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**[From the EHDI Coordinator](https://youtu.be/77zbZIlBjeE)**

By Arlene Stredler Brown

Greetings all. We are in our ninth month coping with the implications of COVID-19 to the work we do, and in our personal lives as well. And, Colorado EHDI is in its seventh month; all seven months of our COEHDI work have coincided with our state’s response to COVID-19. The work has been challenging in oh-so-many ways, but I am heartened by the fact that we are in it together.

Many of us, among many different agencies and facilities, are tackling the impact of COVID-19 by closely monitoring screening and rescreening rates (which seem to be holding steady), loss to follow-up (which seems to be impacted), and opportunities for children to receive a diagnostic evaluation by three months of age (which, according to at least one large hospital, is significantly impacted). While we continue to celebrate COEHDI’s progress, we remain focused on the work to be done as we address system challenges that may need to be remediated.

In the spirit of celebration, which I wish could be held in person, Colorado’s new Health Informatics Data System (HIDS) was launched in October. We see more and more users signing up each week. Thank you to Margaret Ruttenber, Leanne Glenn, Bill Vertrees, and a host of others at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) who are working to get this system up and running.

There is a wealth of information in this newsletter that describes our efforts to support screening, diagnostics/identification, and a prompt entry into early intervention. We are moving quickly to develop our Deaf and Hard of Hearing adult-to-family support services. Families are integral in our work and are represented on almost every task force as well as our COEHDI Alliance. There are details about all of these programs in this newsletter.

Thank you, one and all, for the pleasure of working with you.

[**Announcements**](https://youtu.be/Q_edFHUF06o)

The Diagnostic/Identification Task Force, which includes the transition from diagnostics to early intervention, will meet the 1st Thursday of each month. The next meeting date is December 3rd, 2020 from 4:00-5:00 PM.

The Families of DHH Children Task Force will meet the 1st Friday of each month. The next meeting will be December 4, 2020 from 12:00-1:00 PM.

The Screening Task Force will meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. The next meeting date will be December 8, 2020 from 11:00 AM-12:00 PM.

The DHH Adult Task Force will meet the 2nd Monday of each month. The next meeting date is December 14, 2020 from 2:00-3:30 PM.

The COEHDI Alliance meets the 3rd Friday of each month from 10-11:30 AM. The next meeting date is December 18, 2020. 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 continues to meet on an as-needed basis.

Position title changes: There have been a few position reclassifications which reflect the responsibilities of the positions. Dr. Arlene Stredler Brown’s position title has changed from EHDI Coordinator to EHDI Director. Heather Abraham’s position title has changed from Family Support and Engagement Coordinator to Family Support and Engagement Manager.

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 Katie Cue](https://youtu.be/zI0gdIR0O_U)**

This month’s spotlight highlights Dr. Katrina Cue (Katie). Katie was closely involved with the grant development and grant writing process that served as the genesis of the COEHDI Alliance. Currently, she serves as a member of the Core Team in supporting grant implementation, leading the website work, newsletters, email lists, social media, and all other communications.

Katie is a product of Colorado (born and raised) as well as some of the earliest days of the EHDI system in the state. After Katie was identified as being deaf, her parents actually received services from the earlier iteration of the Colorado Home Intervention Program (CHIP) beginning in early 1982 from none other than Dr. Arlene Stredler Brown! Katie also ended up working for CHIP for a few years as an ASL Facilitator while attending the University of Colorado at Boulder for an undergraduate degree in English Literature. Working for the COEHDI feels like a full circle in many ways for Katie!

Upon graduation from CU Boulder, she attended the Rochester Institute of Technology for a master’s degree in Secondary Deaf Education. Following graduation, Katie taught in various deaf education settings (mainstream and Deaf schools) in Fairfax, VA, San Francisco, CA, and Denver, CO. She has also worked for several different non-profit organizations as well as established two different businesses. In the midst of that, she successfully completed a doctorate degree in Deaf Studies and Deaf Education from Lamar University earlier this year.

Katie is still recovering from her doctorate degree and rediscovering what it means to have free time! However, she mainly enjoys hanging out with family (especially her nieces and nephews), friends, and her two pups. You might also find her engrossed in a good novel or TV series, seeking out her next adventure via a road trip, or discovering avenues to experience whatever she is utterly passionate about at the time.

