NYSACHO EI All County Call – October 2, 2024

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Agenda Item	Discussion/Presentation	Action Item
Welcome and General Updates	- General BEI updates: - Federal Funding Stability: Despite federal government shutdown discussions, EI operations and federal grant funding remain unaffected. Core Department of Education staff continue working, ensuring uninterrupted access to federal grant systems. - State Plan Amendments (SPAs): The 4% SPA for underserved and rural populations was approved by CMS earlier than expected, due to strong advocacy efforts. Implementation details—zip codes, timelines, and county guidance—will be issued soon. The 5% SPA is still pending approval. - BEI is coordinating with PCG and IT to align implementation timelines, as the 4% was approved before the 5%, reversing the anticipated sequence.	
Data and Program Evaluation Unit	**Annual Performance Report (APR) Data Cleaning** - The unit thanked counties for ongoing data cleaning efforts to prepare for the Annual Performance Report (APR). - Due to system constraints in EI Hub, BEI is still collecting data via Excel spreadsheets. Counties were reminded to: - Review all spreadsheet tabs (Indicators 1, 7, and 8A, B, & C). - Correct missing or inaccurate fields such as "other delay reasons," "unknowns," and "late reasons." - BEI stressed data completeness and accuracy as vital for both OSEP compliance and program improvement. **System Glitches and Workarounds**	

	• PCG is addressing technical issues preventing:
	   ○ Saving transition notification dates.
	   ○ Completing child exits due to closed referrals.
	• Counties encountering issues were advised to contact BEI directly for case-by-case solutions.
	• BEI is regularly checking backend data to monitor county progress and is investigating county suggestions, including whether it is possible to create an automatic closure process (e.g. 2 week auto-close) rather than requiring counties to manually close & report.
	
	Timeline for Closures and County Concerns
	• BEI requested counties complete closure of 8/31 group cases by October 7.
	• Counties voiced frustration about:
	   ○ Short turnaround time creating significant administrative burden.
	   ○ Frequent reopening requests prevent billing and duplicate workload.
	   ○ Counties requested flexibility or auto-close functionality, citing repetitive "busy work" for data reporting rather than service quality.
	• Yonghua Feng acknowledged these challenges and agreed to:
	   ○ Explore alternative data collection for major transition periods (Aug. 31, Jan. 1–2).
	   ○ Revisit the issue during the December All County Call with potential solutions.
	   ○ Coordinate with NYSACHO for continued dialogue on realistic timelines.
	
	Other Clarifications
	• BEI will assess feasibility of reports identifying closed children missing transition data.
	• Counties were advised to send data correction spreadsheets to *NYEISTA01@health.ny.gov* for PCG processing.
	• BEI confirmed ongoing work on both the notification date and referred to 3–5 program date issues within EI Hub.	

Provider Approval and Due Process Unit	**General Updates**
	• A reminder was issued regarding the "In the Loop" article on the Central Directory Report, accessible via:
	   ○ DOH website.
	   ○ EI Hub (with role-based search filters).	

- Provider Approval Unit (PAU) has published step-by-step guides for adding or ending catchment areas separate for agencies and individuals.
- Additional LMS resources were created for navigating provider profiles, agency directors, and approval processes.

Monitoring RFP
- The Programmatic and Administrative Monitoring RFP (2026–2031) is now posted on the DOH website for public awareness.

Special Education Teacher (SEIT) / Qualified Personnel Approvals
- Clarified confusion around certification requirements:
  - Accepted certifications:
    - Teacher of Special Education (permanent)
    - Students with Disabilities: Birth–Grade 2
  - Students with Disabilities: All Grades is *not* accepted for EI, as it lacks the necessary coursework for birth–3 services per SED.
- Teachers must also have 1,000 hours of experience with children birth–5 years.

Basic vs. Appendix 1 Agreements
- **Basic Agreement:**
  - For individuals contracting through an approved agency or county.
  - Quick approval (~2 weeks) if applications are complete.
  - No Medicaid enrollment required.
- **Appendix 1 Agreement:**
  - For independent providers billing directly.
  - Requires:
    - Early Intervention Medicaid enrollment (free for individuals without a business name).
    - State Central Registry (SCR) clearance.
  - Approval can take weeks to months depending on application accuracy and Medicaid processing.

