

**Newborn Hearing Screening Committee Workgroup
June 10, 2005
Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association
Minutes**

Participants:

Beth Tolley, Carol Wiegler, Debbie Pfeiffer, Dana Yarborough, Ruth Frierson, Susan Shaw, Pat Wiley, Leslie Hutcheson Prince, Pat Dewey, Deana Buck

Minutes of the May 11 workgroup meeting were approved as drafted.

Announcements

Virginia is one of the 5 states accepted to receive grant funding from NCHAM to replicate the North Carolina "Beginnings" program. Basic information was shared about North Carolina's "Beginnings" program:

- It was started in 1987 prior to the start of the NHS
- It has a focused mission – it is not a panacea to solve all problems related to deafness and hearing impairment
- The mission is to inform families about hearing loss and communication options and to provide technical assistance/training to providers
- Direct service in terms of provision of information including information about resources is provided to parents, individuals, families; However, direct services in terms of audiology, speech, etc., are not provided through Beginnings.

Though details are not available yet, Pat reported that Virginia would have flexibility to adapt the program to meet Virginia's needs. Joni Alberg, Executive Director of BEGINNINGS For Parents of Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Inc. (North Carolina), has been our contact person and she has been invited to attend the next workgroup meeting July 12, 2005.

Carol announced that she will be leaving the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind (VSDB) – Staunton the end of July and will be taking a position as the Coordinator for Assistive Technology with James Madison's Training and Technical Assistance. She reported that the position at VSDB would not be replaced and explained that the school receives no funding for services for the birth – 2 year old population. Serving this population through the Schools for the Deaf and Blind is not mandated in the Code of Virginia. Carol challenged the workgroup to assure that children and families receive the services they need. Carol will continue to work with the workgroup and the EHDI Advisory Committee.

Voices of Vision is going to produce a documentary about the Newborn Hearing Screening which will feature Jackie Busa and her family and Carol, as well as other individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. (Jackie is from Northern Virginia and has served on the EDHI Advisory Committee). The documentary will be aired on PBS. Dates are not yet known.

Debbie reported that there has been outstanding response to the trainings planned for June 20 and June 21. 80 people have registered for the June 20 training in Roanoke, which is titled Learning to Listen, and Listening to Learn. 115 people have registered for the Fredericksburg conference titled, Focus on Literacy for Students Using Total Communication.

Training Budget

The Virginia Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program proposed budget for September 2005 – August 2008 submitted with a new federal grant application includes funding for SKI-HI Training, training of audiologists, hospital teleconferences, EI videos, and other EI training. In addition, Pat indicated that there is flexibility in how the funds can be moved within contractual categories as needed. Training for this grant is proposed to be done through a contractual arrangement with the Partnership for People with Disabilities. This grant HAS NOT yet been funded. It will not be known until August whether or not it is funded.

Qualified Staff

The group discussed the purpose for and uses of a list of providers qualified to work with infants and toddlers who are deaf and hard of hearing. Discussion included the definition of “qualified” provider. Debbie referred the group to the Standards for Early Intervention Service Providers: Infants/Toddlers Who re Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Their Families developed jointly by the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) and the Council on Education of the Deaf (and revised March 2000). According to this document, early interventional providers for children with hearing loss must, in most cases, possess one of the following degrees in order to meet minimal education requirements:

- Master level degree in audiology
- Master level degree in speech/language pathology
- Bachelor level or master level degree in deaf education
- Master level degree in early childhood special education or Other degrees by individual variance (e.g., early childhood, Deaf studies, counseling for the deaf)

The document goes on to list the knowledge and skills needed by professionals serving this population.

Preparing a list of qualified providers would serve at least several purposes:

1. Identify who is qualified and where they are located (so system managers could contact qualified providers to provide services in multiple systems where possible as well as to provide mentoring, technical assistance and training as they work to build the capacity within their system or region.
2. Identify training needs throughout Virginia.
3. Identify staffing needs.

Use of the “standards” or something similar as a tool to identify current knowledge and skills will further tease out training needs.

Discussion followed about the Virginia Network of Consultants (VNOC) that is in place for local school systems and whether this model might be appropriate for early intervention. VNOC consists of audiologists, teachers of the deaf, speech language pathologists, audio-verbal therapists, etc. who provide consultation upon request by the local school system. This resource is managed by Debbie and is paid for by the Department of Education.

The group decided to put the standards into a matrix to facilitate use by providers. Debbie, Carol, Beth and Susan will work on this with Debbie starting the process after July 3.

Research and Evidence-Based Practice

Carol and Debbie provided the following articles, abstracts and presentations.

- *Early Identification and Intervention: It Does Make a Difference*, Christine Yoshinaga-Itano, PhD
- *Early Intervention Services for Families with Deaf or Hard of Hearing Children* (Presentation to Congressional Hearing Health Caucus May 2004 by Sass-Lehrer)
- *Specific Play Behaviors and the Development of Communication in Children With Hearing Loss*, Snyder and Yoshinaga-Itano (Abstract)
- *Mastery Motivation Predicts Expressive Language in Children With Hearing Loss* Pipp-Siegel et. al. (Abstract)
- *The Role of Educators of the Deaf in the Early Identification of Hearing Loss*, Arehart and Yoshinaga-Itano, 1999 (Abstract)
- *The Efficacy of Early Identification and Intervention for Children with Hearing Impairment*, Downs and Yoshinaga-Itano, 1999 (Abstract)
- *From Screening to Early Identification and Intervention: Discovering Predictors to Successful Outcomes for Children with Significant Hearing Loss*, Yoshinaga-Itano (Abstract)
- *The Social-Emotional Ramifications of Universal Newborn Hearing Screening, Early Identification and Intervention of Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*, Christine Yoshinaga-Itano

Discussion followed about being aware of bias in publications. It was felt that literature reported by Christine Yoshinaga-Itano was unbiased. Individuals reported that though AG Bell attempts to provide unbiased information, the organization is committed to oral communication. Gallaudet also provides information about all of the communication options, but is committed to American Sign Language (ASL).

Resource Materials for Local Systems

The group discussed video and print materials to be included as resources for local systems. When considering the low incidence of hearing loss and considering the number of local systems that do not have children in their system who are deaf or hard of hearing the group decided a more effective way to maintain a resource library would be through the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH). This would not only be more cost effective, but would also increase local awareness of the other resources available through the DDHH. A list of recommended resources was provided to Deana Buck and she will begin the purchasing process. These materials will be kept as a separate collection in the DDHH and will be mailed (on a loan basis) to the system manager upon request. Some of the funding for these materials will be available from unspent funds from this year's contract (VDH).

The next meeting is July 12, 2005 at Children's Hospital, 2924 Brook Road, Richmond, Virginia from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM.