

EHDITION COLORADO

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[From the EHDI Coordinator, Arlene Stredler Brown](#)

It is hard for me to believe that we are six months into our first year of our COEHDI grant. Our commitment to forming a collaborative structure has taken shape. I am imagining our structure as a vehicle that will move Colorado's EHDI efforts forward. The "vehicle" has three parts - *task forces*, *Core Team*, and *The Alliance*. They all work together.

Any stakeholder in Colorado - professional, parent of a deaf or hard of hearing child, and/or deaf or hard of hearing adult - can join a *task force*. These task forces combine all the moving parts to propel the vehicle forward. To date, we have created four task forces: (1) COVID response; (2) Screening; (3) Parent-to-Parent Support; and (4) Deaf/Hard of Hearing Adults. Two more task forces will be launched soon; one addressing identification including the transition to early intervention, and the other focusing on early intervention and transition to Part B. Once these next two task forces are launched, we will have a full complement of six task forces to cover the breath of the EHDI system. Please join any task force of interest to you. Participation of parents and DHH adults is welcomed in all task forces.

Next, our *Core Team* of seven functions as the "engine" of our "vehicle"; ideas are discussed, and priorities (e.g., which task forces to launch first) are identified in keeping with our grant proposal.

Third, the "driving force" of our work is *The Colorado EHDI Alliance*. Our 16-member Alliance reviews recommendations from the task forces and supports collaborative participation by all stakeholders - individuals, groups, and agencies. The Alliance meets monthly. Public participation is invited.

I am excited to be working with all of you. Your experiences and your knowledge inform our work. Thank you for being involved in task forces and trusting our Alliance to have the best interests of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, and their family members, at the forefront of all the work we do.



Announcements

The Families of DHH Children Task Force will meet the 2nd Friday of each month. The next meeting date is October 9th from 12:00-1:00 pm.

The Colorado Infant Hearing Advisory Committee's (CIHAC) quarterly meeting is scheduled for October 9th from 9-11AM. This meeting will be held remotely. Contact Leanne Glenn at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to be added to the email list in order to receive meeting information (leanne.glenn@state.co.us). ASL interpreters will be provided.

The DHH Adult Task Force will meet the 2nd Monday of each month. The next meeting date is October 12th from 2:00-3:30 pm.

The COEHDI Alliance will meet the 3rd Friday of each month from 10-11:30AM. The next meeting date is October 15th. 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](#)

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.

Spotlight on Ashley Renslow

This month's spotlight highlights Ashley Renslow, Early Education Consultant with the Outreach Programs at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB).

HELLO! I am thrilled to represent the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) on the EHDI Core team and the EHDI Alliance! Additionally, I am looking forward to working with an amazing team to develop the DHH Adult-to-Family Support Services program.



My background is in Speech Pathology and I currently work as the Early Education Consultant with the Outreach Programs at CSDB. While I have primarily worked in special education schools and hospitals, the last 10 years have been at residential Deaf schools at the California School for the Deaf, Riverside and CSDB. I have also worked with families with children up to age 5 through the Colorado Home Intervention Program (CHIP) as well as through private practice. As a Colorado native, who moved around for 5 years, Colorado Springs is now "home" and the beautiful Pikes Peak is in my backyard! I am married and have a busy (almost) 3 year old boy! My faith, my family and my friends are priorities in my life! In my free time, I enjoy being outside - especially hiking, running, camping, and paddle boarding. I love coffee, traveling, reading, and music! I am passionate about EHDI and excited for the next 4 years!

Sub-Grant Announcements by Jack Damico

The COEHDI Alliance subcommittee to review the sub-grant applications consisted of the following members:

- Ms. Marti Bleidt, President, Colorado AG Bell
- Dr. Jack Damico, Department Chair, Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences, University of Colorado Boulder
- Ms. Pat Greenway, Executive Director, Listen Foundation
- Dr. Arlene Stredler Brown, Colorado EHDI Coordinator, facilitated the sub-grant review discussions.

There were four sub-grant applications that were submitted and reviewed. Although there were three priorities listed in the Request for Proposals/Instructions for the sub-grant program, three of the four applications were submitted under the same priority (*Family Based Organizations for Family Supports*) and one for *Resources for Spanish-Speaking Families*. There were no applications under the third priority (*Professional Development Activities*) although this area was addressed in several of the proposals.

