

**Virginia Early Hearing Detection & Intervention
Advisory Committee Meeting**
Friday, September 11, 2026
10 AM – 3 PM

Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association
Washington & Jefferson Rooms

Draft Meeting Minutes

Member Attendance	Voting Record Y=Yes, N=No, A=Abstain		
	Previous Meeting Minutes	Regulatory Review Amendments	Adjournment
Member Legend			
Bold = Present, in person			
Bold* = Present, remote participation (Reason*, Location)			
<i>Italicized</i> = Absent			
Voting Members			
Judy Alonzi, Co-Chair	Y	Y	Y
Lisa Eickel, Co-Chair	Y	Y	Y
Valerie Abbott	M1	Y	Y
<i>Patricia Eitemiller</i>	-	-	-
Ashleigh Greenwood	Y	M2	Y
Margaret Halinski	Y	Y	Y
<i>Christina Harrison</i>	-	-	-
Mona Iskander	Y	M1	Y
Rebecca Levorson	Y	Y	M1
Leigh Emma Lion	Y	Y	Y
<i>Stephanie Moody-Antonio</i>	-	-	-
Kara Norcross	Y	Y	M2
Christina Owens	Y	Y	Y
Terese Urban	Y	Y	Y
Sandra Woodward	Y	Y	Y
Tracey Yurechko	M2	Y	Y
Ex Officio Members			
Marcus Allen			
<i>Robin Bliven</i>			
<i>Terri Nelligan</i>			
Ira Padhye			
Eric Raff			
Amy Scott			
Interested Parties			
Heather Paradise, ASL Interpreter			
Lorelei Schanstra, ASL Interpreter			
Jennifer Barrett			
Tressela Bateson			
Lori Bobsin			
Penni Crist			
Kourtney Fiedler			
Christen Grimes			
DeVita Parker			
Alexandra Tharpe			

***Reasons for Remote Participation:** 1. Disability or other medical condition that prevented the member's physical attendance (counts towards quorum); 2. Family member's medical condition that prevented the member's physical attendance (counts towards quorum); 3. Distance between the member's principal residence and the meeting location > 60 miles ; 4. Personal matter

Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Staff Attending: Jayla Dickens, Jennifer Macdonald, Andrea Mendes, Jana Pushkin, Deepali Sanghani, Tre'nard Scott

Introduction/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 AM.

Vacant Positions

Vacant voting-member positions on the advisory committee were announced. These positions included:

- Deaf Hard of Hearing – Adult Representative (1 open position)
- Health Insurance Industry Representative (1 open position)
- Hospital NHS Nurse Representative (2 open positions)
- Speech Language Pathologist (1 open position)
- Agency Representative affiliated with VHHA (1 open position)
- CMV Parent Representative (1 open position)

Interested individuals were encouraged to email the VAEHDI address.

Review of Agenda

Agenda was reviewed.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The committee reviewed and approved the minutes from its June 5, 2026, meeting. The first motion was made by Abbott, followed by Yurechko.

Travel Forms & Membership

The committee discussed the travel reimbursement process, noting that reimbursements may take up to 30 days after the invoice submission and acceptance. It was also emphasized that an eVA account must be created to receive reimbursement.

Agency Updates

Technical Assistance Center for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Submitted by: Tracey Yurechko

Mission: The Technical Assistance Center for Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing is funded by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to provide training and technical assistance in the area of deafness and hearing loss. Assistance is available to local public school systems as well as state-operated programs including early intervention through the Virginia Network of Consultants for Professionals Working with Children Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VNOC) in areas such as identification, assessment (educational, psychological), communication of children across the spectrum of modalities (listening and spoken language, American Sign Language, Signed English, etc.), specific needs of children with amplification including cochlear implants, and instructional strategies.

Updates:

- From May 29, 2026, to August 31, 2026, TAC-DHH addressed/processed 34 calls/email requests for technical assistance; 4 were directly from parents. One request was converted into direct consultations through the Virginia Network of Consultants (VNOC). Additionally, TAC-DHH disseminated 28 announcements during this quarter; 22 were directed to parents. (There are currently 190 parents on the TAC-DHH database.)

