

The Nebraska Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Program
Advisory Committee Meeting
October 2nd, 2025
Meeting Minutes
09:00a.m. - 11:20a.m.

<u>Members</u>	<u>Guest</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Jonathan Arteaga	Shanika King- Parker	Angel Sumpter-McFarland
Laura Beshaler	Alejandra Amaro	Mujtaba Ebrahim
Heather Gomes		Stacy Luther
Jessica Hoss		
Shelli Janning		
Kristin Jolkowski		
Sara Peterson		<u>Newborn Screening Staff</u>
Vicki Steinhauer- Campbell		Jillian Chance
Joanna Webster		
		<u>Interpreters</u>
		Katrina Watton
		Julie Bergmann

1. Introductions:

Mujtaba Ebrahim, Community Health Educator for the Nebraska Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (NE-EHDI) welcomed everyone and introduced himself.

Meeting start time – EHDI Community Health Educator, Mujtaba Ebrahim, called the meeting to order at **09:15 a.m.**

Mujtaba Ebrahim presented the Open Meeting Act at the beginning of the Advisory Committee Meeting. The Open Meeting Act was placed on the door of the meeting room, as well as read aloud (with ASL Interpreters) and a copy of the meeting act was placed in each folder of the members attending.

Mujtaba Ebrahim made note that NE-EHDI Advisory Committee strives to better lives of children in Nebraska who are deaf or hard-of-hearing by recommending policy that improves diversity, equality, awareness, and access. NE-EHDI is an unbiased program that informs families of

available resources, and we respect their right to determine what's best for their family. Mujtaba also stated that the committee has **2** advisory committee meetings per year due to budget limitations. He advised members and guests to refrain from using the words "hearing loss" or "hearing impaired." This may be difficult since some members may not view these words as negative terms, but we do recognize these terms as negative for some members. If these terms are used in the duration of the meeting all members will recognize that it is not the intent to be negative or disrespectful. Thank you, members, for sharing your valuable perspectives.

2. Review of Agenda:

Mujtaba Ebrahim, gave a review of our agenda and description for the meeting. Describing who and what they would be presenting.

3. Review of May 2024 Minutes

A copy of the May **2025** meeting minutes was emailed to all committee members. Mujtaba Ebrahim asked members if they would like to have any changes made to the meeting minutes and if they approved of them.

4. Nebraska Association of the Deaf:

Vicki Campbell, Vice President of the Nebraska Association of the Deaf, shared updates on NeAD. Vicki shared that NeAD has received 48 referrals this year & there are 12 families being served through NeAD. Vicki talked about the referral process, and how NeAD handles a referral. Vicki also spoke on data being compiled by NeAD, including how many times NeAD mentors are visiting families, cancellations & ways of improving the Deaf mentorship program - Including survey forms to families to directly get feedback to improve mentees and program alike. NeAD is also working with Omaha public libraries to host monthly activities. Focusing on families with toddlers aged 0-3 years of age. NeAD is looking to branch out to public libraries in the western portion of the state. The public libraries are excited to work alongside the deaf and hard-of-hearing community as well as exposing ASL and hearing differences to the general public.

NeAD is also collaborating with Boys Town National Research Hospital to host an event over the holiday aimed at connecting families with the hospital and services it provides to the deaf and hard -of-hearing community and its families. NeAD is also developing home visit and communication programs, as well as tracking data for these programs gaging engagement between families and mentors. Vicki also highlighted how Nicole Froehlich has been instrumental in developing these partnerships and activities.

5. Nebraska Hands & Voices Update:

Shelli Janning, Nebraska Hands & Voices Guide by Your Side (GBYS) Program Coordinator, shared updates on Nebraska Family support programs through the group. There are **11** parent guides throughout the state and **151** families being served through GBYS. Nebraska Hands & Voices is made up of 16 board members. 13 of the board members have a child that is deaf and/or hard of hearing.

- Held annual non-program event in metro area at Fontenelle Forest on August 30, 2025.

- Continue to collaborate with Regional Programs on events.
- Guide By Your Side (GBYS) work as “Guides” directly with families who have just learned of their child’s hearing condition currently have **11** guides.
 - “Moms Night In” Event in Lincoln
 - Lincoln 01/31/2026 & 02/01/2026
 - ASTra Bootcamp in Kearney 03/07/2026
 - Kearney’s Children’s Museum Spring Event Date TBA
 - Easter Egg Hunt In Papillion Tentative date 03/28/2026 at 02:00 p.m.

Shelli noted quarterly zoom series “You Are Not Alone” for children being diagnosed later or not followed up on, in English and Spanish. From the surveys sent out on the program the feedback has been extremely positive. Shelli created a GBYS support card for newly identified babies. These cards have been sent to pediatric audiologists, birthing hospitals, and ESUs. A QR code has also been added to the support card that comes with referral form to GBYS.

