

**First Steps South East**  
**LPCC Quarterly Meeting – Cluster H**  
**Wednesday, November 1, 2023**

**Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 9:06am.

**Introductions and Inspirational Story**

Mikayla Cougill shared a story that she was shopping recently when a mother of a child she use to serve in First Steps stopped to tell her that her child was doing so well that they didn't qualify for developmental preschool.

**Consent Agenda**

Motion to approve minutes and consent agenda was given by Julianne Jarrell and Scott Merkel seconded the motion. Minutes and Consent Agenda were approved.

**Financial Report**

Becky Haymond reviewed the distributed SPOE budget report. The budget numbers represent the grant year of July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 with expenditures through September 30, 2024. Personnel expenses are largest area. Direct expenses include items such as rent. Indirect expenses include items such as IT services.

**Other Business**

- **Cluster Oversight and System Updates**

- **Provider Networks Update –**

- Julianne Jarrell of Hopewell Center reported that Hopewell is getting lots of referrals from Service Coordinators for new kids needing therapy services - "Wow!". Hopewell has added one more new Speech Therapist, has another Speech Therapist who increased hours, and hired a new Developmental Therapist.
- Patty Kovacs of NCA Therapy said her agency has hired twelve new people which brings the NCA staff to 84 therapists serving First Steps, but it doesn't matter – there is still a wait list of children needing services. Some areas are better than others.
- Hanover College Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy programs are looking for placement sites for students around the state that can offer supervised work experience hours. The first students from the program would be seeking placements beginning in the Spring of 2025. This is a potential pipeline for new therapists since our provider networks (Hopewell and NCA) could consider being placement sites. The Hanover PT and OT programs also have student doctoral projects that could be focused on supporting First Steps. For example, there is an idea to develop videos about virtual session implementation.

- **Training Opportunities –** Training opportunities shared by the group:

- Indiana's Early Intervention Conference 2024 is set for June 13-14, 2024 and will be in person in Bloomington again. The conference committee is currently working on booking keynote speakers and is taking suggestions. Organizers are open to help with the planning committee.
- The Division of Early Childhood National Conference is coming up later this month in Wisconsin. Becky Haymond and Whitney Austin from the local System Point of Entry Office (SPOE) will attend. Part of the SPOE state contract is having administrators attend a national conference. Becky and Whitney selected this conference due to the Service Coordination emphasis of the conference.

- **Statistical Reports –**
  - Statistical report handouts were reviewed which include Referrals, Evaluations, and Initial IFSPs for 2023 through September.
    - Referrals - A new feature of the referral statistics handout is the breakdown by County.
    - Evaluations were very high in October (not yet appearing on the report handouts). In fact, the number of evaluations completed in October was the highest one-month total since we began counting in 2020. The System Point of Entry is generally getting all of the needed evaluations scheduled within two weeks of a request, but it is very challenging. Virtual evaluations through Zoom allow the SPOE to maximize evaluation staff availability across two regions to complete all of the evaluations within the required timelines. Thank you to the evaluation team who have given extra hours of work as needed. The SPOE has also added an additional evaluation team member. We are not sure why there are so many more referral evaluation requests – possibly due a stronger outreach presence. Scott Merkel with the Madison County schools said that he had a record number of preschool referrals in developmental evaluations during the 2022-2023 school year, and is currently on pace to beat that during the 2023-2024 school year.
    - IFSPs (Individualized Family Service Plans)– The numbers don't include incoming plans transferred in from other parts of the state. The numbers also don't include plans renewed after one year.
    - Data sharing – Scott Merkel wants to know how routinely numbers information about spikes in referrals, evaluations, and IFSPs gets shared from Service Coordinators to therapy Providers, as he could see where that could be helpful for anticipating and planning to meet upcoming needs. Becky answered that referral and IFSP numbers are collected by the SPOE and shared with the state and the therapy agencies sometimes twice per month, but at least monthly. Patty said the numbers aren't an exact determination of providers needed, and when the numbers come to her therapy agency she doesn't share them with the providers because that could be overwhelming. Julianne echoes that when the SPOE shares the numbers with her therapy network agency, she doesn't share the exact numbers with the individual therapists. The SPOE currently hand counts all data that is reported as EI Hub is not quite functional in producing these reports and statistics. The state is working on getting more data, and we are excited about that possibility.
  
