[**From the EHDI Coordinator**](https://youtu.be/5QdExWnHRCc)

It’s November, the weather is changing, and our work with the COEHDI system supports lots of activity too. I would say our work is advancing quickly based, in large part, on the participation of so many stakeholders. Connecting with you, on the phone or using Zoom, is a highlight of my day. And, I get to do that so much more often since there’s no “windshield time” for me.

Soon, five of our six task forces will be meeting. You can read about the work of these task forces in this newsletter. Each task force is prioritizing specific activities that will enhance our COEHDI system.

In pursuing sustainability and expanding the capabilities of the COEHDI system, we have applied for three grants to date. Recently, we received good news that one of them has been funded; a HRSA grant to support activities impacted by the coronavirus. We are waiting to hear about two other grant applications that we submitted. One was sent to the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP) and will fund telehealth activities for audiologic diagnostics and early intervention. The other grant was submitted to the Oberkotter Foundation. If funded, it will support an exploration of Colorado families’ access to listening and spoken language when this is the choice they make for their children. Fingers crossed we get the funding for these also.

I was delighted, on October 9th, to have been asked to provide an update about our COEHDI work to the Colorado Infant Hearing Advisory Committee (CIHAC). I was able to announce that we are in the process of developing our COEHDI website which met with a lot of approval from CIHAC members. We plan to include functional and informative materials for parents, screeners, early interventionists, physicians, and other providers. Work on this website is being spearheaded by Katie Cue ([kcue@coehdi.org](mailto:kcue@coehdi.org)), with input from our task forces, and in collaboration with CIHAC members.

We also are working with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to expand Colorado’s data reporting. Specifically, we are investigating opportunities to both update and share Colorado’s data with CDC. The CDC annually publishes data related to each state and territories’ EHDI system, which provides a nice measure of progress being made and  allows for researchers, families, and stakeholders to review and compare all states’ data. We have a terrific opportunity to report our intervention data thanks to the efforts of the Colorado Hearing (CO-Hear) Resource Coordinators who are funded by CSDB, and the data housed by Early Intervention Colorado (aka; Part C).

The work I do each day is supported by our Core Team and I am forever appreciative of the collaboration that guides our work. A hearty “thank you” for the opportunity to refresh our COEHDI system with you - Cliff Moers, Christy Scott, Heather Abraham, Katie Cue, Ashley Renslow, and Amy Novotny. Our work is more thoughtful and of higher quality, in depth and breath, because of the work we do together.

PS; Since my column is recurring (and I've looked at the same picture of myself for far too long), I will begin to entertain you with pictures of me in my other element - the great Colorado outdoors! My almost daily hikes are one thing that hasn’t changed much in all the months we’ve been coping with the impact of COVID. As always, I’m lucky to be in Colorado!

[**Spotlight on Amy Novotny**](https://youtu.be/94uyvNn9yMY)

This month’s spotlight highlights Amy Novotny, Director of the Rocky Mountain Deaf School (RMDS).

Hello! I am originally from the land of 10,000 lakes, Minnesota. Despite short stints in Washington DC and New Mexico, I have made Colorado my home for the last few decades. In fact, one of my favorite quotes is, “I am not a Colorado native but I got here as fast as I could!”

I am passionate about deaf education, and leadership. I have over 20 years of experience in Deaf Education, 18 years of which have been at Rocky Mountain Deaf School (RMDS). Currently, I am in my 9th year as the Director of RMDS. I received my bachelor and master degrees in Deaf Education from Gallaudet University. I also added a master degree in Administration Leadership Policy studies from the University of Colorado, Denver (UCD).

One of my favorite things is exploring and enjoying what Colorado has to offer. I love traveling, reading and hiking with my dog, an Australian Shepherd. I also have a Boston Terrier, but she is more of a hide-under-the-cozy-blankets (especially in cold weather!) dog than an adventurer.

I am honored to be part of the Colorado EHDI Core Team and Alliance. I have enjoyed working with an excellent group of professionals filled with diverse experiences and expertise.

[**Announcements**](https://youtu.be/E-TSO9hTOEI)

The DHH Adult Task Force will meet the 2nd Monday of each month. The next meeting date is November 9th from 2:00-3:30 pm.