- Opening Doors - Unlocking Potential 2026 was held on July 28-29, 2026. The event had 100 registered participants. The feedback survey respondents for the virtual ODUP 2026 conference highlighted strong overall satisfaction with the event's affordability, organization, accessibility features (like captions and interpreters), and the high caliber of its diverse presenters. Participants praised the well-structured schedule and practical, evidence-based content, particularly sessions covering language deprivation, best practices for D/HH educators, and standout keynotes.
- The Virginia Network of Consultants continues to support school divisions across the Commonwealth. For the 2025-2026 school year, VNOC supported nine school divisions.
- If you want to keep up with future events at the TAC-DHH, please complete the following form: <https://airtable.com/shrgJBAmME9gYXjWz> to receive our weekly newsletter.

DBHDS/Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia:

Submitted by: Terri Nelligan

Mission: Part C early intervention builds upon and provides supports and resources to assist family members and caregivers to enhance children's learning and development through everyday learning opportunities. Purpose: 1. To enable young children to be active and successful participants during the early childhood years and in the future in a variety of settings – in their homes with their families; in childcare, preschool or school programs; and in the community. 2. To enable families to provide care for their child and have the resources they need to participate in their own desired family and community activities. Key Principles: 1. Infants and toddlers learn best through everyday experiences and interactions with familiar people in familiar contexts. 2. All families, with the necessary support and resources, can enhance their children's learning and development. 3. The primary role of a service provider in early intervention is to work with and support family members and caregivers in children's lives. 4. The early intervention process, from initial contacts through transition, must be dynamic and individualized to reflect the child's and family members' preferences, learning styles and cultural beliefs. 5. IFSP outcomes must be functional and based on children's and families' needs and family identified priorities. 6. The family's priorities, needs and interests are addressed most appropriately by a primary provider who represents and receives team and community support. 7. Interventions with young children and family members must be based on explicit principles, validated practices, best available research, and relevant laws and regulations.

Updates:

- Kyla Patterson, Early Intervention Program Manager, presented an overview of ITCVA's Part C system at the VEHD June meeting. Topics covered: referral, referral from VISITS, EI Process, Development of an IFSP, including Outcomes, EI entitled services, modality selection, provider selection, data collection, and transition to LEAs.
- An informational flyer for parents of children who are DHH and/or VIS was created and distributed by a collaborative team representing ITCVA, VEIPD, TTAC DHH, DB Project, DBVI. The flyer defined each of the services available to families and how to contact the program.
- VDOE for VA SLLRS DHH posted the newly created one-page resources developed to meet the requirements of Senate Bill 265 and House Bill 649 to VDOE for publication and created by a collaborative team including ITCVA.
- The ITCVA website has a REFERRAL button on the top right to receive electronic referrals from any source; the referral will go directly to the appropriate Local Early Intervention System (LEIS) immediately.
- Grafton Special Services Program (GSSP) hired a new program Director, replacing Judy who recently retired.
- EI Preservice University Consortium: ITCVA engages in the work of this multi university community to address mutually identified needs for a well-prepared early intervention workforce and to improve outcomes for young children with developmental delays or disabilities and their families by enhancing preservice training, increasing and enhance quality of EI content in preservice curriculum, and by increasing the availability of preservice practicums in LEIS across the Commonwealth.

- Technical Assistance continues to be provided statewide and regionally to support local early intervention systems, maintain and increase capacity to serve infants & toddlers with disabilities and their families within the confines of IDEA, state regulations, and evidence-based practices.

University of Virginia Hearing Aid Loan Bank:

Provided by: Penni P. Crist

Mission: To provide loaner aids to children until permanent aids are received. The Virginia Hearing Aid Loan Bank was established statewide for children under the age of 21 whose hearing loss is confirmed by an audiologist. Parents may apply for hearing aids and FM systems by completing an application form along with the audiologist who will complete a portion of the application. Loaner aids are provided for 6 months while the family secures permanent aids for the child.

