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### **[From the EHDI Director, Arlene Stredler Brown](https://youtu.be/djFnRWI4F_8)**

Happy holidays to all! As I write, my family is enjoying the Festival of Lights. What an apt name for an experience that offsets some of the more challenging times we’ve experienced in spring, summer and fall. Coming up, is one of my favorite days - the winter solstice. I see it as yet another opportunity to bring light into shorter and darker days. I mean this literally and figuratively. I’m collecting candles as I write.

As an EHDI program, we have much to celebrate during this holiday season. I take very seriously the task we committed to - to enhance our system, change what we might, and look toward novel ways to reach our 1-3-6 benchmarks. We are working collectively - our Core Team, six task forces, and the COEHDI Alliance - to include all stakeholders. I enjoy the collective perspectives gleaned from all who have chosen to participate. And I look, with a fair amount of anticipation, to see how our systems evolve.

Some of our bigger accomplishments are in response to our biggest challenges. First, we have a plan to collect and report EHDI benchmark data for 2019 to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This data will be a guide for many activities; especially those related to screening, rescreening, and loss to follow up. Second, we have interest and a commitment from educational audiologists in many parts of the state to participate in screening. Third, involvement of primary care providers (PCPs) in our EHDI system is a hurdle just waiting to be overcome. There are many players working collaboratively to garner PCP involvement in our 1-3-6 system. Fourth, our deaf and hard of hearing adult-to-family support program is just about ready to pilot what we have thoughtfully created with input from many families. Later in this newsletter, you will find more detailed updates about our work to date.

By the time you are reading this newsletter, it will be 2021! For each of us, I’m certain this has special meaning. This past year is one for the record books. I believe we’re on a course of change in so many ways. And, I welcome the benchmark of a new calendar year.

[**Announcements**](https://youtu.be/KcuFHG4wm44)

The Diagnostic/Identification and Transition to Early Intervention Task Force will meet on the 1st Thursday of each month. The next meeting date will be January 7, 2021 from 4:00-5:00 pm.

The DHH Adult Task Force will meet the 2nd Monday of each month. The next meeting date is January 11, 2021 from 2:00-3:30 pm.

The Screening Task Force will meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. The next meeting date will be January 12, 2021 from 11:00-12:00 pm.

The COEHDI Alliance meets the 3rd Friday of each month from 10-11:30AM. The next meeting date is January 15, 2021. 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 Task Force meets the 4th Monday of each month. The next meeting will be Monday January 25, 2021 from 12:00-1:00 pm.

The Families of DHH Children Task Force normally meets the 1st Friday of each month. January’s meeting has been cancelled due to the New Year holiday. The next meeting will be February 5, 2021 from 12:00-1:00 pm.

The EHDI Annual Meeting that was scheduled for March 2021 in Cincinnati, has been converted to a virtual format! The 2021 EHDI Annual (Virtual) Meeting will take place March 1-5, 2021 at your nearest screen. The 2022 EHDI Annual Meeting will be in Cincinnati. Stay tuned for more details and opportunities to participate in and/or attend EHDI Annual Meetings!

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.

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### **[New Task Force Forming by Heather Abraham](https://youtu.be/eNG0Xotzecw)**

Greetings EHDI Colleagues! Colorado EHDI is preparing to roll out our sixth (and final) task force. This one is the “Intervention” Task Force and it covers early intervention from the time that ongoing early intervention services begin through to the transition to school (Part B). An email was sent to parents, Regional Colorado Hearing (CO-Hear) Resource Coordinators, members of COEHDI task forces and the COEHDI Alliance. As always, anyone is welcome to join!

The goal is to have the first meeting of the Early Intervention Task Force in January. Just to pique your interest, and to help you identify colleagues who are interested in this part of our system, here are a few topics that we will discuss:

* Resources that are shared with families by early interventionists
* Systems for family-to-family support
* Transition from early intervention to preschool services
* Data collection and interpretation (e.g., The FAMILY Assessment) regarding effectiveness of services
* Equity of services throughout the state

As a reminder, each task force does a lot of the work that is then shared with the COEHDI Alliance. The Alliance, at their monthly meetings, makes recommendations for our system going forward.

We are excited to have the opportunity to facilitate the group that coalesces to address this part of our EHDI system. Please email Heather Abraham (habraham@coehdi.org) if you would like to participate and, please share this opportunity with your colleagues.

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### [**ASCENT Program Flyer**](https://youtu.be/xZtz_2MZ9es)

### The Ascent Program.

### Colorado Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Contractor Position.

Seeking Colorado Deaf and Hard of Hearing Adults to connect with families with DHH children ages birth to 3.

Interested in learning more about the new Ascent Program? Attend an informational Zoom session to learn more:

January 12, 4:00 PM to 5:00PM

Or

January 14, 11:00 AM to 12:00PM.

Registration:

<http://bit.ly/AscentRecruitment>

What does a DHH adult who works with the Ascent Program do?

* Meet families with DHH children (either in person or virtually)
* Share life experiences
* Promote empowerment for families of DHH children and their DHH child
* Support family’s individual needs and goals.

\*Tentative Training Dates:

January 23, 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM

January 26-27, 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM

\*All those interested in being a contractor/attending trainings must attend an informational session first.

Questions?

Contact: Kathryn Sevier

Email: ksevier@csdb.org

Phone: (720) 441-1229

### [**Spotlight on Margaret Ruttenber**](https://youtu.be/625DUhxrBIY)

This month’s spotlight highlights Margaret Ruttenber, Director of the Colorado Responds to Children with Special Needs (CRCSN) and the Colorado Newborn Hearing Screening program, both housed under the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).

Margaret has a Master’s of Science in Public Health (MSPH) from the University of Colorado Health Sciences and is an epidemiologist/ physical scientist/ research scientist who came to the department (CDPHE) in 1995.

She began working on the Rocky Flats Cancer Incidence Study of Workers as a Physical Scientist with her late husband Dr. James Ruttenber. Her office was at Rocky Flats in Golden until the completion of the study in 2000 when they published some seminal findings related to Rocky Flats and cancer. She then moved back to the main campus and continued working on issues related to environmental epidemiology and toxic exposures conducting public health assessments. The most important was an investigation into risks to children in a Superfund Site with possible lead and arsenic exposure from smelting operations at Vasquez Blvd.

In 2003, she took over the birth defects registry as the Director, also known as Colorado Responds to Children with Special Needs (CRCSN). In that program she has served as the Principle Investigator on Birth Defects Surveillance, Muscular dystrophies, Newborn Hearing Screening and other grants.

Margaret spends her time walking the parks and trails of Boulder with her beloved English Cream Golden retriever, Jack, who is two years old. She has had him since the passing of her 13 year old Golden, Cooper. Jack is Cooper’s successor not his replacement!

This photo appeared in the CDPHE Daily Broadcast with the title—“Wear the Damn Mask”…a quote from Governor Polis!

[**CDPHE Launches the Health Information Data System (HIDS) Newborn Hearing Application: Application Information Below**](https://youtu.be/xg7juDEq5iQ)

By Leanne Glenn, Newborn Hearing Screening Coordinator, CDPHE

On October 6, 2020, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) launched the Health Informatics Data System. This database is designed to collect data in these fields: hearing screens (that were not conducted at birth), follow-up hearing screens (aka; rescreening), basic audiologic evaluation data, and some key intervention milestones.

Any health professionals working with infants and toddlers, ages birth to three who have suspected or confirmed hearing loss, may apply for access to the HIDS database. Health professionals interested in applying may include: health professionals who perform follow-up hearing screens (e.g., hearing screeners, educational audiologists, midwives, PCPs, etc.), pediatric audiologists who conduct audiologic evaluations, and the Regional Colorado Hearing (CO-Hear) Resource Coordinators.

For information, please contact:

Leanne Glenn

Newborn Hearing Screening Coordinator

Email: Leanne.Glenn@state.co.us (preferred)

Work Phone: 303-692-2603

### **[Task Force Updates](https://youtu.be/JdHcWDCR6jw)**

[**COVID-19 by Hannah Glick**](https://youtu.be/JdHcWDCR6jw?t=7)

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

This Task Force met on December 28th after the COEHDI January newsletter had already gone to press. Stay tuned for our February newsletter with details of our December and January meetings.

