

Family Health Committee Meeting February 11th, 2025

Introduction and Campaign Discussion

- Grace Dawson welcomed attendees, and Molly Fleming introduced the first speaker, Paul Fahey.
- Paul Fahey and his company are developing a campaign to promote public health careers within local health departments across New York State.
- The campaign aims to address longstanding recruitment challenges by creating customizable materials like social media content, flyers, banners, radio scripts, and billboard designs.
- The Workforce and Funding Committee recommended focusing on early intervention roles such as service coordinators and specialized providers (OT, PT, Speech).

Discussion on Difficult-to-Fill Positions

- Paul Fahey asked for input on the most challenging positions to recruit.
- Special instructors, speech-language pathologists (SLPs), and special education itinerant teachers (SEITs) were highlighted as difficult to fill.
- Nursing positions were also noted, particularly in contrast to hospital settings.

Key Motivators for Recruitment

- Flexibility in scheduling, work-life balance, and Monday-Friday hours were emphasized as major recruitment advantages.
- Benefits packages and civil service protections were noted as key differentiators from private sector jobs.
- Other motivators included supportive work environments, mentoring, teamwork, and salary positions covering travel time and paperwork.

Campaign Development and Next Steps

- Paul Fahey's team will use the feedback to create a toolkit and branding materials.
- Future meetings will present draft materials for review and ensure alignment with recruitment goals.
- A need for clear messaging about civil service application processes and benefits was discussed.

Preschool Rate Setting Overview

- The meeting transitioned to discussing preschool rate setting, with Suzanne Bolling and Nell Brady presenting on tuition methodology redesign.
- They outlined the state's initiative to develop a sustainable, predictable, and efficient rate-setting process.
- The project, legislated in 2023, is a multi-year effort expected to conclude with a final report by July 2027.
- Stakeholder engagement has included surveys, site visits, and regional meetings.

Key Issues Identified in Stakeholder Feedback

- Funding equity with public school districts.
- The need for competitive salaries and benefits.
- Timely issuance of rates to allow for effective budgeting.
- Consideration of regional cost differences.
- Reimbursement for professional development, substitute staffing, and behavioral supports.

Regulatory Concerns and OCFS Licensing

- Some attendees raised concerns about the dual licensing requirement with the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).
- The perception of preschool special education programs as daycare centers due to OCFS oversight was discussed.
- Challenges with OCFS processing times for new program approvals and relocations were highlighted.
- A specific issue regarding OCFS regulations preventing children from attending a special class in an integrated setting (SCIS) before turning three was raised, and a follow-up was promised.

Future Steps in Rate Setting Reform

- The study will continue gathering data, issuing surveys, and conducting site visits.
- The final methodology will focus on sustainability, fair allocation of funds, and a phased implementation approach.
- Providers emphasized the need for stability and predictability in rates to ensure program continuity.

Early Intervention (EI) Fiscal Workgroup and EI Hub Improvements

- The EI Fiscal Workgroup has formed and will meet on February 25th to address financial challenges within the EI system.
- The workgroup will focus on simplifying billing, child snapshot transfers, and streamlining processes.
- Counties were encouraged to provide input on planned EI Hub enhancements, with a request for feedback by February 9th.

Upcoming Events

- The statewide **EI/CYSHCN Conference** is scheduled for April, with registration now open.
- Plans for targeted outreach to county representatives regarding rate reform efforts were discussed.

Closing Remarks

- Attendees were reminded to provide feedback on the EI Hub recommendations.
- Future meetings will include updates on methodology reforms and implementation plans.
- Grace Dawson and Lydia Lednyak thanked participants and closed the meeting.

Participants

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