

**Healthy North Dakota Early Childhood Alliance (HNDECA)
Stakeholder Meeting
Wednesday, May 11, 2011**

Draft Meeting Summary

Proposed Meeting Goals:

- To reconvene in a spirit of collegiality and cooperation;
- To receive updates from the ECCS Project Director;
- To review and discuss agency activities and legislative outcomes;
- To receive a progress report and guidance on the HNDECA work plan;
- To review and discuss issues of importance to HNDECA for the future;
- To identify next steps in planning and implementation of HNDECA goals.

Meeting Participants: Jennifer Barry, Kendra Bartholomew, Suzie Kramer Brenna, Sue Burns, Helen Danielson, Ramona Danielson, Donene Feist, Sharon Hansen, Tania Hellman, Vanessa Hoiner, Lorine Horvath, Jody Bettger Huber, Roberta Lein, Cheryle Masset Martz, Barry Nelson, Linda Rorman, Heather Steffl, Starr Brown, and Linda Reinicke.

Facilitated by: The Consensus Council, Inc.

Welcome & Introductions, Review of Consensus Process, Ground Rules and Proposed Agenda: Participants were welcomed to the meeting and provided self-introductions. The consensus-based decision-making process was affirmed, as were the following ground rules:

1. It's your 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 reviewed the proposed agenda, meeting goals and meeting materials/handouts.

Project Directors Report: Cheryle Masset-Martz provided updates as follows:

- **Federal Funding Status:** Funding for HNDECA comes through the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). North Dakota is currently in the final year of a 3-year cycle. Cheryle has submitted a (non-competitive) grant of \$140,000, which has been cut to \$108,000 in the past but eventually reinstated. In 2010, the grant was cut by \$8,000 and won't be reinstated. Funding after May 31, 2012 is unknown.
- **Legislative Messaging Project:** Thanks to all who participated in this project, it was a great success, with good feedback from HNDECA members and legislators. 256 cards and letters were distributed including family photos and stories. These cards could still be used in the future as they are not dated or time sensitive. There is also an opportunity to improve the project to better reach rural legislators. Cheryle has updated the "how-to" package, compiled/scanned all of the letters and photos into a document that can be downloaded from the ECCS website for ongoing use. 50% of Senators and House Members received at least one letter from a constituent from their home district. There would be opportunity to also share these messages with the Congressional delegation, ND First Lady and/or other state leaders. If used in the future, there may be an opportunity to include an invitation for the recipient to a program/agency site for lunch or a visit to get more direct information. There was discussion about making the messaging project into a traveling exhibit at places where many people could experience the stories, like the ND State Fair.
- **Revised HNDECA Work Plan (through May 2012):** Participants briefly reviewed the revised work plan documents. The HNDECA Subcommittees met in December and March to refine the work plan goals for the next and final year. Although there was relatively low attendance at the meetings, accomplishments were noted.
- **Longitudinal Data System Development:** There is an established committee that has been convened through the Information Technology Division (ITD) to better address early childhood populations, as directed by the Governors office. The committee has been meeting approximately every six (6) weeks and Jennifer Barry serves as Chair. The committee also includes HNDECA members Linda Rorman, Cheryle Masset-Martz and Gwen Marback. Kayla Effertz from the Governors office is kept routinely informed of the activities and progress of the committee. Experts from Arkansas will be in North Dakota in August for the Early Childhood Summit to share best practices and their successes, as well as how the data impacts funding/appropriations. HNDECA members should start thinking about what/how they can use such data to support their efforts, identify trends, challenges and gaps in early childhood services. Many national and federal meetings have discussions about development of these data systems and

all agree that HIPAA and FRPA laws need to be better addressed at the federal level to enable states to do their work.

- ***Governors Early Childhood Education Council (ECEC) Report:*** Cheryle provided a handout on SB 2150 that outlines changes in the composition of the ECEC. HNDECA members had a meeting with the Governors office in January to review information from CCR&R and to discuss how multiple, diverse groups are working together under the HNDECA umbrella. There was discussion about the ECEC focus on K-12 education but not enough focus on early childhood education. There is also agreement that the ECEC also needs to include attention to children with disabilities and special health care needs. The Governor agreed to new members on the Council (thus, SB 2150) as well as the addition of several non-voting members. The initially appointed, regular member terms are rotating so some existing members may be leaving. There is currently no ECEC meeting scheduled. The new Lt. Governor will now chair the ECEC. There was an initial \$20,000 placed in the DPI budget from 2009 to support the work of the ECEC (meeting costs, travel for members) but not all funds have been expended. There was a request for continued spending authority that was not granted and thus, there is no funding or appropriation to support ECEC meetings. The Head Start State Collaboration office and ECCS have agreed to support the continued meetings of the ECEC.