All four of the applications were received from Community organizations with 501 (c)(3) or 509 (a)(1) tax status. Overall, the four sub-grant proposals were strong with respect to their rationales for seeking funding. The program designs appeared adequate in each of the sub-grant applications to accomplish the goals stated in these proposals within realistic timelines.

Based upon subcommittee review of the four sub-grant proposals, it was recommended that all four of these proposals be funded in this funding cycle. These four proposals seem to be effective initiatives that accomplish the goals of the sub-grant program even though only two priority areas were addressed.

Without further ado, congratulations to the recipients of our 2020-2021 COEHDI sub-grant awards! We look forward to the results of your work!

- Colorado Hands & Voices (expanded Guide By Your Side program)
 - Rocky Mountain Deaf School (expanded family education program)
 - American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado chapter (Colorado cCMV Family Network)
 - Colorado Hands & Voices (Spanish speaking initiative and resources)
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HRSA COVID Supplemental Grant

Introducing Hannah Glick, Ph.D., CCC-A

Hello! My name is Hannah Glick and I am one of the newest members of the COEHDI COVID Task Force. I will be involved in addressing pandemic-related gaps in screening and re-screening in our state. I am both an audiologist and a cognitive neuroscientist with a passion for working with children and families with hearing loss.



I received both my audiology degree as well as a Ph.D. in cognitive neuroscience from the University of Colorado at Boulder. I have clinical experience working with adults and children of all ages. My current research focuses on the effects of hearing loss on the brain and well-being. I currently serve as an instructor at University of Colorado where I help train and inspire the next generation of audiologists.

Although I moved away from Colorado after I finished school, I am thrilled to be back in Colorado. I was born and raised in Evergreen, and am so grateful to be closer to family again! On the weekends, you will either find me in the mountains hiking, mountain biking, camping, or backpacking with my husband, Nate, or chasing my two little nephews around. As the days grow colder and the leaves begin to change, I am reminded of the importance of slowing down and pausing to enjoy the beauty that is all around us. I am looking forward to connecting with members of the COEHDI community and working together!

Task Force Updates

COVID-19 by Becky Awad

The COVID Task Force, endorsing the initiative of Becky Awad (Children's Hospital of Colorado) and Stacy Claycomb (University of Colorado Health), distributed a survey to 59 Colorado birthing facilities over the summer to gather information about COVID-related issues with newborn hearing screening, re-screening, and loss to follow-up. We received a 47% response rate on this survey. Overall, results from this survey indicated a high in-patient screening rate (100% of birthing facilities continued to screen, though babies of COVID-positive moms were not always screened). Hospitals identified their biggest challenges which included: parents choosing not to return for re-screening (61%), COVID-related hospital restrictions (46%), increased referrals due to quick discharges (29%), and issues tracking and reminding patients (outpatient) to return for rescreening (21%). In this survey, it was also noted that Colorado birthing facilities reported a need for greater support regarding the importance of screening and more guidance with regards to safe outpatient screening/rescreening procedures during COVID.

The COVID task force met on September 25th and discussed the three proposed strategic goals written in a recently-funded HRSA grant and the summer survey results. During the meeting, we gathered input and ideas from members of the COVID Task Force regarding the activities that support the three proposed strategic goals as outlined below.

1. To support Colorado birthing facilities by offering input about screening, rescreening, and loss to follow up (LTF) as well as guidance with regards to safe outpatient screening/rescreening. To meet this need, we propose surveying birthing facilities within the next month to gather more detailed information about the types of support birthing facilities need. Based on the results, we propose creating a FAQ page and informational support page regarding safety with outpatient screening/rescreening during COVID, and publishing this on the COEHDI website. Colorado birthing facilities can be directed to the website to obtain this information. Hannah Glick will serve as the point of contact for birthing facilities to deliver requested support.
2. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) is set to launch the new Health Informatics Data System (HIDS) on October 6th. We are working with the newborn hearing personnel, Margaret Ruttenber and Leanne Glenn, at the CDPHE to collect information that we can use to track COVID-related issues and gaps with regards to screening, rescreening, and LTF. Hannah Glick, with help from Arlene Stredler Brown, will be working with CDPHE on these efforts.
3. Connect with primary care physicians (PCPs) to identify opportunities for screening and rescreening. We propose building relationships with PCPs to support screening and re-screening efforts in the state. Hannah Glick will spearhead this effort with support from Dr. Maureen Cunningham, our Colorado Chapter Champion of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and Arlene Stredler Brown, EHDI Director. The first step is to connect with PCPs and gain more information about the feasibility of garnering their support going forward.

