Statewide Data Needed for Early Intervention & Preschool Special Education Services

As mentioned in a previous newsletter we are often asked by legislators for data to support our financial funding asks for the Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education programs. Although they understand and respect our argument in regards to these two troubled systems, our argument would be far stronger if we were able to utilize data.

With this in mind, the New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) in collaboration with Adirondack Birth to Three Alliance, dispersed a survey to all 58 local health departments in December 2019 to collect data regarding Early Intervention services. The survey received 49 responses out of the 58 surveys sent out.

A summary of the 49 survey responses received showed that the top three services that children are waitlisted for are speech, special education and physical therapy. The average amount of days children wait for the aforementioned three services are approximately 77, 45 and 43 respectively. In addition, about 17% of children aren’t receiving services due to the limited capacity of Early Intervention providers.

Survey participants attributed the insufficient number of Early Intervention providers to not enough specialists residing in the area, minimal pay, and the uncovered expenses of time and travel. Early Intervention waitlists have caused referral resources (i.e. pediatricians & community programs) to defer referrals until a child is eligible for preschool special education.
Survey respondents recommended the following as improvements to the Early Intervention program in addition to increased funding and higher reimbursement rates: streamlining the billing process, improved communication among counties, more incentives, and better advertising of the program to college students.

The Children’s Agenda is doing a similar survey to collect data regarding preschool special education. Thus far the survey has been sent out to CPSE chairpersons in Western and Central NY school districts.

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**Update from the Kids Can't Wait Campaign Leaders Council**

On February 26th, the Kids Can't Wait Leaders Council had a very productive meeting. Within that meeting the members agreed to send a letter to state legislative leaders urging them to include the Early Intervention covered lives proposal in the one-house (Assembly and Senate) budgets.

This [letter](https://thechildrensagenda.salsalabs.org/KidsCantWaitJuly20190_copy1_copy2_copy1_copy1_copy1) signed by organizational members of the Leaders Council, was sent to the following legislators on March 6th.

**Carl Heastie, Assembly Speaker**

Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Temporary President and Majority Leader

Richard Gottfried, Chair, Assembly Committee on Health

Gustavo Rivera, Chair, Senate Committee on Health

Shelley Mayer, Chair, Senate Committee on Education

Michael Benedetto, Chair, Assembly Committee on Education

Kevin Cahill, Chair, Assembly Committee on Insurance

Neil Breslin, Chair, Senate Committee on Insurance
Liz Krueger, Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Helene E. Weinstein, Chair, Assembly Committee on Ways and Means

Amy Paulin, Member, Assembly Education and Health Committees

In addition, on March 13th, members of the leaders council made phone calls to legislators regarding the same topic addressed in the aforementioned letter.

These were important steps toward potentially having the covered lives proposal included in the final NYS budget.

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**Early Intervention Services During COVID-19 Pandemic**

As we attempt to adjust to the ‘new normal’ as a result of the current health crisis the New York State Bureau of Early Intervention has provided some guidance regarding the delivery of early intervention services.

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**You Are Appreciated!**

A big thank you to all the Kids Can’t Wait Campaign Champions who have joined us this past year in our advocacy efforts. If you are receiving this email then that is YOU!

Whether you took part in our action alerts, shared your family story, participated in our fall letter signing campaign and/or joined us in Albany, etc, we truly appreciate you.
We've been busy! Check out our latest happenings.

We want to keep this momentum going as we continue to be the voice for our children. With a strong belief that there is strength in numbers the Kids Can’t Wait Campaign needs more champions and parent stories from across the state so please spread the word.

If you are interested or know of someone or a group of someones who may be interested in elevating the Kids Can’t Wait Campaign in their area please email kristen@thechildrensagenda.org. We would particularly like to hear from our neighboring counties in Western and Central New York.

On February 28th, the following email was distributed regarding the implementation of the 5% rate increase that was approved in 2019.

New York State Department of Health

New York Early Intervention System (NYEIS) Electronic Mailing List

Implementation of the 5% Rate Increase for Occupational Therapy (OT), Physical Therapy (PT) and Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) Services and Supplemental OT, PT and SLP Evaluations Rendered by Licensed Practitioners Effective April 1, 2019

Dear Early Intervention Provider,

The 5% rate increase for Occupational Therapy (OT), Physical Therapy (PT) and Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) services and supplemental OT, PT and SLP evaluations rendered by licensed practitioners effective April 1, 2019 has been implemented. Claims for OT, PT and SLP services previously paid by
Medicaid for service dates from 4/1/19 to present (see attached for a list of rate codes) will automatically reprocess with the increased rates. Reprocessing and payment of these claims will occur in Medicaid Cycle 2220 with check date of 03/09/2020 and a check release date of 03/25/2020. Claims for OT, PT and SLP services submitted to Medicaid starting the week of 3/2/2020 will include the 5% rate increase.

Once the 5% rate increase has been fully processed for Medicaid claims, BEI will implement the 5% increase for claims paid from escrow for OT, PT and SLP services from 4/1/2019. Counties will receive a supplemental invoice for the one-time retroactive escrow payment. An additional notice will be posted after dates are finalized for the 5% escrow payments.

If you have any questions, please contact BEI at EIP.Fiscal@health.ny.gov.

Please do not reply to this e-mail announcement.

Thank You.