# **June 1, 2020 Newsletter**

[**Announcements/Upcoming Meetings**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yp-rlgSX0zo)

Since the notice of award, the following activities have and/or will occur:

* The Colorado EHDI Alliance Core Team meets for two hours each week
* The Colorado Infant Hearing Advisory Committee (CIHAC) meeting scheduled for May 1st was postponed. The next CIHAC meeting is scheduled for August 7, 2020
* A COVID-19 meeting with concerned stakeholders occured on May 18th. Another COVID-19 meeting is planned for June 1st
* The Colorado EHDI Alliance had its first meeting on May 27th from 9-10:00AM and the next meeting will be announced soon.

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).

[**Introduction**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPtvvbmnjYU)

Welcome to our first Colorado EHDI Alliance newsletter. We want to take this opportunity to introduce our vision, our team, and invite you to join us in the next four years and beyond!

Our grant vision is to bring everyone to the table and work together via a state-led Alliance that invites the input and participation of all EHDI stakeholders.

We know our stakeholders are a group of passionate individuals who are dedicated to improving the outcomes for our state’s deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) children and their families.

The destination is the same even as the routes vary for each of us. We want to work together and make things better in the process. We look forward to it!

This newsletter is available in [English and Spanish](https://www.coehdi.org/newsletters/). Additionally, all articles are available in American Sign Language (ASL) - just click on the title to view the ASL translation.

[**From the EHDI Coordinator: Arlene Stredler Brown**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCZm2GsWYuw)

I appreciate the opportunity to be the Colorado EHDI Coordinator for the next four years. My work will be guided by the prominent themes identified in our grant application. First and foremost, our work will focus on developmental *outcomes* for DHH infants and toddlers. Parent-to-parent support is an integral part of this goal. The intent of our work is to *collaborate* with any and all stakeholders in our state. Our plan is to *refresh* the components of our state’s EHDI system so that practices are available and *equitable* statewide. We may take some *novel* approaches to enhancing our system so that it will be *sustainable* in the future. Our goals of outcomes, collaboration, refreshment, equitability, and sustainability are endorsed by HRSA. We will support their mission with our work. I look forward to working with all of you.

[**Grant Overview**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PehKofESTSg)

The Colorado Department of Human Services’ organizations of [CCDHHDB](http://ccdhhdb.com) and the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) Early Intervention Program ([EI Colorado](http://coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.force.com/eicolorado?lang=en)) are the two agencies serving as principal investigators for the four-year EHDI grant that is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resource and Services Administration ([HRSA](http://www.hrsa.gov)). This grant began on April 1, 2020 and ends March 31, 2024; it funds some activities of the state's EHDI system including services to families of DHH children and supports to EHDI stakeholders who are its central members.

The purpose of this program is to enhance and sustain the comprehensive and coordinated state EHDI system of care so families with deaf or hard-of-hearing children, birth to three years old, receive appropriate and timely services. These services include a hearing screening by one month, identification of hearing loss by three months, and early intervention entry by six months.

The overarching mission of the grant is to: 1) adhere to the 1-3-6 benchmarks in order to ensure optimal, developmentally-appropriate language outcomes for children; 2) improve data collection and reporting to measure outcomes of the EHDI system; 3) establish the Colorado EHDI Alliance to assure the state has the opportunity to collectively assess and make recommendations on how to make the EHDI system as seamless as possible; 4) prioritize resources, including engagement opportunities, for families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children; and 5) develop a deaf and hard-of-hearing mentor program. Going forward, this program will be known as the Colorado EHDI Alliance.

**[Intro to FAQs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAgB9mYxCsw)**

This column offers an opportunity for the EHDI Alliance Core Team to respond to your questions. You can send a question to any member of the Core Team. Connect with us by email ([info@coehdi.org](mailto:info@coehdi.org)), post your question on our website ([www.coehdi.org](http://www.coehdi.org)) or use Facebook ([facebook.com/coehdi](http://facebook.com/coehdi)). Each month, a member of our Colorado EHDI Alliance Core Team will post an answer.

[**FAQ: How do I stay in touch with the Alliance?**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZl6C2sTu7I)

We have an interim website at [www.coehdi.org](http://www.coehdi.org) for basic communication purposes. We will begin working with a web designer in June to create a superb website that can become a one-stop resource for the Colorado EHDI system. In our website footer, there is a newsletter sign up form to subscribe to our monthly newsletters and other Colorado EHDI Alliance communications. In addition, we have a Colorado EHDI Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/coehdi](http://www.facebook.com/coehdi).