**[Diagnosis/Identification: An Explanation](https://youtu.be/LaQJM-XBtuE)**

By Katie Cue

Have you noticed that our new *Diagnosis/Identification and Transition from Diagnosis/Identification to Early Intervention* Task Force has quite a lengthy title? The reason behind this reflects the diverse group of people who represent our COEHDI Alliance and other stakeholders throughout the state. We are a diverse group of people with different backgrounds, experiences, and philosophies. We recognize that words are powerful, so we are making thoughtful suggestions. Therefore, the title is an attempt to find a common ground.

This term “diagnosis” is typically used as a medical reference to formally identify a person as being deaf or hard of hearing. Members of the DHH communities have challenged the medical/disability perspective, and suggest the adoption of a cultural and linguistic perspective. In this perspective, being deaf or hard of hearing is seen as a difference, a variation, and/or a cultural and linguistic variety. Therefore, when a person is formally discovered to be deaf or hard of hearing, that is typically perceived as being an “identification” rather than a “diagnosis.”

Because both terms are prevalent, valid, and in widespread use, for now, it seemed best to use both terms. A handy abbreviation is DX/ID. This task force may be renamed in the future.

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[**Colorado Hands & Voices Roadmap for Families: An Introduction**](https://youtu.be/r-lRm9y9itE)

By Sara Kennedy, Director, Colorado Hands & Voices

*The Colorado Roadmap for Families* has been added to the information safety net, helping families see what next steps are for babies in the process of EHDI 1:3:6 (screening at birth and completed by one month of age; identification of hearing status by three months of age; and entering early intervention by 6 months of age). *The Roadmap* may counteract some of the “comfort language” families tell us they receive when a baby doesn’t pass the screening such as, *“It’s probably fluid,” “We are not sure the machine is working today,” “Most babies pass; don’t worry.”* These types of comments may lead a family to believe that a *follow up* isn’t necessary. We get three to five calls each year from parents in the parking lot of their birthing hospital or from those who found *The Roadmap* on an internet search while seeking support.

*Roadmaps* are available in both English and Spanish. One side of the *Roadmap* has a graphic of a timeline, with a space to add the screening and testing results for each ear. At each *signpost*, families learn more about that phase and are encouraged to follow up with next steps.

[**FRONT SIDE**](https://youtu.be/q4M9bNTpEDQ)

The other side of the *Roadmap*, customized for each birth center, lists the contact information of people who can help with the EHDI process, from screening coordinators, pediatric audiologists, and CO-Hears to *Parent Guides from Colorado Hands & Voices*. Relevant state and national websites are also featured. While some hospitals print their own materials, best practices indicate that a family should receive results in writing as well as in person. They should also have a follow up appointment scheduled before leaving the hospital. Informed parents can make better choices for their newborns. Physicians also tell us that they can’t always get screening results from the hospital discharge summaries, so this is important information for pediatricians, as well.

[**BACKSIDE**](https://youtu.be/TBolZmuZPL4)

An interactive *Parent Roadmap* can be found on the CO H&V website (http://www.cohandsandvoices.org/newsite/roadmap-for-families/)[.](http://www.cohandsandvoices.org/newsite/roadmap-for-families/) A parent can click on each phase to learn more. There is also a video intended to encourage families in following up called “Loss & Found”.

The *Roadmap* is in need of updates. Three major edits include:

* The COEHDI task forces have discussed adding EHDI-PALS ([www.ehdipals.org](http://www.ehdipals.org)) as an option to find pediatric audiology clinics. Test out the above link with your home address and see what comes up locally.
* The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) updated their website recently, so the URL for the Colorado Home Intervention Program/CO-Hear page needs to be updated.
* There have been some staffing changes since CO H&V last updated *Roadmaps* in early 2020.

Currently, the website shows a scrolling list of updated *Roadmaps* with contact information for local “teams.” Currently, the downloadable PDFs are unavailable until they can be updated with the aforementioned changes in order to be accurate. We are happy to keep up this important resource for families and professionals in the field.

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**Task Force Updates (**[**Part I**](https://youtu.be/EC7mK_8ui7Y) **&** [**Part II**](https://youtu.be/1omCH3IYgmE)**)**

[**COVID-19 by Hannah Glick**](https://youtu.be/EC7mK_8ui7Y?t=19)

**(Alliance Representative:** Hannah Glick**)**

The COVID-19 Task Force surveyed birthing facilities and midwives in the State of Colorado in mid-late October to assess the impact of the pandemic on newborn hearing screening, re-screening, and loss to follow-up. The survey also probed needs for additional resources and information surrounding safe screening and best practices during the pandemic. Based on feedback from the survey, our task force is prioritizing information and outreach to support screening facilities. We will be posting pandemic-related hearing screening resources to the new COEHDI website. As new information emerges, we will disseminate articles and updates to screening facilities across the state through our distribution list.

