

Healthy North Dakota Early Childhood Alliance (HNDECA)
Family Support Subcommittee Meeting
Monday, May 10, 2010

Meeting Summary

Proposed Meeting Goals:

- To receive an update from the HNDECA Steering and Stakeholder Committee meetings;
- To review and refine strategic planning goals;
- To discuss 2011 early childhood legislative messaging; and
- To identify next steps in implementation of goals.

Meeting Participants: Cheryle Masset-Martz, Megan Treinan, Missi Baranko, Carlotta McCleary, Donene Feist (by phone) and Richard Rathge (by phone).

Facilitated by: The Consensus Council, Inc.

Welcome, Introductions, Process and Agenda Review: Participants were welcomed to the meeting and provided self-introductions. The meeting process, ground rules and agenda were confirmed. Participants were directed to review the meeting summary from 12/16/09 and advise the facilitator of any corrections.

Cheryle provided an overview of the recommendations made by the HNDECA Steering and Stakeholder Committees regarding the subcommittee goals and indicated that the federal ECCS project officer is seeking more specific details relative to project funding. There was also information shared regarding Dr. Rathge's recommendations/ideas for potential HNDECA surveys.

Review and Refinement of Strategic Plan Goals: The subcommittee members reviewed each of the goals and recommended the following:

Goal #1: To recruit parents as HNDECA members (at least 3 per subcommittee) and to start each stakeholder meeting with a family story.

- There was discussion regarding how to make HNDECA more appealing to parents, how to provide a sound orientation process and to articulate the return on investment for parents
- It was suggested that an additional theme of "Parent/Family Representation" be considered for the strategic planning grid to better identify at what points or junctures parents would be the most useful
- The counter-point to that suggestion is that parents are always useful/needed at every step of the decision-making process

- There was discussion about adding a separate parent meeting to allow for interaction between HNDECA leaders and parents while still continuing to invite parent participation in any of the HNDECA activities
- It is critically important that invitations to parents are made in an intentional way and that it is clear to them that they are not tokens in the process
- Payments for parents to participate in HNDECA, beyond, mileage and meal reimbursements would be an incentive: Cheryle will research this possibility through the ECCS grant as well as other sources like MCH Title V
- Parents who complete the Parent Leadership Institute are taught about HNDECA as a way to get involved and to practice their leadership skills
- All HNDECA members should identify and invite parent representatives to HNDECA meetings and agree to attend with them to increase the comfort level
- It was agreed that the whole of HNDECA would benefit from training on the multiple levels of family support/involvement and participation in order for this to be successful and thus, Goal #1 was rewritten as follows:

NEW Goal #1: To enrich and enhance the goals and outcomes of HNDECA by including more parents in decision-making at all levels.

1. A training program (half day in length) will be developed on family support, involvement and participation by the Family Support Subcommittee
2. The target audience will be HNDECA membership and MCH Core Team and others as identified
3. Expert trainers will be Family Voices of ND, Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health and the Head Start Association

Note: prior to the training, a decision will have been made regarding payment of stipends to families for attendance at HNDECA meetings/events.

Goal #2: To analyze data from family support efforts and develop a white paper to share the results.

- This initiative by FVND is at a point where nearly all of the contacts/calls have been made
- The next step will be to compile the raw data and hand this off to Dr. Rathge for analysis and development of the white paper report
- It is then hoped that this information can be shared with agency leaders in an effort to effect positive change within and among systems
- A secondary goal is that these agencies would buy-in to the need for change within and among systems and be willing to provide funding resources for convening of broader training efforts
- This process will inform the training information and ideas set forth by the HNDECA Access to Health Insurance and Medical Home Subcommittee (see meeting summary of 5/10/10)

Goal #3: To develop a plan for joint education and training for families, agencies and eventually, legislators and policymakers.

- It was agreed that progress on this goal will come through as part of the training opportunities that have already been discussed and developed
- It was also agreed that direct training for legislators and policy makers is not timely nor potentially very easy to do, particularly in getting large numbers to participate
- A better strategy may be to devote effort to parent training that will develop a closer connection/relationship with their elected legislators; based on that, the goal was rewritten as follows:

NEW Goal #3: To develop a plan for joint education and training for families (and agencies) that will develop more direct connections between families and legislators/policymakers.

- Family representatives can be helped to tell their stories in an articulate way and to focus on the impact or outcome on their family (mostly positive, but not all have to be)

2011 Early Childhood Messaging: It was agreed that holding an “Early Childhood Day” at the Capitol (informational and educational booths) is not the best way to reach legislators. As an alternate idea, it has been suggested that a “photo frame” project be utilized with the following elements:

- Heavy stock paper would be used to design a frame that will hold a photograph (similar to the type used for holiday greeting cards)
- Families would be contacted by advocacy groups (Children’s Defense Fund, Family Voices North Dakota, Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health, ND Head Start Association, NDAEYC, LSS/CCR&R, NDSU Extension, Pathfinders and others) to write a short, personal story about how a program and/or piece of legislation has positively impacted them; multiple agencies will be used in order to assure a good mix of families, situations and issues
- The family would then include their family or child’s photo on the face of the card and it would be intended for receipt by the legislators serving from their voting district; all to be delivered on the same day to all legislators, near the beginning of the 2011 session
- The inside of the card would contain a few quotes or facts about early childhood issues as well as a pocket to hold the personal letter
- It is hoped that each legislator would get at least one letter but there will be no upper limit
- Cheryle will gather information about the HNDECA members thoughts about this project and then review the information with the ND Department of Health Public Information Officer for approval
- Releases of information may have to be signed by parents; it will be important to get an early start on this initiative

- If approved at the DOH level, Cheryle will convene the “Messaging Subcommittee” (Cheryle, Vanessa Hoines, Roberta Lein and Helen Danielson) to begin drafting of the product/messages
- Subcommittee members thought there would be merit in keeping the “letter writers” in the loop throughout the legislative session to invite them to weigh in on specific pieces of legislation, in an ongoing way, to support and sustain the personal relationship with their legislator
- It was suggested that this effort could become a signature event and/or an annual event for HNDECA with good visibility and stakeholder involvement

Participants were excited about the project and believe that it will be impactful in connecting constituents to legislators. It is a very personal approach that will be hard for legislators to ignore or disregard. Cheryle will provide ongoing updates as progress is made.

Participants were thanked for their time and talents and the meeting was adjourned by consensus of the group.