Updates:

- Announcing the retirement of Vertie Wade as the Loaner Hearing Aid Program Manager. She leaves the program well-situated to continue to serve children of the Commonwealth. Vertie's hard work over her years of service is greatly appreciated.

VDH Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN):

Submitted by: Marcus Allen

Mission: The Children with Special Health Care Needs Program promotes the optimal health and development of individuals living in the Commonwealth with special health care needs by working in partnership with families, service providers, and communities.

Updates:

- September is Sickle Cell Awareness Month. VDH will be recognizing the need for sickle cell awareness with several outreach initiatives designed to increase the public's knowledge about the disease and sickle cell trait (including how the disease is inherited).

Center for Family Involvement @ VCU-Family to Family

Submitted by: Lisa Eickel

Mission: Since its inception in 2005, The Center for Family Involvement works with families to increase their skills as advocates, mentors, and leaders so that families, children, and young adults with disabilities can lead the lives they want.

Updates: Virtual Support Group: The meetings will occur every other month during two separate time slots: 12:30-1:30pm and 5:30-6:30pm. Dates are: September 16, 2026; November 18, 2026, January 20, 2027, March 17, 2027, and May 19, 2027. Registration on is required, nyurl.com/DHH-family-call

- New this year, we are offering "office hours" each week for families to book 1:1 me for more in depth conversations around their child's hearing and/ or language needs, support needs, questions about services, IEPs, resources and more. Booking calendar is available at nyurl.com/dhhOfficeHours
- 11 referrals for family-to-family support from EHDI have been received from EHDI (May 28, 2026- September 2, 2026).
- 36% enrollment rate for family-to-family support
- 63% of referrals were unable to be connected with (a er a minimum of 3 contact a empts)
- 2 referrals are currently in process from EHDI
- 4 referrals were for Spanish speaking families
- 1 referral was for CMV diagnosed child
- 2 referrals were made to local Early Intervenor Programs

- 1 referral was made to Gra on Special Services
- Past Events and Upcoming Events of Note

- Exhibited and connected with families at VCU Health's Camp Chat Community Day in June.
- Hosted family event at The Art Factory in Midlothian in August.
- Hosting family park event at Mill Mountain Park and Discovery Center this Saturday in Roanoke (registration on has closed).
- Hosting family playdate for li les on Friday, September 18 in Leesburg
- Exhibiting and connecting with families at NVRC's Celebrate Communication on Saturday, September 26 in Springfield

Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind (VSDB):

Submitted by: Robin Bliven

Mission: Our mission is to provide educational and residential services that promote: Value for each person and their unique abilities, success in meeting each student's academic goals, diversity in instruction to meet the needs of all students, building opportunities that foster expertise in technology and its integration, communication, and achievement for all staff and students and their families.

- **Updates:** Based on the December 1, 2025, Child Count, 1,915 students received special education services under the disability category of Deafness/Hearing Impairment, and 42 students received services under Deaf-Blindness. Both counts include students identified under the primary, secondary, and tertiary disability categories.
- The Sensory Disabilities Academy (SDA), held as part of the Content Teaching Academy at James Madison University, took place June 22–23, 2026. SDA welcomed 28 educators from a variety of localities and roles, including general and special education teachers, administrators, teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing, teachers of the blind/visually impaired, speech-language pathologists, and paraprofessionals.
- The updated Comparison Report on Language and Literacy Development of Children with Disabilities, Birth to Age Five is available on the VDOE website. The report, developed in coordination with VDDHH and DBHDS, compares language and literacy outcomes for children who are deaf or hard of hearing with their peers using existing state-reported data.
- The Virginia Supplemental Resource Guide for Families of Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VA SELLR-DHH) has been developed in coordination with VDDHH and DBHDS and is now available on the VDOE website. This series of resources includes charts and checklists families can use to support and track their child's early language and literacy development as well as contact information and website links for statewide supports in Virginia developed in collaboration with partnering agencies and programs. Communications announcing the release of the resource series are planned for September 3.
- The Annual Resources Update for Serving Students with Sensory Disabilities is currently under development and is expected to be available in early October.

