which OSEP sets 100% compliance as the goal, and the other seven are performance or results indicators. Patti reviewed each of the indicators, pointing out our achievement in Massachusetts. Our statewide system has done well, and has improved its performance where needed.

4. Committee Reports. Standards Committee – Zulmira Allcock: The committee has reviewed eight out of 12 sections of the EI Operational Standards. Toward the end of the process the committee will review all comments that have been received and could incorporate appropriate changes at that time. Those who have made comments would receive feedback at that time. **Personnel Preparation – Arlene Tannenbaum:** The committee has met with higher education. Holly Newman did an informal poll to explore the extent to which the DVD on Massachusetts EI personnel recruitment is being used. The Play Brochure has been published and is available on the Early Intervention Training Center and the EI Parent Leadership Project websites. The committee is discussing ways to provide incentives to EI programs for accepting EI interns; it also intends to create an online module on how to be an intern supervisor. **Specialty Services – Tracy Osbahr for Tom Miller:** The committee has completed the work and the following handout was distributed: *Starting Points for Service Coordinators for Children with Complex Care Needs*. It is dated November, 2010. **Fiscal Committee – Peter Woodbury:** The committee continues to work on the priority issues identified at last September’s ICC Retreat: 1) An EI rate increase. The law calls for the rate to be reviewed and revised every two years, but it has actually been six years; therefore, a task force will be appointed. 2) Self-funded insurance plans, which are not required to cover EI, though some do. The committee will work with the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium when timing is right. **Membership Committee – Jennifer O’Leary:** The ICC materials are now available on line. Please let Jennifer know if any committee needs additional members. **Family Leadership Team – Crystal Hebert:** The team has attended an overview of the ICC that was provided by the EI Parent Leadership Project. The team is gathering information about goals and strategies of other family and provider groups; and is currently seeking someone from the Federation for Children with Special Needs to replace Sara Miranda.

5. The ICC meeting adjourned at 12 Noon.