

**Healthy North Dakota  
Early Childhood Alliance (HNDECA)  
Stakeholder Meeting  
Tuesday, October 20  
Draft Meeting Summary**

**Proposed Meeting Goals:**

- To receive a report from the Project Director;
- To receive an update regarding the MCH Title V Block Grant;
- To receive information regarding early care and education initiatives;
- To review and discuss next steps in HNDECA strategic planning;
- To develop a schedule of HNDECA sub-committee meetings; and
- To identify the next steps in planning and implementation.

**Meeting Participants:** Cyndee McLeod, Jody Bettger-Huber, Lyn Hendrickson, Jodi Hulm, Pamela Nemeth, Kora Dockter, Sarah Myers, Beth Schildroth, Christin Mohr, Janet Bassingthwaite, Richard Rathge (by phone), Allison Johnson, Roxane Romanick, Sue Burns, Tricia Kiefer, Megan Treinen, Alan Ekblad, Tim Hathaway, Cheryl Ekblad, Kathy Lampman, Cheryle Masset-Martz, Joni Steinke, Earleen Friez, Linda Lembke, Bobbe Shreve, Vanessa Hoines, Linda Rorman and Kim Senn.

**Facilitated by:** The Consensus Council, Inc.

**Welcome, Introductions, Process and Document Review:** Participants were welcomed to the meeting and provided self-introductions. Participants reviewed and affirmed the use of consensus as the rule of decision and reaffirmed the ground rules for discussion as follows:

1. It's our show.
2. Everyone is equal.
3. No relevant topic is excluded.
4. No discussion is ended.
5. Respect opinions.
6. Respect the time.
7. Silence is agreement.
8. Non-attribution.
9. Keep the facilitator accurate.
10. Have fun!

Participants were directed to review the HNDECA Stakeholder meeting summary from April 2009 and to let Rose or Cheryle know of any corrections. Participants also reviewed the meeting handouts.

**ECCS Project Directors Report:** Cheryle provided stakeholders with updates/reports on the following items:

- Review of the HNDECA overarching goals and the subcommittee role relative to each of them
- Summary of the 2009-2011 Strategic Work Plan
- Report of the October 19 meeting of the HNDECA Steering Committee including their agreement to meet again October 28 to refine and prioritize strategic plan activities as well as to determine potential uses for HNDECA funds for subcommittees (\$21,900 that must be spent by 5/31/09)
- Document (for later discussion with Dr. Rathge) regarding better integration of strategic work plan activities into theme areas
- Technical Assistance being provided by Megan Hiltner of John Snow, Inc. in the areas of implementation best practices from other states and early steps in development (including grant proposals) regarding establishment of Governor's Councils; it is hoped that this information will be available by the time the subcommittee meetings are held so they may consider this information in their work
- Update on the Governor's Early Childhood Education Advisory Council. A meeting in mid-July was held with Dr. Dwelle, Arvy, Brandi Pellam (with Governor Hoeven's staff), Kim Senn, and Cheryle. Cheryle provided them with copies of the HNDECA strategic plan, a list of HNDECA members and was asked for a list of references from the HNDECA membership list to serve on the council. Individual members of HNDECA also have submitted names of individuals but at this time no information regarding appointments has been made. Cheryle also was asked for and provided a document which outlines how other state's are coordinating between the ECCS programs and the early childhood councils. It is believed that Lt. Governor Jack Dalrymple will Chair the Council and they hope to have their first meeting by the end of the year. No "lead" agency within state government has been determined to write for or administer the federal grant. In addition, Cheryle, Linda Rorman and Melissa Olson (Healthy North Dakota) attended the National Governor's Association Summit that was held in mid-September. The meeting focused specifically on early childhood issues.
- Review of a comparison of the federal legislation to North Dakota legislation (HB1400) for development of the Council and the Council goals; there are federal funds available for supporting the Council (\$500K for 3 years with a 70% required match) and such proposals from states are due in August 2010; Cheryle has developed a "draft" timeline and action steps (such as a strategic plan and implementation plan) needed to fill in some of the blank areas on the "state" side of the comparison document; these action steps will be necessary to be in process before applying for the federal funding (it is not known whether or who will write the grant proposal at this time). Future discussion are anticipated with the Governor's office and this document will be made available to them.
- Cheryle also reported on the ECCS program goals that she has been working on recently, describing them as the "low hanging fruit" from the lengthy list of goals compiled earlier this year by the HNDECA subcommittees
- Report on a compilation document of articles, current events, news of interest to the early childhood community, much of which is shared over email list serves; she will also post this information to the ECCS website: [www.ndhealth.gov/eccs](http://www.ndhealth.gov/eccs)

There was discussion among participants about the ongoing assistance being provided by Cheryle in regard to the Governor's Council and strong encouragement for this to continue on behalf of HNDECA.

**Updates from Maternal and Child Health Title V Block Grant:** Kim Senn reported that the Department of Health is experiencing budget shortfalls and has been looking at internal reductions and may have to consider less funding for some of the partner agencies/grantees including Public Health Units, Tribal entities, Children's Special Health Services and non-profit organizations.

Regarding the Title V needs assessment; the mission is *"to improve the health of North Dakota's MCH population through a comprehensive assessment and planning process that is of value to the greater MCH community."* Kim reported that this is a federal requirement and must be completed every 5 years. Early assessment results indicate that some of the highest perceived areas of need include parenting education and access to medical care. In addition to the needs assessment process (to which many HNDECA members replied), there will be numerous focus groups conducted by the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD) at Minot State University that will gather information from youth across the state. Most focus groups will be held in "urban" communities but there are a limited number of stipends available for rural youth to travel to attend. In partnership with Family Voices, there will also be focus groups conducted with families from across the state. If you are aware of a family that might be interested in participating, you are asked to provide their name to Kim.