A monthly newsletter is sent to all GBYS families in both English and Spanish. The newsletter includes a spotlight for a “rising star” which is a Deaf or Hard of Hearing individual who stands out amongst their peers. Additional “Rising Stars” nominations are always welcome and needed.

- Parent Guide Spotlight
- Not So Funny moments
- What’s New or share-worthy
- Upcoming Events
- Information about our projects
- An ASTra Tip.

<https://www.handsandvoicesne.org/risingstarnominationform>

Nebraska Hands & Voices Referrals:

- **24** referrals to Guide by Your Side since July 2024
 - **11** From NE-EHDI
 - **13** non EHDI (From audiologist, deaf educator, etc.)

Ages of Children currently being served

- 0 to 3 = **42**
- 4 to 5 = **36**
- 15 to 17= **13**
- 18 to 21= **0**

6. Review of program and Program Updates:

Angel Sumpter-McFarland directed committee members to review the handout that details our current NE-EHDI funding and requirements from the three sources of funding for the NE-EHDI Program: (HRSA, CDC, and MCH Title V Block Grant). Angel also made note that NE-EHDI has no state funding and is all federal income. Angel also pointed out the family support agreements NE-EHDI regularly renews: Nebraska Hands & Voices, HearU Nebraska, Nebraska Association of the Deaf. Angel made note that every advisory meeting fewer members are attending meetings. This will be addressed multiple times now until our upcoming meeting in May 2026. NE-EHDI is looking to add new members to our Advisory Committee including people from the Nebraska doula & homebirth community.

7. NE-EHDI Special Programs Updates

Mujtaba Ebrahim, Community Health Educator Sr. for Nebraska EHDI, updated the committee on special programs that EHDI has updated for the HRSA agreement implementation phase 2, including: cCMV awareness, Hospital Champions Campaign, Educational Materials, and EHDI Newsletter.

cCMV Awareness:

Mujtaba talked about how NE-EHDI to date has sent out over **5000+** cCMV fact sheets, how the information was adapted from the CDC (insuring accuracy), and how NE-EHDI and Dry Blood Spot will be working together with parent advocates to get more education about Congenital Cytomegalovirus. NE-EHDI also attended the Congenital Cytomegalovirus Public Health Conference.

Measles Outbreak:

*As of September 23rd 2025 a total of 1,514 confirmed cases of measles were reported by 42 jurisdictions.

- **1** in Nebraska
- **12** in South Dakota
- **90** in Kansas

Measles is the most contagious virus known to infect humans. To put this in perspective, nine out of 10 susceptible individuals exposed to measles will be infected. Measles infection is a serious disease that can lead to severe complications, including death. Those most at risk are young children, pregnant women, and those with weakened immune systems.

Before the MMR vaccination, measles was a significant cause of sensorineural loss in children, accounting for about 5-10% of the population. Measles continues to be a common cause of profound hearing loss in areas in which measles vaccinations are rare. Governor Pillen is urging Nebraskans to get vaccinated.

Hospital Champions Campaign:

The Hospital Champions Campaign was highlighted as a key initiative aimed at educating birthing hospital staff about effective communication with parents of newborns, with a focus on

improving early hearing detection and follow-up care. Challenges such as inconsistent staffing, missed follow-ups and limited engagement from rural families were discussed, along with proposed enhancements, including simulation-based training, real-time data integration, and culturally relevant educational materials.

8. NE EHDI Data (Statistics & Data Projects)

Angel Sumpter-McFarland, Program Manager for Nebraska EHDI, presented state **1-3-6** hearing statistics vs the National average.

Screening by 1 month 2024 Average: Nebraska: 95.4% US:NA

Diagnosis by 3 months 2024 Average: Nebraska: 61.6% US:NA

Early Intervention services by 6 months Average: Nebraska: 52.3% US :NA

9. Presentations:

Nebraska Association of the Deaf – Presented by Vicki Steinhauer Campbell

Hands & Voices Updates – Presented by Shelli Janning

Program Updates – Angel Sumpter-McFarland

Special Program Updates – Mujtaba Ebrahim

10. Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Kristin Jolkowski at 11:20 a.m.

Review/Approval of Minutes from October 2023 meeting:

The May 22nd 2025 minutes were approved by Sara Peterson.

Dates and Locations for Next Meetings: Via Zoom, May 07th 2026 / October 09th 2026 Nebraska State Office Building (Meadow Lark Room)

Meeting Adjourned 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Angel Sumpter-McFarland

Mujtaba Ebrahim

Stacy Luther

Clare Koneck-Wilcox