



**Commission on People with Disabilities
Meeting Summary Minutes
December 13, 2023**

**** MEETING WAS HELD VIA ZOOM ****

Welcome and Approval of November 2023 Meeting Minutes

Trish Gallalee, Chair, convened the meeting. A motion was made to approve the November 2023 Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the November 2023 Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved as written. Approved minutes are available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd.

Infants and Toddlers Early Intervention Program – Jennifer Arnáiz, Administrator, and Jill Lyons, Program Manager II, Early Childhood Services, Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services (MCDHHS); Remarks by Dr. Barbara Howard, Developmental Behavioral Pediatrician, President of CHADIS

PowerPoint Presentation: https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/MCITP_PPT_CPWD.pdf

Montgomery County Infants and Toddlers Program (MCITP) Flyer: [English](#) / [Spanish](#)

MCITP Parent Brochure: [English](#) / [Spanish](#)

Family Involvement Center Flyer: [English](#) / [Spanish](#)

MCITP is the local system of early intervention services for children birth through thirty-four and a half months of age and their families. When an infant or toddler is suspected of having a developmental delay – either by the parent or the pediatrician - a referral is made to the program. Children are eligible if they meet the following criteria: demonstrate a 25% delay in one of the developmental areas, have atypical development or have a high probability condition that would likely result in developmental delays.

The program includes a developmental assessment; a review of family concerns; priorities and resources; meetings with the family to develop an individualized family service plan; service coordination to ensure that the individual and his or her family receive needed services which may include but are not limited to physical therapy, occupational therapy, audiology, health/medical services, nursing services, nutrition services, psychological services including specialized play groups or therapy sessions, counseling, speech and language assistance, special instructional services, transportation, and parenting skills development; and ongoing evaluation of the child's progress and his or her changing enrichment needs. These services are provided in a family centered practice model where families participate with service providers to learn skills and strategies to support their children's development. All services are provided at no cost. To apply for services, visit <https://referral.mditp.org/> or call the Infants and Toddlers Program at 240-777-3997.

The Federal Regulations for the “Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities” are issued by the U.S. Department of Education and define how the program will be implemented. Each state is obligated to have a process that ensures that these regulations are implemented.

The floor was opened to questions.

This Commission has advocated for an outreach program. When the County Council enacted this proposal, it was intended for an electronic tool such as CHADIS to be used by pediatricians to share

information with MCITP to facilitate more timely and accurate screenings. Will the County be moving forward with setting a bid for a vendor? The Infants and Toddlers program is a state program. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is requiring all jurisdictions to use the PINWHEEL platform. While PINWHEEL is not a screening tool, it will meet many of the same goals that CHADIS provides including allowing pediatricians and parents to upload screenings. The County is connecting with therapists, pediatricians and families and looking at what the end user experience is with using this new tool as well as providing suggestions on how to improve it. Jill is part of the Committee that pilots the platform. The platform will continue to evolve over time. It was noted that MCITP has 45 days from the first contact of referral to determine eligibility and to begin providing services.

It was suggested that outreach also be provided at recreation centers as well as through low-income housing managed by the Housing Opportunities Commission. MCITP currently does outreach through the Department of Recreation and Montgomery County Public Libraries as well as Judy Center Early Learning Hubs and Family Involvement Centers.

Will outreach be provided to families who are unhoused through shelters or temporary housing coordinators? Yes, although it can be a bit more challenging. MCITP is working with MCPS on how to strategically provide that outreach as children do move.

How many children were served in the last year and are you able to serve all eligible children or is there a waiting list? MCITP served approximately 2,500 children. Every eligible child is served and there is no waiting list. Betsy Luecking, Staff, further explained the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law that makes available a free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children. The IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 7.5 million (as of school year 2020-21) eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. Infants and toddlers, birth through age 2, with disabilities and their families receive early intervention services under IDEA Part C. Children and youth ages 3 through 21 receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B. Additionally, the IDEA authorizes:

- [Formula grants](#) to states to support special education and related services and early intervention services.
- [Discretionary grants](#) to state educational agencies, institutions of higher education, and other nonprofit organizations to support research, demonstrations, technical assistance and dissemination, technology development, personnel preparation and development, and parent-training and -information centers.

Congress reauthorized the IDEA in 2004 and most recently amended the IDEA through Public Law 114-95, the Every Student Succeeds Act, in December 2015. In the law, Congress states: "Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities."

It was asked that social media outreach materials be shared with the Commission.

Barbara Howard, CHADIS, said the main barrier is the workflow of the system. MCHAT requires a follow-up 26-page interview that oftentimes pediatricians do not complete. CHADIS is offering free diagnostic evaluations for children who screen positive through the CHADIS system. CHADIS also offers an automated referral tool. She asked if CHADIS could be integrated with the PINWHEEL program to allow for data sharing and referral. It was suggested Barbara have conversations at the state level as the County has to follow state program requirements.