MCH will convene a stakeholder retreat on February 2, 2010 in Bismarck that will address the qualitative, quantitative and perceived needs information and allow attendees to prioritize among the many identified needs. Approximately 100 people will be invited and Kim asked that, if you receive an invitation but are unable to attend, pass the invitation to a colleague who can attend to represent the views of your constituency.

**Early Care & Education Initiatives:** Linda Rorman reported on the ND Head Start State Collaboration office that was originally developed in 1996 and is federally funded. Much of the work of Head Start agencies is dictated by the Head Start Act of 2007 (subtitled the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007). Linda directed stakeholders to review the 5-year strategic plan by visiting the following website: [www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/headstart](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/headstart). This plan, done in concert with Dr. Richard Rathge, will direct the Head Start programs into the future as well as serve as a tool to measure the ongoing quality/quantity of services. Linda's role is to connect the dots among many groups, build systems and bring the voice of Head Start to policy decisions. There are federally identified priority areas that are the focus of this work and they include:

### **Health Care**

Promote access to timely **health care** services, including general health, oral health, and mental health services.

### **Homelessness**

Support access to services for children experiencing **homelessness** through coordination with state and local education agencies (LEAs) implementing McKinney-Vento requirements.

### **Welfare**

Encourage and support collaboration with **welfare** systems (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program).

### **Child Welfare**

Improve or enhance coordination with **child welfare** services, including foster care and child protective services.

### **Child Care**

Coordinate activities with state child care agencies and child care resource and referral agencies to strengthen partnerships between local Head Start and child care programs to make full-working-day and full-calendar-year **child care** services available to children.

### **Family Literacy**

Promote and support state and local connections that enhance **family literacy**.

### **Disabilities**

Increase opportunities for children with **disabilities**.

### **Community Services**

Promote and support full utilization of relevant **community services**, including public schools, public libraries, museums, and law enforcement agencies, and promotes effective outreach efforts to Head Start-eligible families.

### **Education**

Facilitate alignment of **education** curricula and assessments used by Head Start agencies with the *Head Start Child Outcomes Framework* and, as appropriate, with state early learning standards and kindergarten curricula. Promote and support appropriate curricula for limited English proficient children and expand partnerships with LEAs for coordinated pre-kindergarten and transition to kindergarten services.

### **Professional Development**

Support Head Start grantees in better accessing **professional development** opportunities for staff to meet the Head Start degree requirements.

Linda reported that she has been in regular contact with Governor Hoeven's office regarding the establishment of the Education Advisory Council and may likely be appointed as a member.

**HNDECA Strategic Plan:** Dr. Richard Rathge, State Data Center Director and Policy Analyst for KIDS COUNT, joined the meeting by phone to discuss the integration of HNDECA strategic plan activities. Dr. Rathge has identified five primary “theme” areas that appear to have multiple work plan activities in common/dedicated to them. They are:

1. Training and Education
2. Messaging and Legislative Development
3. Survey Development/Assessment and Reports, Data and Presentations
4. Integrating Support, Securing Appointments/Experts, Resource Development
5. Organizing Meetings and Planning Systems

There was discussion regarding how to ensure Subcommittee productivity by working not only within their group but also across groups on common issues. It was agreed that there is particular interest in the theme areas of training, messaging and survey development. It was agreed that the Subcommittee membership would remain the same and serve the five core ECCS areas. However, there may be a need for additional work by the Steering Committee to address the crosscutting, integrated issues as well as prioritization of goals. This might be done through the Subcommittee Chairs and/or their delegates.

As a test, the stakeholders addressed the common items in the Training and Education theme and agreed that, with the exception of one activity (adapting a developmentally appropriate practice statement), all seemed to fit and had elements in common. It was agreed that there might be some clarification needed regarding some of the action steps and this needs to be the work of the subcommittees. Better clarification of the meaning and intent of action steps will help to reduce confusion, interpretation and/or multiple meanings of particular steps. It was also agreed that not all activities had been included in the theme areas.

**Identification of Subcommittee Meeting Schedule:** Stakeholders identified the following meeting dates for their next subcommittee meeting:

- November 16 (morning): Mental Health (Carlotta McCleary and Jody Bettger-Huber, Co-Chairs)
- November 16 (afternoon): Parent Education (Vanessa Hoines, Chair)
- November 23 (afternoon): Access to Health Insurance/Medical Home (Sue Burns, Chair)

Cheryle agreed to contact the subcommittee Chairs of the Early Care and Education (Linda Reinicke) and Family Support (Donene Feist and Missi Baranko) to schedule their meetings in the available time slots of:

- November 10 (morning or afternoon) and
- November 23 (morning)

Meeting location and agendas will be sent out following the next meeting of the HNDECA Steering Committee.

**Identification of Next Steps in Planning:** It was agreed that Cheryle would revise the following documents for ease of understanding and send them out via email to all stakeholders:

- Work Plan (to include the numerical and alphabetical identification of activities making it easier to track/integrate into the theme areas)
- Integrated Activities work sheet (to include all activities appropriate to the identified themes)
- Stakeholder Contact List (which all stakeholders should review for accuracy and/or missing information)

Stakeholders were thanked for their participation and the meeting was adjourned by consensus of the group.