Billing and System Use

	- Providers can enter claims manually in EI Hub or hire a billing service, third-party billing is optional. - Qualified personnel employed directly by agencies (W-2 employees) do not require BEI approval, though agencies must verify their credentials. **Training and Resources** - Three recorded webinars are available: *Who Can Apply to Become an EI Provider* *How to Apply* *What Happens After Approval* - Providers and counties were reminded to direct questions to provider@health.ny.gov. **County Discussion** - Counties raised concerns that provider lists inaccurately reflect availability many listed providers do not actually serve their county. - Requested ability for BEI to verify or remove non-participating providers. - BEI responded that PAU is: - Asking new applicants follow-up questions about county service areas. - Exploring backend data-cleanup methods to identify inactive providers. - Counties offered to bulk-send provider "opt-out" lists to PAU for cleanup assistance. - Counties requested clarification and better guidance for providers mistakenly applying under the wrong agreement (Basic vs. Appendix). - BEI agreed to clarify in future applications and coordinate with PCG on correcting user roles for approved providers.	
Fiscal Planning and Policy Unit	**State Plan Amendments (SPAs)** - BEI expanded on earlier comments regarding the 4% State Plan Amendment (SPA) for rural and underserved areas: - Approved by CMS in late September, which was faster than anticipated. - Implementation guidance is being developed in collaboration with PCG and DOH IT to adjust system coding, zip code alignment, and rate tables. - Counties will receive official communication soon detailing:	

- The list of eligible zip codes.
- Effective dates for claiming under the 4% enhancement.
- Instructions for payment adjustments and retroactive application where applicable.
- The 5% SPA remains pending CMS review, and BEI continues to coordinate advocacy efforts to expedite its approval.

Fiscal Operations and County Communication
- BEI acknowledged that implementation sequencing of the 4% and 5% SPAs has caused confusion for local programs and PCG but affirmed that BEI's fiscal and IT teams are working to minimize disruption.
- Counties were reminded to hold off on changing any internal billing structures until formal guidance is distributed.

Transportation
- Counties were informed that BEI and Medicaid Policy staff are evaluating transportation cost efficiencies and potential audit findings related to transportation claims.
- BEI is analyzing:
  - Provider billing compliance with rate methodology.
  - Consistency between county contracts and service documentation.
  - Potential corrective actions for any patterns of over- or under-reimbursement.
- BEI indicated that they will issue updated written guidance once the fiscal team completes its internal audit review.

Audits
- BEI reported continued coordination with the DOH Audit Unit on reviewing:
  - County program cost reports and fiscal reconciliations.
  - Provider documentation tied to EI service delivery and billing accuracy.
- Counties were encouraged to retain all backup documentation for prior years' claims and respond promptly to any data or fiscal audit requests.
- BEI's fiscal and policy teams are aiming for greater transparency and predictability in how audits are initiated and communicated to local programs.

| Information Systems and Quality Improvement Unit | **EI Hub Functionality and Fixes**
• PCG acknowledged ongoing challenges within the EI Hub, particularly related to:
    o Inability to save transition notification dates.
    o System glitches preventing case closure or reopening referrals.
    o Referred 3–5 dates not populating correctly.
• PCG engineers are actively addressing these issues, and updates will be included in an upcoming fall release.
    o However, PCG confirmed that some exit and closure fixes will occur in a later release, not in the immediate fall update.

Data Reporting and Temporary Workarounds
• BEI reiterated that until the system issues are resolved:
    o Counties must continue to use the Excel data correction spreadsheets provided by the Data and Evaluation Unit.
    o These should be returned to NYEISTA01@health.ny.gov for aggregation and transmission to PCG.
• Counties were advised to document any system errors encountered during data entry or billing in order to support BEI's troubleshooting and audit protection efforts.

User Roles and Permissions
• Multiple counties raised concerns about providers' incorrect role assignments within the Hub following approval.
    o BEI agreed to work with PCG and the BEI Info Team to ensure users have proper access to service logging, billing, and case management features.
    o Counties were encouraged to continue reporting access discrepancies to EIHubHelp@pcgus.com with clear details.

Quality Improvement and Monitoring
• The Information Systems Unit is using backend data to:
    o Monitor county-level data completeness and timeliness.
    o Identify recurring data entry barriers.
    o Develop training materials based on user feedback. | |

	• BEI thanked counties for their cooperation, noting visible progress in data cleanup and Hub navigation improvements since the last All County call.	

Open Discussion	**EI Hub Functionality and User Roles**
	• Several counties raised continuing issues with EI Hub functionality, including:
	    ○ Transition and referred 3–5 dates not saving.
	    ○ Inability to close or reopen cases efficiently.
	    ○ Incorrect user role assignments for new providers following approval.
	• BEI confirmed that:
	    ○ The fall Hub release will include partial fixes, with others coming in later updates.
	    ○ They will work with PCG and the BEI Info Team to ensure accurate user permissions for case management and billing functions.
	    ○ Counties should continue documenting system errors and reporting them to	

Adjournment	**The next EI All County Call is December 18th (10-11)**	