The Families of DHH Children Task Force will meet the 2nd Friday of each month. The next meeting date is November 13th from 12:00-1:00 pm.

The COEHDI Alliance will meet the 3rd Friday of each month from 10-11:30AM. The next meeting date is November 20th. Meetings are open to the public and members of the public are invited to submit a public comment. In order to facilitate the meeting in a punctual manner, we request that those wishing to submit public comments complete a request form in advance so that we may add your comment to the appropriate place in our agenda. The public comment request form can be found at this link: [Public Comment Request Form](https://forms.gle/sgoRmD9TVRZdTU7V8)

The COVID and Screening Task Forces continue to meet on an as-needed basis.

The Diagnostics/Identification and Transition from Diagnostics/Identification to Early Intervention Task Force is preparing to launch. Please contact Arlene Stredler Brown (astredlerbrown@coehdi.org) if you are interested in joining this task force. To date, 18 people have expressed their interest. Thank you!

All Colorado EHDI Alliance and Task Force meetings will be announced here as will other Colorado EHDI system stakeholder meetings. If you would like your meetings included in our monthly newsletter, contact: [info@coehdi.org](mailto:info@coehdi.org).

[**Teleaudiology**](https://youtu.be/zzkryMUTlkA)

**by Arlene Stredler Brown and Christy Scott**

A grant was submitted on October 16th to the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP). This funding opportunity is part of the CARES Act and targets development and enhancement of telehealth initiatives. Early Intervention Colorado (Part C) has been supporting telehealth since 2016 for all direct Early Intervention (EI) services. With the onset of COVID restrictions, all EI services migrated to telehealth with only limited in-person services. Parent and provider survey data has indicated telehealth is successful.

In the AMCHP grant application, we propose to develop and expand tele-audiology to include both counseling/troubleshooting services and diagnostic/identification services. The western slope has discussed their needs for local diagnostic services for several years; telehealth could address this need. This grant, if funded, will purchase equipment so that diagnostic testing can be piloted in some areas on the Western Slope.

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) supports this grant application. This is fortunate as we will be approaching educational audiologists, in their respective administrative units, about their interest in participating in grant-funded tele-audiology services.

The initiative and information provided above is still in its early stages. We have received valuable Input about the challenges and successes setting up tele-audiology services from our neighbors in Nebraska. At this point in time, we want to keep our stakeholders apprised of the work being done thus far. Keep your fingers crossed that our grant application is funded!

[**Task Force Updates**](https://youtu.be/kkoBE00XMgc)

There are currently four task forces operating with a fifth currently being formed this month. Below are the individual task force updates.

**COVID-19 by Hannah Glick**

**(Alliance Representative:** TBD**)**

This task force has selected three goals to focus on at this time. Each goal is associated with specific activities:

1. Goal 1 – Supporting newborn hearing screeners:Earlier in October, COEHDI distributed a survey to newborn hearing screening facilities to identify the needs of screeners. Midwives were included in the distribution list. (Another survey is being developed by Lisa Cannon and Arlene Stredler Brown that will be tailored to the needs of educational audiologists who are conducting hearing screenings.) One outcome of the survey will be the development of materials to address safety precautions related to COVID. These materials will be posted  on the COEHDI website, and will be easily accessed by personnel conducting newborn hearing screenings and rescreenings.
2. Goal 2 – Tracking screening and rescreening results: The HIDS database was launched by CDPHE on October 6, 2020. The COVID Task Force is collaborating with CDPHE to collect information that can be used to track COVID-related gaps.
3. Goal 3 – Working with Primary Care Physicians (PCPs): Maureen Cunningham, Hannah Glick, and Arlene Stredler Brown are collaborating to define activities to engage PCPs  in screening and  rescreening activities. They may also be in a position to help us reduce loss to followup.

**Families of DHH Children by Heather Abraham**

**(Alliance Representatives:** Geoff Goodside and Emily Augsberger**)**

The Family Task Force is taking the lead in the development of the DHH adult program and the work of this task force is much appreciated as it is guiding our efforts to create a DHH Adult-to-Family Support program. The intent of the program is to offer parents access to DHH adults until a child’s third birthday. As we create our program, we are learning from programs in other states. We will borrow and adapt materials from other programs when they represent our defined values & philosophy. While parents would like access to DHH adults all through their child’s lives, EHDI’s mission is to focus solely on the birth – three population.