[**Families of DHH Children by Heather Abraham**](https://youtu.be/EC7mK_8ui7Y?t=139) **(Alliance Representatives:** Geoff Goodside and Emily Augsberger**)**

Families continue to provide feedback about the newly-forming program in which families will receive support from Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults. The families on this task force continue to provide guidance defining the program philosophy, its values, and the outcomes for this program.

[**DHH Adults by Heather Abraham**](https://youtu.be/EC7mK_8ui7Y?t=188)

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

During the month of November, the DHH Adult Task Force continued to provide feedback on the development of the COEHDI Deaf and Hard of Hearing Adult-to-Family Support Program. This feedback includes an analysis of the program’s philosophy, and the outcomes we hope to achieve for families who participate in this program.

[**Screening Task Force by Arlene Stredler Brown**](https://youtu.be/1omCH3IYgmE)

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

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) database, known as the Health Informatics Data System (HIDS), was launched on October 6th. If you are a hospital screener, a diagnosing audiologist, or a Regional CO-Hear Coordinator, please contact Leanne Glenn at CDPHE to be added as a HIDS user: leanne.glenn@state.co.us

The Screening Task Force wants to encourage practitioners assisting with in-home births to conduct and report newborn hearing screening. The Screening Task Force members have been discussing ways to support midwives beginning with providing information to midwives about screening. We are also sharing information about screening and rescreening sites in their communities. Thank you to Colorado Hands & Voices for maintaining *The Colorado Roadmap for Families* (discussed in this newsletter) that contain this information.

Professional Development is being offered to newborn hearing screeners in two ways. We are entering information of interest to screeners on our COEHDI website. In addition, the knowledge and expertise of Hannah Glick, a clinical audiologist, is available as a resource for screeners statewide. Hannah can be reached at: Hannah.Glick@colorado.edu

We are exploring the role of educational audiologists in supporting screening and rescreening efforts, especially in rural areas. At this time, we are aware that educational audiologists in some western slope communities have been conducting screenings/rescreenings for years. We are investigating opportunities to replicate this practice in other parts of the state. In October, Lisa Cannon, the lead for educational audiology activities at the Colorado Department of Education, supported the distribution of a survey to all educational audiologists. The results of this survey will inform next steps in utilizing the expertise of educational audiologists to support screening and rescreening efforts and our intent to reduce loss to follow up.

[**Diagnostic/Identification and Transition from Diagnosis/Identification to Early Intervention Task Force by Arlene Stredler Brown**](https://youtu.be/1omCH3IYgmE?t=258)

**(Alliance Representative:** Emily Chamberlain)

A self-identified group of 20 individuals comprise this newest task force. See our article in this newsletter about the reasoning behind our lengthy title!

At our November meeting, we had a rich discussion about data collection. A recommendation will be made to the COEHDI Alliance to collect statewide data for 2019 and 2020 regarding 1-3-6 benchmarks. Community members and parents are welcomed to join this task force. Please contact Arlene to be included in notifications of future meetings: astredlerbrown@coehdi.org

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**[Alliance Meeting Brief](https://youtu.be/0e4y6-F6B40)**

November’s Alliance meeting was attended by 12 of our 16 members. There were 22 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: update on grant applications, website update, introduction of the DX/ID and Transition to Early Intervention Task Force, task force updates, and EHDI and CDPHE working collaboratively.

The next Alliance meeting will take place on Friday December 18, 2020 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/Dwi5Rr6P9dY)**

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 DHH Adults Task Force. Its members include:

* Rachel Benedict
* Sloan Blanton
* Caty Carrico
* Stephanie Carson
* Lauren Charles
* Sara Frederickson
* Alexa Garfinkel
* Megan Hedman
* Stephanie Herring
* Sarah Honigfeld
* Claudia Hopkins
* Spencer Kontnik
* Cathy Noble-Hornsby
* Rosane Volchan O’Conor
* Sara Robinson
* Aaron Rose
* Carmela Roybal
* Lauren Sandal
* Megan Thomas

The DHH Adult Task Force has been working to develop an Adult-to-Family support program. The DHH Adult Task Force has done a stupendous 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!