Virginia Department of Education

Submitted by: Amy Scott

Mission: The mission of the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is to advance equitable and innovative learning. To ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed in life.

Updates:

- Based on the December 1, 2025, Child Count, 1,915 students received special education services under the disability category of Deafness/Hearing Impairment, and 42 students received services under Deaf-Blindness. Both counts include students identified under the primary, secondary, and tertiary disability categories.
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Virginia Project for Children and Youth with Deaf-Blindness:

Submitted by: Ira Padhye

Mission: The Virginia Project for Children and Young Adults with Deaf-Blindness (VDBP) is committed to supporting families, teachers, and service providers in their endeavors to improve outcomes for children and youth who experience both vision and hearing loss. Through providing technical assistance, training, and information, we aspire to improve the quality of life for people with deaf-blindness as they live in their homes, learn in their schools, socialize in their communities and access the services they choose.

Updates: No new updates.

Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH):

Submitted by: Eric Raff

Mission: The vision of VDDHH is a Commonwealth where persons who are deaf and hard of hearing can fully access and participate in all aspects of life without barriers. The Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) removes barriers to effective communication so that persons who are Deaf and hard of hearing can fully participate in programs and services throughout the Commonwealth.

Updates:

Deaf Mentor Coordinator – Paul Stuessy, Community Services Manager, continues to administer the program, provide support to Deaf Mentors and placed families with matched Deaf Mentors. The position description was revised, and a job bulletin was posted. VDDHH initiated a recruitment campaign seeking applicants.

Deaf Mentors - VDDHH had been recruiting 15 deaf adults for the 4th cohort of Deaf Mentors. Of the 7 adults who participated in the SKI-HI Deaf Mentor training, 6 adults became Deaf Mentor contractors and are being matched with families.

Deaf Mentor Operations – VDDHH created a part-time (wage) position, the Parent Advisor Coordinator, to be a liaison with parents and assist with the DM operations. A job bulletin was posted, and Teri Urban was hired to fill the position. VDDHH has drafted a web page to promote the Deaf Mentor.

Virginia Hands & Voices:

Submitted by: Terese Urban

Mission: Virginia Hands & Voices is a non-profit, 501(c)(3), parent-driven organization. We are dedicated to supporting families with children who are deaf and hard-of-hearing without bias around communication modes or methodology. Virginia Hands & Voices provides parents with the resources, networks, and information they need to improve communication access and educational outcomes for their children.

Updates: We have hosted multiple community events for families, professionals and adults who are deaf/hard of hearing:

- Movie Matinee - Toy Story with Open Captions, Virginia Beach
- Back to School Bash, Virginia Beach
- Back to School Bash, Richmond
- Back to School Bash partnering with Little Hands Pediatric Therapy, Aldie

Looking ahead, we have the following events planned:

- Teri and Hannah will attend the National Hands & Voices Leadership Conference, Colorado, September 17-19
- Exhibitor at VDDHH Open House, September 25 and 26
- Exhibit at Celebrate Communication, Springfield, September 26
- Author Showcase with Narita Snead, Fairfield Library, September 28 from 6-7pm
- Future collaborations with DHH Departments across school divisions o Frederick County Public Schools, Northwestern Regional Educational Center, Winchester, October 17 from 11am - 1 pm
- Christmas/Hanukkah Party, Hampton Roads and Northern VA
- Exhibitor at Friendship Circle's Disability Expo, Richmond Science Museum, January 10

Hands & Voices Headquarters secured anonymous funds to distribute to chapters using a competitive application process and Virginia was selected as a recipient! With the Strategic Boost funds we received, we will be opening up an application process to host at least six community events over the next twelve months, with at least two events partnering with school districts and at least two events in rural areas. After a decade of leadership, Teri Urban's term will end in December 2026 and she will be stepping off the Board and the VA EHDI Advisory Committee. We have been discussing succession planning and the next phase for our chapter during this transition. Our new board members in Virginia Beach, Fairfax and Shenandoah have brought great enthusiasm to the team and we have been enjoying their ideas and energy!