HNDECA Discussion and Planning: Participants provided updates on activities they are conducting as well as legislation that they had been tracking during the 2011 session. These reports include:

- Family Voices of North Dakota (FVND): The provider phone survey is complete and the final report is available. The survey included 215 agencies that achieved an average score of 2.2 on a scale of 1 – 5, which is lower than hoped. There has been a meeting with state agency department directors to discuss these results and to share ideas and dialogue for improving services and responses to families in need. There may also be an opportunity for more regional, localized efforts to share information from the survey and begin work on collaborative improvements. FVND is also working on agency strategic planning for the future.
- Southeastern Community Action Head Start: The organization is in the process of finishing a review and developing a proposal for a 3-year federal grant. There is little known about federal funding beyond 2011 due to the budget remaining unresolved and in a continuing resolution status. While it was disappointing that state funding for Head Start failed in the legislature (by one vote), the proposed legislation did succeed in increasing the number of “politically active” families across the state, as well as greater visibility for Head Start with the public.
- North Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS): The final DHS budget totals \$2.6 billion, including a 41% increase in general funds. Because of the decrease in the Medicaid match (FMAP) for North Dakota, general fund dollars were

appropriated to fill this gap. There is a new program contracting with local hospitals that will provide inpatient mental health services for children closer to their home communities. Appropriations were also made for Autism Spectrum Disorders; provider salary increases of 3% and for screenings at Human Service Centers for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). May is Mental Health Month and the annual Clinical Forum is scheduled for May 17 – 19 (information will be made available to HNDECA members). The State Council on Developmental Disabilities is accepting applications for funding of initiatives that provide assistance to children with developmental disabilities; the deadline for submissions is generally sometime in the summer months with awards being made later in the year. Tove Mandigo is retiring and Heather Steffl has accepted the position of Special Assistant to the DHS Executive Director/Director of Economic Assistance Programs. Heather was congratulated by HNDECA on her new position. In the Medical Services area, there is continued work on the Medical Home project and the chronic disease health management initiative. The ND Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD) at Minot State University (MSU) plans to apply for additional funding for the Medical Home project. There will be much work involved in implementation of federal healthcare reform (HCR) and it is hoped that some of the elements of HCR will be of help to citizens who experience gaps in coverage/health services. In the area of Children and Family services, the State Plan for Childcare (and funding) will be posted for public comment on 5/16/11. The directions from federal sources place value and focus on professional development, QRIS and collaboration. Legislatively, HB 1085 relates to childcare license suspensions and other legislation provides a \$50,000 appropriation for inclusive childcare for children with special needs (original request was \$750,000). SB 2057 provides a \$3.1 million appropriation for childcare training, recruitment, technical assistance and professional development (original request was \$5 million) and the DHS is in the process of developing a request for proposal (RFP) for these services.

- ND Council on Abused Women's Services (NDCAWS): There was success in defeating legislation that would have allowed accused offenders to be present for interviews with victims of child abuse. There was also success reported with respect to anti-bullying legislation. NDCAWS is receiving funding from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for prevention activities and continues to work in areas of children's advocacy, and support of visitation and exchange centers. There was some loss of federal funding (Safe Havens) that has had a negative impact on the NDCAWS efforts. There are new initiatives in the areas of professional training for "fatherhood for men who batter" as well as the "engaging men" initiative to prevent domestic violence, particularly focused on men in the oil/energy industries.
- Healthy Families: Healthy Families is instituting a quarterly newsletter that will provide updates and information on home visiting, and other issues. They have been increasing screening activities, particularly in the areas of mental health (ASQ), post-partum depression, and autism (CHAT). There is also an increased

effort for training and support for pregnant teens, for fathers, as well as adapting curriculum for differing learning styles and capacities. Data collection remains an ongoing challenge. With regard to legislation, it was disappointing that the home visiting funding initiatives failed. Level funding for Healthy Families from the DHS will not allow further growth of services for Burleigh/Morton counties or expansion elsewhere in the state.

