



Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services

First Steps

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Interagency Coordinated Council Meeting Minutes

January 12, 2022

10am to 12:30pm

ICC members in attendance: Karen Carradine, Gina Doyle, Thomas Fisher, Mariann Frigo, Mark Guyer, Kristi Linson, Tonia Carriger (Proxy for Nicole Norvell), Jennifer Owens, Brittnee Smith, Angie Vaughn, Stacy Williams, DeAnna Woodruff, Joan Smith (Proxy for Gina Woodward), Jake Stein

ICC Members not in attendance: Representative Clere, Sara Cummins, Sarah Sailors, Erica Walker

First Steps State Staff in Attendance: Christina Commons, Maggie McCall, Sondra Tarter, Jessica Tomasino, Connie Young

Welcome and Introductions

Brittnee Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting and attendance was taken. Governor appointments for 2022-2025 members are pending.

The meeting was called to order and Delen Williams shared her story about her First Steps experience with her older daughter who is now 27. Her daughter was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy at 18 months and was referred to the program. She had a good experience and wished the program went beyond age 3. The providers were very knowledgeable, kind, and respectful and her daughter looked forward to the sessions.

Approval of November 2021 minutes (Vote on Approval)

Brittnee Smith asked the council if anyone had any edits or additions to the November 2021 meeting minutes. Thom Fisher moved to accept the minutes as written. Karen Carradine seconded the motion. The council voted to accept the minutes by a vote:

10 Yes

0 No

3 Abstained

The motion was carried.

First Steps Update

Christina Commons, State Director, shared that the office is continuing to work on improving the process for obtaining physician’s signature for IFSP services. There is a small workgroup of stakeholders working on this issue in collaboration with the state team. The goal of this effort is to improve timely start of services for children and their families. This is related to the IDEA Part C SSP Indicator 1, which is reported each year in the Annual Performance Report (APR).

The state is continuing to work on interpreter billing by provider agencies using EIHub. Thom Fisher asked if First Steps was paying for interpreter services. Christina addressed the question by stating there are enrolled interpreters in First Steps, and they have been paid for their services rendered.



First Steps has previously reimbursed agencies for interpreter services, however, when First Steps transitioned to EIHub the agency's ability to bill for these services was interrupted and will hopefully be resolved soon.

Full functionality of the case management module in EIHub went live on December 16, 2021. The state is working with Public Consulting Group (PCG) and SPOE offices to document all service coordination processes so SPOEs can train service coordinators.

FFY2020 APR Data

Maggie McCall, Quality Assurance Manager, presented the data being reported by Indiana for all indicators of the APR (Power Point attached). Maggie provided time for questions or comments. There were no comments provided by the council.

SSIP Target

Jessica Tomasino, Assistant Director, shared information about updating the State Systemic Improvement Plan's (SSIP) State Identified Measurable Results (SiMR) to include all children exiting the program. This was discussed in a stakeholder workgroup in December 2021 and the group recommended to accept the proposed change. Additionally, Jessica informed the ICC of changes made to the targets set for Indicator 3 Child Outcomes and explained the process the State used to come to this determination. Jessica provided all in attendance an opportunity to make comments or ask questions. No comments or questions were made by the council.

Christina thanked all stakeholders, the State team, and the QR team at Indiana University for their time and expertise shared during the stakeholder meetings in preparation for the FFY20 SPP/APR submission.

Christina engaged the council in a conversation regarding Indiana's Federal Part C budget and reviewed with them what was submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs for the FFY21 budget. Christina requested council member and public feedback on how they would advise First Steps invest its FFY22 funding.

Thom Fisher asked if First Steps can re-examine the pay structure for providers. Public comment was captured in the Zoom chat about provider rates—particularly over last year with COVID causing cancellations and increased gas prices. Christina indicated the Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services is awaiting Office of Special Education Program guidance on the use of ARP funds for recruitment and retention of staff. She confirmed workforce shortages and understands this is a concern across the state in all business sectors.

Christina brought to the attention of the ICC the pending Federal Appropriations Bill and encouraged the ICC and public in attendance to become familiar with the bill. The current version of the bill adds additional funding to IDEA. (See attached handout).

Sub-Committee Work Summary

Advocacy Sub-Committee

Brittnee Smith gave the summary for the Advocacy sub-committee. The subcommittee continued discussion about how best to inform legislators about First Steps. The discussion touched on several possible strategies including the importance of concise information, turning the annual report and rate study into a one-page snapshot to give out to legislators, and provide talking points for council members. The group would like to still bring families into the conversation.

Fiscal Sub-Committee

Mark Guyer gave a summary from the Fiscal sub-committee. They expressed the need to meet with PCG to recommend possible fixes to the EIHub, including an update on the electronic signature, updated training on documentation with the new codes, and changes that have been made over the past year with the EIHub available for providers. It was also recommended that training needs to be developed for new providers as an onboarding tool on how to bill using correct codes. This group would still like a training on insurance for parents.

Professional Development Sub-Committee

Karen Carradine gave an update for the Professional Development sub-committee. The group is looking at professional development evaluations and providing feedback on a consistent tool to gather feedback from providers about the trainings they receive. She will work on pulling the information together before sharing it with the full council.

Legislative Updates

Brittnee Smith shared her recent conversation with Representative Clere around the 2022 legislative session. He reiterated the importance for stakeholders and the ICC to continue their advocacy of First Steps and the services it provides to children and their families.

Public Comment

Mentimeter, a survey tool, was used to gather stakeholder feedback around recommendations to be utilized by DDRS when completing the FFY22 Part C grant application package. This package includes a budget for how FFY22 federal funds will be invested in First Steps. All in attendance were informed the Mentimeter would remain open until 1pm.

Brittnee requested additional public comment of which there were none.

Adjourn

Brittnee made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mark Guyer seconded the motion. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 12.20pm. The next meeting is March 9, 2022, at a location to be determined.

Minutes were respectfully submitted by Janet Ballard, ICC Staff Support