June 25, 2020

2 PM MST/4 PM EST

Attendance:

CDC: Marcus Gaffney, Eric Cahill, Alina Flores

DSHPSHWA: Linda Hazard, Marcia Fort

HRSA: Bethany Applebaum, Maea Banks, Treeby Brown, Michelle Koplitz, Sandra Battiste

NCHAM: Karl White, Mandy Jay, William Eiserman

AAP: Müge Chavdar

H&V: Lisa Kovacs

LEND: Maureen Johnson

1. COVID-19 Updates. Each group provided a brief update regarding activities and impacts of associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and EHDI.
   1. **H&V.** Lisa mentioned that H&V continues to update appropriate COVID-19 information and links on the website. The main concern for FBOs center around schools opening again, if masks will be required, and how education will work for DHH children. Family support providers are concerned about families receiving necessary diagnostic testing especially for newborn screening services. Although some audiology clinics are opening, there is still a limited number of families being seen due to COVID restrictions so the backlog continues to grow.

The H&V conference has been cancelled. They are working with the planning committee towards having some virtual workshops during the same dates in place of the conference. H&V continues to work closely with FBOs to make sure family providers are in place with their own families and the families they serve.

Lisa reported that H&V finalized a work plan for work with AMCHP as part of the Tele Audiology Grant regarding the family support world and how it fits in the telehealth system.

* 1. **AAP.** In addition to COVID-19 updates to the website, AAPs current focus is providing guidance and support as physicians apply for provider care funding. Müge asked if there is any official guidance or recommendation on face masks, especially for DHH children. The following points of discussion were included:
* Vermont released guidance that face shields could be used in classroom settings and with social distancing.
* One problem with the face shields is that many are made of thick plastic which muffles the sound and makes it more difficult to hear.
* Face shields fog up easily but can be washed and used indefinitely
* There are also clear plastic face masks available, but they have the same challenges of muffled sound and fogging.
* Dividers between a provider and student, along with allowing distance for evaluating and assessment may be helpful.
* The National Deaf Center has been posting several resources for face shields or face masks.
* Several states directors of special education have been putting out guidance to school districts, offering funding for masks, and making sure they take into consideration clear face mask for DHH students.
  1. **HRSA.** HRSA and MCHB have released two additional requests for supplemental funding to the NTRC and FL3 to address COVID-19 and assist during the pandemic.
  2. **AUCD.** The AUCD continues to have weekly calls with their network focused on universities re-opening and on the mental health of families being served. The AUCD Mental Health Special Interest group had a webinar on strategies to use during a pandemic.
  3. **CDC.** The CDC Data Committee continues its discussion on the impact of COVID-19 around staffing, furloughs, and the funding challenges EHDI programs are facing. They continue to look at how services are being delivered as well how to adapt data collection for 2019 and 2020. It is more difficult to provide 1-3-6 services, but we still need to have the goal that all children receive appropriate services.

The CDC NOFO is still on track for September beginning with a 1 hour kick-off on July 9th at 3:30 pm EST. The zoom meeting will be recorded.

* 1. **DSPSHWA.** All of the EHDI programs are concerned about reduced funding as well as more and more states are having their EHDI staff furloughed as a result of COVID-19. Requests to EHDI coordinators, even simple requests, are more difficult with staff being furloughed resulting in an increased stress level for EHDI coordinators.

EHDI Chats is returning to its regular monthly call with the caveat that emergency calls be added as necessary.

* 1. **NCHAM**. The NTRC, in conjunction with DSPSHWA, developed and distribute guidelines for holding stakeholder meetings during COVID-19. We are also working with group of EHDI coordinators and audiologists to develop guidelines to keep children safe during audiology visits.

NCHAM has received sub awards from AMCHP as part of the CARES Act Tele Audiology grant for two projects:

* EHDI-PALS. There are 1400 facilities registered on the EHDI-PALS to help families find a pediatric audiologist. Using those facilities that are currently offering telehealth audiology services we will develop resources and guidelines to expand telehealth services as we move into the re-opening phase of the pandemic. Those programs already doing telehealth will be in a position to provide assistance and resources to others.
* Virtual Site Visits to Hospitals. For many years state EHDI programs have done in-person site visits to hospitals to help improve screening and follow up outcomes.  We believe these follow-up visits could be done virtually and working with a small group of state EHDI Coordinators to develop support materials and tools to enable that to happen.

On July 16th, Amy Szarkowski will present a webinar: [*Self-Care During "Interesting Times": Beyond the Advice to Eat Better and Get a Good Night's Sleep*](http://infanthearing.org/resources_home/events/index.html#July-16-2020). Registration information is available at [www.infanthearing.org](http://www.infanthearing.org).

The CMV Conference has been postponed until 2021. During the week originally scheduled for the conference we are planning four “Lunch and Learn” webinars using presenters scheduled for the conference.

1. General Discussion:

Things continue to change so rapidly and are very unpredictable so it’s hard to know what will be the new normal. COVID-19 numbers continue to increase and in some states hospitalization rates are reaching crisis stage. HRSA is planning in-team meetings for grantees and Sandra asked if there are things that grantees or FBO are working on that can help EHDI teams as we move forward.

1. What have been some of the practices we have learned through FBOs that will be long standing after the pandemic?
2. Should we start thinking about family support being provided virtually as part of telehealth system?
3. What are some activities and resources maybe started because of COVID-19 that will continue to be valuable after the pandemic ends?
4. Are there other things that would be helpful from a federal perspective (besides additional funding)?

Karl expressed appreciation to both HRSA and the CDC for their understanding that this is an unusual time and for their flexibility on deadlines and submissions.

Transitioning from in-person to virtual services has increased the workload, especially with reduction in staff due to funding changes or furloughs. Recent concerns around the country related to racial tensions and social justice have required additional time and energy from EHDI program staff.

Many organizations have increased financial burden due to transitioning to virtual. Basic platforms and infrastructure may need to be increased as we think about how to do virtual for a long period of time for a larger groups.

H&V is requesting support for part time position for consultant for underrepresented populations.

**Resources shared during the meeting:**

<https://www.nad.org/covid19-communication-access-recs-for-hospital/>

<https://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/covid-19-information>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/coronavirus-mask/art-20485449>

<http://www.handsandvoices.org/pdf/covid-19/WeWearMasks.pdf>

<https://mailchi.mp/nationaldeafcenter/your-questions-answered-masks?e=369e0ccb82>

<http://www.handsandvoices.org/pdf/covid-19/faceshieldEAA6-5-20.pdf>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Mood-Boosting-Tips-for-Families-COVID-19.aspx>

Lucille Packard Foundation Resources - <https://www.lpfch.org/cshcn/covid>

COVID-19 Planning Guide and Self-Assessment for Higher Education: <https://www.opensmartedu.org/>

Webinar: Strategies for Addressing Anxiety Related to COVID-19: <https://www.aucd.org/template/event.cfm?event_id=8661&amp;id=16>

<http://www.handsandvoices.org/about/hv-jobs.html>

<https://www.nad.org/covid19-communication-access-recs-for-hospital/>

**The next EHDI Partners Meeting about COVID-19 is scheduled for Thursday, July 23rd at 2 PM MST/4 PM EST.**