

CSB Attendees: Cheryelle Cruickshank, Paola Jordan, Edie Weber, Eman Rimawi

NYC Health Staff: Dr. Jorge Petit, Marnie Davidoff, Reyana McKenzie, Naomi Legros, Mina Fasolo, Dashiell Yeatts-Lonske, Upjeet Chandan

Action items:

- Schedule additional in-person subcommittee meeting.

Call to Order: 10:00

Meeting Resolution:

- No formal resolutions were presented or voted on during this meeting.

Introduction:

The meeting began with introductions from members of the developmental disabilities subcommittee and staff of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene who shared their professional and personal experiences in disability advocacy, public health, policy, and family support services including housing and transitions. The group also welcomed Dr. Jorge Petit, Executive Deputy Director of Mental Hygiene, who highlighted his commitment to DD work within the Department. He shared his extensive leadership experience across public health, behavioral health, developmental disabilities, hospital administration, community-based organizations, and government systems.

Member Updates:

Birth through Three Years

Members raised significant concerns about ongoing challenges in Early Intervention and disability services in New York City, including the closure of long-standing center-based programs, provider shortages, and increasing pressure on families to accept telehealth services instead of in-person care. They emphasized that these issues are limiting family choice, undermining the natural environment model of Early Intervention, and making services less accessible for children and families.

School Aged Children

Additional concerns included inequities affecting school-age children and families with limited English proficiency, difficulties accessing appropriate bilingual special education services, and major delays in obtaining OPWDD eligibility and supports for younger children with autism and developmental disabilities. Members stressed that systemic failures are preventing youth, particularly Black and Brown children, from receiving the services they need.

Youth and Young Adults

Members also highlighted major gaps in services for youth and young adults with disabilities, particularly after they age out of school. They noted that vocational support like ACCES-VR is often limited to less complex cases, leaving many youths without meaningful employment or structured activities, which can lead to disengagement



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and negative outcomes. They also raised concerns about high numbers of students in the Bronx who are not attending school and limited post-school pathways, particularly for individuals with co-occurring conditions. Members stressed the need for stronger training, resources, and partnerships with community and corporate organizations to better support transition-age youth. Members noted ongoing academic struggles under new citywide learning initiatives, and insufficiently trained paras to properly support students with disabilities. Members also highlighted segregation within schools and lack of inclusion of students with I/DD, including separate entrances.

Cross-Sector Collaboration

Members discussed efforts to establish communications with the subcommittee focused on individuals who are impacted by the justice system. They emphasized the need to better understand and support youth with disabilities who become involved in the legal system, noting that many lack adequate services and support before, during, and after incarceration. Pathways to Justice, an initiative in Staten Island, which brought together agencies such as the NYPD, District Attorney's Office, Legal Aid Society, and community providers to coordinate responses and improve support. While the model has potential to be scaled, they noted challenges related to funding and coordination across systems in New York City.

Members underlined the need for greater cross-sector collaboration and outreach to connect mental health, developmental, and neurodivergent issues with broader health discussions, while increasing community engagement and information-sharing so people can better access available resources and support.

Event Announcements

IncludeNYC is having its 10th annual outdoors or Autism Fair on May 31st at the Wendel T Fisher Park. The only autism friendly park in NYC. 500-700 are expected to participate in this event as there will be activities for families to participate in and resources for family support.

NYC Health Updates:

Marnie Davidoff, Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of Child, Youth, Families, and Developmental Disabilities reflected on the information shared and indicated that the Department will be looking at ways to see how we can better integrate DD and mental health into the Bureau's work, both organizationally and from a population perspective. Additionally, she described Department efforts to provide training and technical assistance to build perinatal and early childhood mental health capacity in Article 31 clinics. Members highlighted a need for perinatal services among individuals with I/DD.

Concept papers for recreation and socialization and vocational services have been released for public comments. The concept paper for ASD clinic programs has been entered into public record and will be released shortly.

Meeting frequency:

Members present agreed to increase subcommittee meetings from two meetings per year to meeting quarterly.

CSB Core Priority Areas:

To align the CSB subcommittee's work with the Core group, the group discussed setting annual priorities focused on priority areas identified by the Core group including access to care and prevention for youth and families, alongside related themes such as workforce development, systemic barriers, and equity in services for people



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with developmental disabilities. Members emphasized the importance of defining “access” across the full lifespan, addressing fragmentation in services, and ensuring disability perspectives are centered rather than treated as an afterthought. Members shared concerns about federal policies impacting people with I/DD including immigrants and the expected changes to Medicaid due to HR1. Members are concerned about people losing eligibility for Medicaid services, impacting provider operations.

They also raised ongoing concerns about Early Intervention and the need for continued cross-system collaboration to address service gaps and improve outcomes. **Policy and Legislative Developments:**

The committee did not have sufficient time to cover the agenda item related to OPWDD’s proposed rule regarding Article 16 clinics and the subsequent impact on services to individuals not enrolled in OPWDD services. It will be added to the agenda of the next CSB subcommittee meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 11:30AM