DHH Adults & Families of DHH Children by Heather Abraham

Both of these task forces tackled the same issue this month - assisting the Colorado EHDI Alliance to conceptualize a program that will provide DHH adult support to families. This month, these task forces developed a shared understanding of the goals of the program and history behind adult-to-family support programs. They reviewed current literature regarding adult-to-family support, programming in other states around the country, and current resources that exist in Colorado. In addition, these task forces analyzed preliminary survey data collected from Colorado families regarding their perceptions of and needs in relation to deaf and hard of hearing adult supports. The feedback from these task forces will provide continued guidance as the Colorado EHDI Alliance defines this new program throughout the state of Colorado. The COEHDI Alliance has commissioned a thorough report tying together all the pieces of information gathered thus far. This report will be shared in early October.

Screening Task Force by Kristin Sommerfeldt

Margaret Ruttenber announced that the HIDS Database will be launched on October 6th. Many of the goals identified by the Screening Task Force will be rolled out in light of the HIDS launch.

Goals identified by the Screening Task Force include:

1. Screening, rescreening and limiting LTF:
 - a. plans to communicate with medical home, diagnostic facilities, & birthing facilities
 - b. understand how HIDS data can be reported to Colorado stakeholders and to the CDC (Colorado's latest data included in the CDC database is from 2014).
2. Audiology Regional Coordinators: Funding for these coordinators ended on March 31, 2020 (when the last HRSA-EHDI grant ended). There is a need to offer support to screeners in birthing facilities. Opportunities to accomplish this could include:

- a. Hannah Glick's efforts as she works on COVID-related issues;
 - b. Educational Audiologists especially in rural areas and for home births;
 - c. support from our EHDI team.
3. cCMV: This initiative has been awarded one of the EHDI sub-grants.
 4. Screener Training: Screeners have requested help in these ways:
 - a. screening effectively;
 - b. communicating with parents, including scripts to use;
 - c. assuring equitable services in rural and urban areas of the state;
 - d. collecting and making available existing materials (e.g., Pediatrix, NCHAM).
 5. Home Births: Investigate ways to assure children born at home have access to hearing screening.
 6. Data collection/sharing of children born in other states or moving from Colorado to other states.

Alliance Meeting Brief

September's Alliance meeting was attended by 12/16 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:

- A discussion on the decision making process
 - It was decided to try a consensus model for the time being.
- A discussion on the public comment model
 - It was decided to adhere to the model proposed in the September Alliance meeting where relevant public comments are invited after each agenda item.
 - General public comments not fitting agenda items will be allowed at the end of each Alliance meeting;
 - Members of the public wishing to make comments are asked to submit a public comment request form prior to each meeting in order to accommodate/group each comment on the agenda.
- A summary of the work of the sub-grant subcommittee
 - Three proposals for family support and one proposal for Spanish-speaking family resources were accepted
 - There was a recommendation to shift funding from the professional development funding priority in order to fund all four proposals
 - A set of recommendations for future grant proposals was compiled.
- Task force updates (as summarized above from COVID Task Force, Screening Task Force, Family Task Force, and DHH Adult Task Force)
- EHDI Coordinator report (as summarized above)

The next Alliance meeting will take place on Friday October 16th 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

We will begin to highlight our task force members who have graciously volunteered to roll up their sleeves and drive the work of COEHDI forward. We begin with our first group, the COVID Task Force. Though not planned in our grant application, it was first convened on May 8th in response to the pandemic and its effect on our children. Its members include:

- Becky Awad
- Jeryl Barganski
- Lisa Cannon
- Stacy Claycomb
- Maureen Cunningham
- Hannah Glick
- Linda Herzberger-Kimball
- Sara Kennedy
- Cory Portnuff
- Jennifer Schryer
- Margaret Ruttenber

The COVID Task Force has been busy. They commissioned a survey of all 54 Colorado birthing facilities to identify urgent needs in the system due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Then they assisted in developing a supplemental grant application from HRSA to address the impact of COVID-19 on the EHDI system. Currently, Hannah Glick is spearheading the efforts identified by the task force, and approved by HRSA, as was discussed above. The COVID 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!