- Head Start Training and Technical Assistance: This initiative is driven by the federal Department of Education and the Office of Head Start where collaboration remains a primary focus.
- ND Kids Count: This initiative continues to provide support and information for advocacy groups and the public. During the legislative session there were fact sheets developed in the areas of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), economic security for low/moderate income families and Head Start. None of these issues received legislative support, funding or increases. Kids Count works closely with the Children's Defense Fund of ND and the Bridge to Benefits program. It was noted that the DHS has observed an increase in online benefits inquiries and applications for services that is likely due, in part, to the success of the Bridge to Benefits link.
- NDSU Extension: Legislation funding the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program (\$625,000) was successful and will go to NDSU Extension who will re-grant much of these funds to local school districts for instructional support. It was noted that Extension has an anti-bullying curriculum available for local school districts or organizations. The curriculum is available from the local Extension Offices. Additional information is available regarding cyber-bullying, social networking and sexting. Extension is developing a parenting program for those who are "new" parents for a second time (grandparents, others) as well as a financial management program for Head Start families. They also sponsored the Nurtured Heart Training Program that is widely used in some school systems, including Fargo. HNDECA partners were reminded of the benefits of the 4H program and 4H camps as resources for children and families.
- Head Start State Collaboration Office: Legislation in HB 1273 addresses formative assessments for kindergarten that include testing days during the regular school calendar days (paid days for teachers). HB 1373, which would have provided state funds for Head Start to reduce waiting lists, failed by 1 vote in the Senate. The Head Start grant is aligned with the strategic work plan developed by the stakeholders in the programs. All Head Start agencies must conduct an annual needs assessment. The State Collaboration Office has been involved in planning for the Early Childhood Summit, developing stronger relationships with Higher Education, and increased alignment for training and technical assistance for capacity building. In addition, there has been much work done with the Oral Health Coalition, the dental home initiative and planning for a dental mission of mercy to Spirit Lake Nation on 9/9/11.
- Childcare Resource and Referral (CCR&R): CCR&R continues to assist families in locating quality childcare services across the state and this assistance can be

accessed online at www.ndchildcare.org or by calling 1.800.450.7801. Funding for the childcare recruitment and retention (through ARRA dollars) officially ends June 30, 2011. Outcomes include a doubling of the outreach efforts statewide, an increase in those receiving the CDA, as well as increased training, support and consultation for existing providers. There has recently been a focused approach regarding childcare shortages in oil-impacted communities including a new option for a turnkey, furnished modular center that can be completed for approximately \$250,000.

- Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota (PCAND): PCAND was pleased to have more than 15 grantees participate in prevention activities and also reports that some successful legislation will provide stronger laws for abuse protection and longer timelines for the reporting of abuse. PCAND is planning a home visitation conference (August 11, 2011 in Bismarck) that will focus on skill building and sustainability. North Dakota does not have a state plan for child abuse prevention even though nearly a dozen counties have a higher than average incidence of child abuse. PCAND plans to focus their efforts on developing a plan and paying greater attention to those high incidence counties in the future.
- Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC): There is major uncertainty about continued funding for this program as there may be a shift to place these programs into Charter Schools, particularly in the area of parental involvement. The Even Start program may also be negatively impacted. PIRC has interest in finding collaborators to apply for the “Promising Neighborhood” Grant. There continues to be work done in the areas of cradle to career development, home visiting initiatives, parents as teachers and PTI for special education. Pathfinders continue to develop connections to autism issues in regard to inclusive childcare services.
- Children’s Special Health Services: Funding for this Health Department program remains status quo. There was some “clean up” language in one piece of legislation relative to screenings for metabolic disorders that allows parents to opt-out of the screening for their children if that is their preference. Although there was not a legislative increase for the CHIP program, there is funding available for outreach services to get more children enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP. FVND will be offering another Family Leadership Training the first weekend in June in Edgeley. The ND Center for Persons with Disabilities will be applying for a Medical Home Grant (\$100,00 for 2 years) and is seeking collaborators for the application process. There will be a total of ten (10) grants awarded nationwide.

HNDECA Strategic Work Plan Update: Ramona Danielson, NDSU State Data Center, provided an overview of the HNDECA strategic plan including performance indicators, performance measures, benchmarks and results. Ramona also noted that the ND Kids Count program has produced a new profile of child wellbeing in North Dakota. Ramona also conducted an overview of the HNDECA work plan segments by subcommittee, including questions about/recommendations for improving goals and tasks.

It was agreed that it would be important for HNDECA subcommittees to meet in the near future (the next month to 6 weeks) to share information, review questions and edits from NDSU State Data Center and finalize each segment of the work plan. It may be possible to convene 60 – 90 minute conference calls to accomplish this work and it was agreed that it would be important to include someone from the State Data Center in those calls. There was discussion about the potential for the Leadership Team addressing the initial questions on the work plan for further review by the subcommittees. It was noted that the Leadership Team is too busy with planning for a Summit in August to take this responsibility.

There was discussion regarding the changes/decrease in HNDECA participation over time. Several ideas were shared (mentioned below) and it was agreed that the Leadership Team might want to discuss these issues at a future meeting and clarify how to move forward in the future for best results.