EHDI Regulatory Review & Voting

The committee conducted an extensive review of the proposed updates to the EHDI regulations. Its discussion focused on refining definitions, improving clarity, and ensuring inclusivity across various birthing settings and healthcare providers.

Members began by addressing added definitions and updated proposals. It was agreed that midwives should be explicitly included in the regulation language to ensure that births outside of hospitals are also covered under screening and referral requirements. This change aims to strengthen the language so that all infants, regardless of birth setting, can receive appropriate hearing screening services or referrals.

The committee reviewed several line-specific revisions. For lines 54-55, the group agreed to include midwives alongside hospitals to ensure comprehensive coverage. For line 130, the wording was changed from "his" to "the" to make the language more inclusive and accurate. It was noted that not all hospitals have a Chief Medical Officer (CMO), so the reference was broadened to include the terminology of Chief Executive Officer (CEO), ensuring representation for smaller hospitals.

In lines 147-156, the committee discussed defining "specialty care nurseries" and "well-baby nurseries." It was clarified that specialty care should include ABR and OAE testing, and that these definitions should appear earlier in the document for consistency.

For lines 157-164, the committee agreed that the language should be generic enough to apply to both inpatient and outpatient settings. Line 158 was revised to specify that infants who fail hearing screening in the well-baby nursery in one or both ears using ABR testing should receive subsequent testing using either ABR or diagnostically equivalent methods that assess cochlear neural function. The group emphasized verifying terminology consistency with the Joint Committee on Infant Hearing (JCIH) recommendations.

A new line (line 156) was added to clarify that infants who fail hearing screening in the NICU, including specialty care nursery services, in one or both ears using ABR testing must be referred for diagnostic audiological evaluation.

The committee took a lunch break at 12:21 PM and reconvened at 1:26 PM. Upon their return, it approved the presented definition for “specialty care nursery.” Lines 183-186 were updated to specify screening between 12-24 months of age, or sooner, based on JCIH recommendations.

Additional edits were made to ensure consistency throughout the document. The term “birthing places” was preferred over “facilities” to encompass all birth settings. References to “hospital” were omitted in line 400. Lines 544-548 were revised to remove the word “facilities.”

The committee also discussed the timing of referrals, noting that the current standard of “before 12 months” often results in premature referrals. The updated language now specifies 9-12 months or soon, aligning with JCIH recommendations. Line 188 was amended to include both “parent and guardian” for clarity and inclusivity.

Motions were made by Iskander (M1) and Greenwood (M2), followed by a roll call vote, where the committee was in unanimous agreement. The committee emphasized the importance of maintaining consistent terminology and definitions throughout the document to ensure clarity and accessibility for all stakeholders.

EHDI Updates

Due to time constraints, EHDI updates were tabled until the next meeting.

Data Presentation

Data on births and hearing screening results from 2020-2025 were shared. A trend was noted showing fewer days between initial screening and rescreening, correlating with the implementation of automated follow-up messages.

The committee discussed missing versus non-missing data across screening types. Out-of-facility birth settings were reviewed, and it was noted that missing records were more common among out-of-facility births. Follow-up improvements were recommended.

Public Comment

Urban emphasized the importance of informing parents about newborn hearing screenings.

Abbott shared that Hearing Loss Association of America’s (HLAA) Hearing Life magazine is expanding its pediatric and hard-of-hearing coverage.

Adjournment

Committee members were reminded of the next meeting dates of December 4, 2026, March 5, 2027, and June 4, 2027. Members were also reminded of the committee’s vacant seats.

A motion to adjourn was made by Levorson (M1) and Norcross (M2).

DRAFT