

Interagency Coordinating Council

September 20, 2004
9:00 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.

One Long Wharf
DMR Office, Third Floor
New Haven, CT

DRAFT

Minutes

Laurel Ross, ICC Acting Chair
ARC, Greenwich

Karen Biernat
Parent

Timothy Bowles, acting
Dept. of Social Services

Carmina Cirioli
Parent

Mary Ann Dayton-Fitzgerald
Dept. of Children and Families

Elizabeth Daly
Office of Protection and Advocacy

Mary Eberle, alternate
A.J. Papanikou Center for Excellence

Maria Engborg, alternate
Parent

Ann Gionet
Parent

Linda Goodman
Department of Mental Retardation

Mark A. Greenstein, M.D.
Pediatrician

Jeannette Haines, acting
BESB

Moira Herbert, acting
Dept. of Insurance

Melvette Hill, acting
Parent

Cynthia Jackson
Children's Therapy Services

Robert LaCamera, M.D.
American Academy of Pediatrics

Joe McLaughlin
McLaughlin and Associates

Amy Moncy acting
Easter Seals CT/RI, Inc.

Maria Synodi, alternate
State Dept. of Education

Robin Tousey-Ayers, acting
Dept. of Public Health

Myra Watnick
Rehabilitation Associates, Inc.

Diane Wixted
Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired

ICC Members Present: Maria Engborg, Linda Goodman, Dr. Mark Greenstein, Moira Herbert, Cindy Jackson, Dr. Robert LaCamera, Joe McLaughlin, Amy Moncy, Lolli Ross, Maria Synodi, Myra Watnick, Diane Wixted

ICC Members Absent: Karen Biernat, Tim Bowles, Carmina Cirioli, Elizabeth Daly, Mary Ann Dayton-Fitzgerald, Mary Eberle, Ann Gionet, Jeannette Haines, Melvette Hill, Rep. Denise Merrill, Robin Tousey-Ayers

The meeting began at 9:20 AM.

Introductions: Lolli Ross, Acting ICC Chair, welcomed everyone to the State ICC meeting. Council members and five members of the public introduced themselves.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Lead Agency Update

Linda distributed the Lead Agency Update (*att. 1*). Discussion ensued regarding families whose services were suspended for non-payment. Linda explained that the suspension action is taken only after each family received monthly written notice of payment due for three months. Rather than end all contact with a family, their status is automatically changed to "service coordination only" until the parent either pays the balance owed or decides to exit the System. It was noted that some programs may wish to sponsor a child. More information on these families might be helpful, for instance are they "just above" the \$45,000 income level that makes them responsible for payments? Discussion continued regarding the

effects on children, families and community resources. The cost per child for early intervention is far exceeded by the cost per child for school-age special education. The State of Connecticut has increased spending designed to improve early literacy while children with special needs seem to have become a lower priority. A more cohesive state policy regarding all early childhood issues was cited as a worthy goal that the ICC may promote. Mark emphasized that, "Intervention delayed is intervention denied."

Discussion then moved to examination of factors that are established in law as contrasted with factors that are solely under Lead Agency control. For example, eligibility was changed July 1, 2003 based on decisions by the Lead Agency in consultation with the Medical Advisory Committee. It is easier to change eligibility criteria than the parent fees, for example, which are defined in statute. Yet eligibility changes did not decrease referrals (they increased by 5% in FY04 even after eligibility was tightened) while the parent fees have had a greater impact on enrollment. The impact of parent fees also differed regionally with far more withdrawals in the West Region than in the South, so caution is needed when any change is proposed.

The ICC Executive Committee reviewed a range of variables (*att. 2, 3*) that changed during last fiscal year and their impact, both intended and unintended. The original goal of the Governor's budget was to "curb growth" of the System. After some discussion, the ICC proposed three action steps:

1. The ICC will send a letter to Commissioner O'Meara to request that the lead agency restore FY03 funding levels via a Budget Option. Lolli, Joe, Cindy, Myra, and Diane volunteered and will solicit Denise Merrill's participation in this effort.
2. The ICC has requested a meeting with Janice Gruendel in the Governor's office but have not received a reply from her to date. Tim, Lolli and Myra will continue to pursue this option. Bob LaCamera offered to approach her to facilitate such a meeting.
3. The ICC will lobby the legislature to change the Birth to Three statute regarding parent fees. Denise Merrill's participation will be requested

Joe made the following **Motion**, seconded by Cindy: The ICC will recommend to Commissioner O'Meara that (a) payment to providers of two units for months of no service be reinstated, and (b) that all eligibility changes made effective July 1, 2003 be reversed. There was one abstention, and the Motion passed.

Discussion continued on the topic of insurance reimbursement. Moira noted that state law does not obligate health insurance companies to pay unless a service is "medically necessary". Connecticut's HMOs have agreed to pay because they wish to do business in this state within a friendly business environment. The Department of Labor has purview over ERISA plans that are not obligated to reimburse under state law. Linda has been reviewing insurance denials sent to her by Birth to Three programs and will continue to work on resolving the issues involved. It was noted that families enrolled in Birth to Three who are Medicaid eligible have increased from 37% to 42%, leaving a smaller percentage of families with commercial health insurance. The ICC asked Linda to provide FY03 data on children referred for concerns about speech only and premature births. A letter will be requested from the Medical Advisory Committee to support the "review and improvement of eligibility criteria". It was decided that the ICC legislative committee and family involvement committee will continue to address ways of educating state legislators about these issues.

Approval of Minutes

A Motion was made to accept the August minutes as written. It was noted that a date was incorrect, therefore the Motion was revised by Myra and seconded by Mark to accept the August minutes as amended to read, "Next Focused Monitoring Stakeholders' meeting is set for **October 18th** at Infoline." The minutes were approved as amended.

ICC Appointments

Lolli announced that the Family Involvement Committee has continued to reach out to parents who may wish to fill vacancies on the Council, and thanked Clara Gutierrez who participated in today's meeting and is considering requesting appointment to the Council. Other vacancies include a Head Start representative and a State Senator. Lolli has been recruiting the Stamford Early Head Start disabilities coordinator for that seat. It was thought best to wait until after the November election to recruit a legislator.

Linda distributed a draft brochure (*att. 4*) that had been requested by the ICC that addresses parent fees. Feedback was solicited, given, and will be reflected in the finished product that is expected to be available for service coordinators to give to families beginning next month.

Lolli then called for a **Motion** to adjourn. Myra made the Motion to adjourn; Cindy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 12:12 PM

NEXT SICC MEETING

There will be **no** October State ICC meeting. Council members are asked to participate in a Focused Monitoring Stakeholders meeting on October 18th.

Monday, December 13th at Infoline in Rocky Hill, 1344 Silas Deane Highway, fourth floor conference room.

Please RSVP to Kathy Granata at 860-418-6146 or via e-mail to Eileen at eileen.mcmurrer@po.state.ct.us.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Wixted, Recording Secretary
with the assistance of Eileen McMurrer, lead agency staff support to the State ICC

Save the Dates for future State ICC meetings:

Executive Committee: Oct. 18 – immediately following Focused Monitoring meeting

Full Council meeting: Dec. 13 – Infoline, Rocky Hill

Full Council meeting: Feb. 7, 2005 – Infoline, Rocky Hill