



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Public Health  
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

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**Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH)  
Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program  
Advisory Committee Meeting, 250 Washington Street, Boston, MA  
Public Health Council Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Meeting Date: Monday, May 15, 2017**

**Quorum was reached for this meeting – 5/15/17**

Appointed members present: Michelle Eisan-Smith, Jennifer Fleming, Darla Gundler, Barbara Herrmann, Marly Kenna, Aimee Knorr, Christine Majeskey, Kathy Manfield, Gale Ann Merle, Jane Stewart, Sarah Stone and Peg Toro

Appointed members not present: none

UNHS Staff in attendance: Martha Morris, Kathy O'Connell, Amarilys Triana Walsh, and Richard Wentworth

Others in attendance: Amy Szarkowski, Martha deHahn, Barbara Hecht, Laura Gillingham, Jennifer Bentley, Melissa Dowler, Cheryl Glovsky, Cathy Guiliani, Marilyn Neault, Kathy Vesey, Janet Farrell, Tracy Osbahr, Suzanne Gottlieb, Mary Katherine Weatherby, Sarah Honigfeld, Jayme Rivas Robertson, Lauren McGrath

**Materials distributed:**

1. Agenda
2. Draft minutes from September 12, 2016 meeting
3. Newborn Hearing Screening Advisory Committee Operating Rules and Procedures
4. Conflict of Interest Law Online Training Program handout
5. Summary of the Conflict of Interest Law for State Employees
6. Open Meeting Law Guide
7. 940 CMR 29.00 Open Meetings
8. The Forum, Newsletter of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Spring 2017 issue, article included by Jane Stewart
9. Odyssey, 2017, "Massachusetts Offers Trilingual Reading Saturdays to Increase Reading Skills and Confidence", by Kathy Vesey

## 10. Job description for open position “Special Projects Coordinator, Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program”

**Welcome and Introductions:** Sarah Stone, Acting Program Director, Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program welcomed the group and introductions were made. Sarah reminded the group that the meetings will continue to be open. It was announced that Janet Farrell retired in December and Sarah is now the Acting Director. The program received a grant from HRSA and has a position posted that is funded through this grant. The job description was made available. The UNHSP held their annual Parent Forum which included consumer and parent presentations. The topic was advocacy and engagement. A family social event was held at An Unlikely Story in January. The Decibels Foundation is now hosting a calendar of events for families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing on their website [www.decibelsfoundation.org](http://www.decibelsfoundation.org). The support group “Hear My Dreams” has expanded to three locations: Littleton, Beverly and Worcester.

**Introduction to the Open Meeting and Conflict of Interest Laws:** Alex Rubin, JD, Deputy General Counsel, MA Department of Public Health reviewed these laws. Materials were reviewed. Members were asked to return the Certificate of Receipt of Open Meeting Law Materials and the Acknowledgment of Receipt of the Summary of the Conflict of Interest Law to Sarah Stone. Alex discussed with the group the Committee’s Operating Rules and Procedures and described the process of remote participation. After discussion, it was decided not to move forward with remote participation.

Following Alex’s presentation the committee voted on several items. The first vote was to elect a chair. Sarah Stone made a motion to nominate Kathy Manfield. It was seconded by Jennifer Fleming. The committee vote was unanimous. The second vote was to elect a vice-chair. Sarah Stone made a motion to nominate Jane Stewart. It was seconded by Marly Kenna. The committee vote was unanimous. The third vote was to accept the minutes from the September 12, 2016 meeting. Sarah Stone made a motion to accept. Jennifer Fleming seconded. The committee vote was unanimous.

**Use of UNHSP Data to Identify New Infant Hearing Loss Risk Indicators and Determine Risk Indicator Rankings:** Martha Savaria Morris, Ph.D., Epidemiologist, Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program. Two studies conducted by the UNHSP were discussed: “Infertility treatment is associated with neurological hearing loss” and “Mothers’ employment during pregnancy in occupations or industries that afford exposure to ototoxic chemicals is associated with neurological hearing loss”. Martha discussed the studies and the challenges with the data. The conclusions were that the use of fertility drugs to facilitate conception and employment during pregnancy in occupations assumed to afford exposure to ototoxic chemicals may increase the risk of neurological hearing loss in infants.

**Family Centered Tele-Practice for Infants and Toddlers with Hearing Loss: The tVISIT Project:** Barbara Hecht, Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech. Barbara described the tVISIT project that Clarke is piloting. This project offers families access to teachers of the deaf and speech language pathologists with experience with children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Telepractice is the application of telecommunications technology to deliver professional services at a distance. Clarke's program provides telepractice early intervention services (tVISITs) to families of infants and toddlers with hearing loss. tVISITs are administered over the Internet using a personal computer and videoconferencing technology (i.e., FaceTime or Skype). Barbara will provide updates to the committee as project data is reviewed.

**Recognition of Service:** Ron Benham, Director, Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition presented three awards. These awards were given in recognition of many years of service to the UNHS Advisory Committee. They were presented to Janet Farrell, Marilyn Neault and Kathy Vesey.

**Adjournment:** Jennifer Fleming motioned to adjourn the meeting. Darla Gundler seconded. The committee vote was unanimous.