**DHH Adults by Heather Abraham**

**(Alliance Representatives:** Sara Robinson and Sarah Honigfeld**)**

The DHH Adult Task Force has also participated  in creating the documents to identify the principles, mission, vision, & core values of the DHH Adult-to-Family Support Program. Representatives from the DHH Adult Task Force  shared progress to date. The six values guiding this program are: access, community, empowerment, inclusivity & diversity, informed decision making, and relationships.  From the perspective of one Alliance member, diversity can be defined by hearing status, communication approach, &/or culture. Families’ access includes materials related to information, language(s), communication, and decision-making processes. It is important for families to be able to relate to the adults they meet.

**Screening Task Force by Arlene Stredler Brown**

**(Alliance Representative:** Kristin Sommerfeldt**)**

The Screening Task Force met on October 29th, strategically planned approximately three weeks after the launch of the Health Informatics Data System (HIDS) at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). The task force is in the process of identifying its priority areas. Agenda items for discussion included:

* Role of PCPs with screening, rescreening, and loss to followup (LTF) activities
* Role of educational audiologists in screening, rescreening, and LTF
* Professional Development needs of screeners as they learn HIDS. Training is a collaborative effort by CDPHE and COEHDI.

An update will be provided in the December newsletter.

**Diagnostic/Identification and Transition from Diagnostic/Identification to Early Intervention Task Force by Arlene Stredler Brown**

This newest task force, the fifth of six task forces, is going to meet for the first time on November 10th. At that time, we will appoint an Alliance representative. As I write, we have 18 members including parents, physicians, CO-Hear Coordinators, and audiologists. This multi-faceted representation of stakeholders will serve us well. Some of the topics specific to diagnostic/identification that will be addressed by this task force include: data collection; utilization of EHDI PALS; and tele-audiology. Topics specific to the transition from diagnostics to early intervention include: the role currently served, on an interim basis since April 1st, by the Colorado Hearing (CO-Hear) Resource Coordinators; resources currently distributed to families; and access to family-to-family and deaf/hard of hearing adult-to-family support services. Please note that additional topics continue to be identified by our stakeholders.

[**Alliance Meeting Brief**](https://youtu.be/Nx0ATPt_aZw)

October’s Alliance meeting was attended by 11 of our 16 members. There were 20 additional attendees including members of the COEHDI Core Team, task force members, members of the public, and those who were providing accommodations. Agenda items and decisions made include the following:

* Adoption of minutes from COEHDI Alliance meetings - August & September, 2020
* Update from Alliance Subgrant Subcommittee
* COVID Task Force update
* Screening Task Force update
* DHH Adult-to Family Support Programming update
* Diagnostic/Identification and Transition from Diagnostic/Identification to Early Intervention Task Force formation
* Tele-audiology effort in rural Colorado
* Website development update

The next Alliance meeting will take place on Friday November 20th from 10-11:30AM. Contact a member of the Alliance, Core Team, and/or any of the task forces to obtain meeting access information. See our website for monthly meeting minutes (<https://www.coehdi.org/alliance-meeting-minutes/>) as well as the link to the public comment form (<https://forms.gle/df7LSFGAEyPAgDqJ7>).

[**Gratitude/Acknowledgements**](https://youtu.be/1SUaiGhhpPs)

We continue to highlight our task force members who have graciously volunteered to roll up their sleeves and drive the work of COEHDI forward. This month, we recognize our second group, the Families of DHH Children Task Force. Its members include:

* Emily Augsburger
* Cathy Cortese
* Stacey Geisel
* Amber Goldstedt
* Brittany Goodside
* Geoff Goodside
* Jill Jacobs
* Sara Kennedy
* Brittany Loeser
* Pia Marie Paulone
* Al Pierce
* Fawn Pierce
* Mah-rya Proper

The Families of DHH Children Task Force has been working diligently to orient themselves to the structures and components of the Colorado EHDI system. In addition, they have been providing invaluable feedback and guidance regarding the creation of the COEHDI Deaf/Hard of Hearing Adult-to-Family support program. The Family Task Force has done a phenomenal job to date and we look forward to the results of their continued work. Join us for a socially-distanced \*hand waving\* in applauding their efforts!