- Lack of knowledge about what HNDECA does
- Start with involving new members at the subcommittee level first
- Can't afford to have multiple staff attend the same meeting
- For Early Care and Education, we may be taking on more than we can realistically accomplish
- Perhaps there should be a stronger focus on building collaboration rather than specific activities or goals that might be practically impossible to achieve
- Is there a possibility that the subcommittees are not meeting frequently enough to really address those needs in the state/work plan?
- How are we leveraging what we already do with what HNDECA wants to do?
- Remember to use the work plan as a tool and a guide
- There is merit in both types of plans (long and short) that HNDECA has built over time

Ramona discussed the 2011 legislative session in terms of a success ratio measurement. She reviewed a matrix of legislative bills that impacted children and families. Ramona requested that any updates, or additions, to the prepared matrix be sent to her attention (Ramona.danielson@ndsu.edu) so that she can continue to compile a post-legislative report. It was agreed that such a report could have multiple uses including sharing with the Governors Early Childhood Education Council. There is merit in exploring the post-legislative report in terms of equity of funding rather than just a pass/fail listing of legislative bills.

Ramona also reported on the status of the Governors Early Childhood Education Council recommendations (through the Commission on Education Improvement), several of which were successful.

The Power Point presentation given by Ramona will be sent to all HNDECA members.

HNDECA Discussion and Planning: Cheryle led discussion on the development of the Early Childhood Summit (August 9-10, 2011 in Bismarck) including the following information on logistics, presenters, potential invitees, agenda outline and the Building Ready States concept:

- The HNDECA Leadership Team is the core group of event planners, keeping the Governor's office in the communication loop
- The goal or theme of the event is to frame the intersection of key early childhood areas and to develop policies that will get ND there (cradle to career)
- The event will be held at the Bismarck State College (BSC) National Center for Energy and can accommodate about 160 participants
- There will be no registration fee for the invitation only event
- The event will encompass 2 full days
- There is discussion regarding calling the event a "Policy Development Institute"
- There is a strong desire to engage people in the event that are not the "usual suspects" and to not preach to the choir on these important issues

The tentative agenda includes:

- Welcome and Opening Remarks from Governor Dalrymple (not confirmed)
- Opening remarks by First Lady Betsy Dalrymple and Rep. Kathy Hawken (not confirmed) who would review the importance of convening the event
- Building Ready States presentation by a representative from the National Governors Association (NGA)
- Presenters from Arkansas regarding Longitudinal Data System development
- Luncheon speaker would be Karen Ray on the importance of collaboration (all participants would receive a signed copy of "The Nimble Collaboration")
- After lunch the participants would break into six smaller groups (predetermined by topic by Building Ready States) and using a World Café model, discuss what is working well and what needs improvement (needs, gaps) for early childhood in North Dakota
- The end of the first day would have the NGA representative review the products of the small groups
- The second day would begin with Ms. Ray and the NGA representative reviewing the small group work and encouraging ongoing enthusiasm for further dialogue
- The next task would be to again break into smaller groups and using the World Café model, focus the discussions on system building activities within the six (6) predetermined areas
- After lunch there would be a discussion about the development of an Early Childhood Foundation for ND, possibly using the Nebraska Foundation as a model

- The next session would be the “Big Unveil” of the accomplishments of the 2 days work including identification of the 3, 4 or 5 overarching goals/agreements
- The final wrap-up would include setting a tone of energy and enthusiasm for moving the goals forward by the Governor and/or Lt. Governor (not confirmed)
- There may be an opportunity for exhibits and displays from early childhood professionals and providers during the course of the event

There was discussion regarding potential invitees as well as potential breakout group topics including the following ideas:

- Members of the ECEC (possibly in lieu of a regular meeting or mandatory at the suggestion of the Chair)
- Select HNDECA Members (potentially using a team approach with those having expertise in the areas of focus, such as a few members from each HNDECA Subcommittee)
- Key partners (not yet specified)

There was discussion regarding the use of breakout groups during the event and how topics should be selected and developed. Suggestions for consideration include:

- The three subcommittees identified and established by the ECEC
- The five HNDECA Subcommittees
- The Building Ready States categories
- Some blending of the above

Potential follow-up from the Summit (implementation of agreements) could include regional and/or community meetings to educate and engage more people in system building and system change. Ultimately it would be hoped that such an effort would help the state of North Dakota build a successful, integrated early childhood system.

There has been a meeting with the Governors office to discuss the Summit planning, tentative agenda and potential invitees. The Governor will give these matters some thought and respond with his recommendations in the coming weeks.

Identification of Next Steps: The following next steps for HNDECA were identified:

- Cheryle will develop a plan for convening the HNDECA Subcommittees over the next 4 – 6 weeks to complete the work plans (with assistance from the State Data Center); and
- The HNDECA Leadership Team will continue development of the August Early Childhood Summit/Policy Development Institute and keep HNDECA Stakeholders apprised of new developments.

The meeting was adjourned by consensus of the group with thanks for the hard work and commitment of the Stakeholders.