- **Staffing Update –**
  - Becky Haymond from the SPOE reported that a bi-lingual Service Coordinators has been hired in Cluster J. The SPOE now has Ben Smith working to support Quality Assurance.
  
- **EI Hub –**
  - Becky Haymond, SPOE Director, says that EI Hub seems to have some speed issues on Tuesdays, perhaps when users across the state are completing billing activities for the Wednesday deadline. The SPOE working with the state on some data clean-up related to race/ethnicity and insurance.
  - Julianne Jerrell, Hopewell Center, reported that her stated wishes for EI Hub as recorded in the May and August meeting minutes continue to be her same wishes: “for families and Service Coordinators to be able to access the service notes entered by providers.”

- Patty, NCA Therapy, shared that if a family is wanting reports, the family can take a picture of the notes in EI Hub since there are often problems printing and sharing the notes within EI Hub.
  - Becky added that some SPOE staff have the ability to access the service notes, but not the general Service Coordinator staff. Hopefully, service coordinators will be given access to see the service notes in the future. Access and permissions are controlled by the software vendor user specifications. The service notes are useful to respond to requests for information about services from the insurance companies. Separately, our SPOE office has trained Service Coordinators to enter the Eligibility and IFSP dates and types as part of their duties rather than having SPOE office staff enter them. Then, SPOE data entry staff double checks the Eligibility and IFSP information when SPOE data entry staff enter therapy authorizations.
- **Old Business**
    - **Outreach Opportunities** – It has been a busy fall of outreach activities in Cluster H. First Steps staff attended events and meetings in several counties to share information to help families identify developmental milestones, and how First Steps can help if families see their child is showing a delay. Recently First Steps attended a Community Baby Shower in Wayne County and Henry County, and participated in a Trunk or Treat organized by the Shriners in Anderson. There is an upcoming Disability Resource Fair in Richmond that First Steps will be participating in. Special thank you to the willingness of extra staff to help out at events.
- **New Business**
    - **LPCC Meeting Dates 2024** – The group discussed options for LPCC Meetings for 2024. The group feels the virtual meeting format is nice as it allows participation from a distance. Anne Dolan asked if the group would like to continue with the same schedule of meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of each quarter. Everyone agrees to continue the same schedule. Anne will send out the 2024 meeting dates.
    - **Amy Griffin, Indiana Family to Family** – Amy gave an overview of the support services available to any family of a child with a disability or special health needs through the Indiana Family to Family organization. [www.inf2f.org](http://www.inf2f.org). Educational resources and services are also available to other professionals serving those families. Amy's presentation included PowerPoint slides that she will share after the meeting. Indiana Family to Family will be holding its annual Heart to Heart Conference on the third Thursday in September in 2024. It will again be a virtual format. Amy's contact info is [amy@inf2f.org](mailto:amy@inf2f.org) or 317-288-6315.
    - **INTECA Study** – The national INTECA group (Innovative Technology for Early Childhood Assessment) is talking with professionals and individuals with experience with using technology and assessment. To gather information, INTECA completed interviews with Becky, Whitney, and the First Steps South East assessment team members regarding the operation of virtual assessments.

## Announcements and Updates

- **Next LPCC Meeting** – February 6, 2024 at 9 am, will be virtual.

## Adjournment

Julianne moved to adjourn meeting. Meeting adjourned 10:25am. Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas!

**Attendance:**

Austin	Whitney	First Steps South East, SPOE Supervisor
Cougill	Mikayla	First Steps South East, Office Manager
Dolan	Anne	First Steps South East, LPCC Coordinator
Flick	Ben	CASY Child Care Resource and Referral
Foley	Janell	First Steps South East, Lead Service Coordinator and Trainer
Fox	Stacy	First Steps South East, Service Coordinator
Griffin	Amy	Indiana Family to Family
Haymond	Becky	First Steps South East, Program Director
Hicks	Everitt	Ivy Tech
Henson	Carrie	First Steps South East, Service Coordinator
Jarrell	Julianne	Hopewell Center
Kovacs	Patty	NCA Therapy
Merkel	Scott	Anderson Community Schools
Modesitt	Missy	MuncieBy5
Sanders	Barbara	First Steps Family Engagement Manager, FSSA
Schwering	Sharon	First Steps South East, Service Coordinator