[**Families of DHH Children by Heather Abraham**](https://youtu.be/JdHcWDCR6jw?t=38)

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

The Family Task Force began collecting information about a variety of family-to-family supports currently available in our state. Some of these supports are available in specific areas; others are accessible statewide. Task force members reflected on experiences they have had with family-to-family supports. And, they brainstormed about meaningful ways to introduce families to the supports they want to have.

[**DHH Adults by Heather Abraham**](https://youtu.be/JdHcWDCR6jw?t=86)

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

This task force did not meet in December due to the holidays.

[**Screening Task Force by Arlene Stredler Brown**](https://youtu.be/JdHcWDCR6jw?t=107)

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

The Screening Task Force is investigating ways to support Colorado Hands & Voices’ efforts to update their *Roadmaps*.

In addition, the role of educational audiologists in screening, rescreening, and mitigating loss to follow up (LTF) was discussed. Lisa Cannon, the Colorado Department of Education lead for educational audiologists is in full support of an expanded role for educational audiologists. If you didn’t know, Colorado is one of a handful of states that has educational audiologists in every school district and BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services). This task force is making a recommendation to The COEHDI Alliance to solidify the role of educational audiologists in our EHDI system.

The role of primary care providers (PCPs) in our EHDI system, specifically our screening activities, is continually being addressed.

[**Diagnostic/Identification and Transition from Diagnostic/Identification to Early Intervention Task Force by Arlene Stredler Brown**](https://youtu.be/JdHcWDCR6jw?t=205)

**(Alliance Representative:** Emily Chamberlain**)**

This task force reviewed the process for gathering baserate data from 2019 and 2020 regarding screening and diagnostic testing, and entering that data into the HIDS system. Both the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and COEHDI are engaged in this effort. In addition, this task force reviewed the interim referral process wherein audiologists refer families to the Regional CO-Hear Coordinators immediately after diagnosis/identification. The task force will continue to review this process, including system capacity and sustainability, given the prevalence of DHH in early childhood and the distribution of children who are DHH in the CO-Hear Coordinator regions.

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

December’s Alliance meeting was attended by 9 of our 16 members. There were 23 additional attendees including members of the COEHDI Core Team, task force members, members of the public, and those who were providing accommodations. Agenda items include the following: announcements including an update on the Annual EHDI Meeting, November meeting minutes, an update on the Health Informatics Database System (HIDS), task force updates, an introduction of our sixth and final task force related to intervention, and an introduction of the guidelines for the DHH adult to family support program (named the Ascent Program). Decision items include: approval of November’s meeting minutes, educational audiologist support for screening, and the Ascent Program.

The next Alliance meeting will take place on Friday January 15, 2021 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>).

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### **[Gratitude/Acknowledgements](https://youtu.be/HTYPlstoGWw)**

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

* Becky Awad
* Kalie Buchman
* Lisa Cannon
* Steve Cass
* Stacy Claycomb
* Maureen Cunningham
* Trudy Fredrics
* Sandy Gabbard
* Andrea Gatlin
* Jillian Gerstenberger
* Hannah Glick
* Sam Gubbels
* Angela Harder
* Linda Herzberger-Kimball
* Wendy Jumonville
* Sara Kennedy
* Kelly Miller
* Megan Nix
* Ramona Pearce
* Mah-rya Proper
* Cory Portnuff
* Margaret Ruttenber
* Jennifer Schryer
* Lisa Shigio
* Dee Shuler-Woodard
* Stacey Snow
* Kristin Sommerfeldt
* Christy Taylor
* Sarah Wedekin

The Screening Task Force has been identifying strengths and needs of newborn hearing screeners statewide with plans to address these needs. It has become quite clear that many screeners need access to resources and technical assistance. Hannah Glick is a point of contact for hearing screeners statewide. Accommodations for COVID are available and information is continually being uploaded on our website. A focus on midwives is next; identifying who they are, who is screening, who is not screening, and what COEHDI can do to support them. The task force members have been particularly engaged in welcoming the role of educational audiologists in screening and rescreening efforts .

The Screening Task Force has done a marvelous job to date and we look forward to the impact of their efforts. Join us for a socially-distanced \*hand waving\* in applauding their efforts!