Written materials will be translated into Spanish and ASL whenever possible in order to be inclusive of all EHDI populations and stakeholders in Colorado.

[**The Colorado EHDI Alliance Core Team**](https://youtu.be/0It0iXFoTms)

In fall 2019, a core team of dedicated Colorado stakeholders representing various interests and affiliations convened to begin working on a grant application to refresh the Colorado EHDI system. From this team’s collaborative vision, the Colorado EHDI Alliance grant application was created. After the grant award, the team was transformed into the Colorado EHDI Alliance Core Team (aka; Core Team) consisting of seven members that continue to meet to launch and address the various stages of our state’s EHDI system. These members are Cliff Moers (Colorado Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind; CCDHHDB), Christy Scott (Early Intervention Colorado), Arlene Stredler Brown (Colorado EHDI Coordinator), Heather Abraham (Colorado EHDI Family Support and Engagement Coordinator), Ashley Renslow (Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind; [CSDB](http://csdb.org)), Amy Novotny (Rocky Mountain Deaf School; [RMDS](http://www.rmds.co)), and Katie Cue (Ktquiet LLC). Throughout the upcoming months of this newsletter, we will spotlight each core team member.

[**Spotlight: Cliff Moers**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPrV5jhFWdI)

This month’s spotlight highlights Cliff Moers, one of the Directors of the Colorado EHDI Alliance. Some of his numerous accomplishments include:

* Director of the CCDHHDB
* Founder of RMDS
* Former President of the Colorado Association of the Deaf

As a graduate of CSDB and a longtime Colorado resident, Cliff has been involved in the Colorado Deaf community in various capacities.

He holds a master’s degree from Regis University in Management with an emphasis on organizational development and human resources.

He’s been involved in numerous community organizations, committees, task forces, councils, and boards.

In his free time, he enjoys hanging out with his wife and four college-aged children, attending Broncos games, and taking advantage of all that Colorado has to offer in its backyard such as skiing, cycling, 14er trekking, and camping/backpacking.

[**Interim Referral Process**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d836Aw_R7NI)

Due to time sensitive issues and a need to respond to COVID-19, some grant activities had to begin before the Colorado EHDI Alliance could formally meet. We share these activities here in the interest of transparency. First, CCDHHDB and EI Colorado, in consultation with the Colorado EHDI Alliance’s Core Team, developed an interim referral process for when a child is identified as deaf or hard of hearing.

Audiologists are asked to refer children who are deaf or hard of hearing, whether with bilateral or unilateral degrees of hearing loss, to the regional Colorado Hearing (CO-Hear) Resource Coordinators. Notably, this is an *interim* process. The Colorado EHDI Alliance members, with informed input from task forces that will be convened, will revisit the topic and jointly establish a sustainable referral process.

[**COVID-19 Response**](https://youtu.be/N_41V_dMSNI)

Much like the rest of the world, we were suddenly confronted with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ripple effects that were felt on all levels of our personal and professional lives. Concerns arose quickly related to hearing screenings, re-screenings, and follow-up visits with audiologists to begin the diagnostic testing process. In response to this unexpected event, a group of approximately 15 concerned stakeholders started meeting to identify specific concerns and to investigate responses to these issues. In May, a survey was sent to hearing screening coordinators in all birthing facilities. The results of this survey will inform the next steps of this group. In addition, Dr. Maureen Cunningham, the American Academy of Pediatrics EHDI Chapter Chair, has sent a letter to all Primary Care Physicians in Colorado to notify them of their role in assuring a newborn hearing screen is done. Please stay tuned.

[**Colorado EHDI Alliance Meeting**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dyXQW1mLlq8)

The Colorado EHDI Alliance had its first monthly meeting on May 27th with 57 attendees plus the 7 members of the Core Team, two ASL interpreters, two trilingual (ASL, English, and Spanish) interpreters, and two captionists. It was a full room with 68 participants altogether. The agenda included the following items:

* Meeting protocol
* Welcome and introductions of core team members
* Purpose of meeting
* Overview of grant
* Colorado EHDI Alliance conceptualization
* Focus on services in rural areas
* Focus on culturally and linguistically diverse resources
* Sub-grant opportunities
* Task Force introduction
* Wrap up and Q & A

A copy of our meeting Powerpoint and a recording of our webinar are available on our website. We will announce our next monthly meeting soon - stay tuned!