Chair and Vice-Chair Report

Trish reported that she is resigning from the Commission effective December 31, 2023. Karen Morgret will take over as Chair.

The Steering Committee met with Councilmember Dawn Luedtke last month to further discuss [County Council Bill 33-23: Voluntary Registration for 911](#). The Commission continues to have significant concerns about the ability to safeguard this information, the cost to maintain the accuracy of the information, and the danger first responders may face if the information is not accurate. Trish will draft a letter stating the Commission is still not in support of this Bill and will send to Commissioners for comment before finalizing. It was suggested that the Commission clarify what it finds objectionable about this particular database. There also needs to be an emphasis on community education on safety and programs the County currently offers including home evaluation. It was noted that Red Cross in conjunction with FEMA developed a comprehensive guide "[Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs](#)".

The Steering Committee Meeting for December has been canceled.

Montgomery Parks is scheduled to discuss curbside sidewalks in Silver Spring at the January 10, 2024 Full Commission Meeting.

It was suggested that Dr. Patrice McGhee, Chief, Aging and Disability Services, provide an update to the Commission in the coming months.

Update – Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission (IDDC) – John Whittle, Commissioner and Liaison to IDDC

IDDC has finished developing priorities for the upcoming year as well as convening workgroups to address those priorities. Three workgroups will work on the following issues: care of individuals with IDD while in a hospital and transitioning them out when discharged; reviewing and providing feedback on Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) draft policy waiver regulation changes that are open for public comment; and barrier gaps and reviewing state data for disparities and funding based on color, race, ethnicity and lack of foreign language or sign language capacity in community programs.

The Commission has written a letter of support and would like to become involved with the statewide group. IDDC is also developing a position on Bill 33-23 and will be presenting it before the County Council the first week of January.

Deputy Secretary Bernie Simons, DDA, is retiring. Marlana Hutchinson, who currently serves as the Director of the Office of Long-Term Services and Supports, has accepted the position of Deputy Secretary, and will begin serving in her new role effective January 10, 2024.

Ex-Officio Member Updates

Faisal Khan, Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), reported MCDOT has secured a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation that will primarily be used for research and establishing best practices in financing and project planning of additional Flash Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors in the county. The County is looking to expand services to Route 355 and Veirs Mill Road by 2028. Starting January 29, 2024, Ride On Bus will be making changes to 47 routes. Call n' Ride ridership is slowly increasing. The program provided 26,000 less trips this year than in 2019. Challenges including shortage of drivers and cabs in the county. MCDOT is researching options to remedy the situation.

Commissioner Updates

Tabled due to time.

Public Comments

Tabled due to time.

Meeting Adjourned – 7:30pm

Submitted by: Carly Clem, Program Specialist II
Betsy Tolbert Luecking, Community Outreach Manager

Attendees

Commissioners Present: Myra Coffield; Kaylee Davis; Patricia Gallalee, Chair; Tonya Gilchrist; Sammi Hampton; Samuel Korper; Cindy LaBon; Ricardo Lopez; Karen Morgret, Vice Chair; Coni Nepomuceno; Lisa Quinn; Avner Shapiro; Richard Shermanski; Jeneva Stone; Teresa Villani; John Whittle

Commissioners Absent: Karen Goss; Karen Herson; Melissa Wyman

Non-Voting Ex-Officio Members Present: Matthew Barkley, ADA Title II Compliance Officer, Department of General Services; Patricia Cochrane, Montgomery County Public Schools; Bob Green, Montgomery Parks; Candace Groudine, Human Rights Commission; Angelisa Hawes, Montgomery County Public Libraries; Angela Luskey, Department of Recreation; Faisal Khan, Department of Transportation

Non-Voting Ex-Officio Members Absent: Rebecca Grayson, Housing Opportunities Commission; Karen Hochberg, Office of Human Resources

County Staff Present: Dr. Patrice McGhee, Chief, Aging & Disability Services, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS); Jennifer Arnaiz, Early Childhood Services, DHHS; Jill Lyons, Early Childhood Services, DHHS; Jennene Blakely, Montgomery Parks

Commission Staff Present: Betsy Luecking, Staff Liaison; Carly Clem, Program Specialist II

Public: Jenni Jackson (Sign Language Interpreter); Wendy Crawford (Sign Language Interpreter); Jill Lyons; Barbara Howard, President, CHADIS; Seth Morgan

**Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities
January 2024 Meeting and Events Calendar**

Full Commission Meeting – Wednesday January 10
6pm to 7:30pm to be held via Zoom – link to be announced

Steering Committee Meeting – Wednesday January 17
5:30pm to 6:30pm to be held via Zoom – link to be announced