

WV Birth to Three Communications to the Field

Subject: BTT Payments
Released: March 24, 2008

Hello,

I know that everyone is concerned about the current status of payments. I have checked with the Finance office in order to be able to provide you with the most current information regarding the next payment.

I have been told that the next payment file, which will be the 1/24/08 EOP file, is expected to be paid this week.

I have tried over the past months to keep everyone as up to date as possible as I shared any information I had regarding payment status.

In this email, I'm including some talking points that I shared with the ICC at their meeting last week. These points explain where we get our current funding, the level of funding that we have, and the level that is needed to continue to provide Part C early intervention services given our current eligibility criteria.

The ICC members know this - and I want to be sure that everyone knows - that WV Birth to Three has received the highest ratings possible from the U.S. Department of Education regarding the effectiveness and accountability of West Virginia's Part C system for infants and toddlers with disabilities.

That only happens because state staff, local service practitioners, service coordinators, and our collaborative partners are working together to provide these quality services that make a difference in the development of our infants and toddlers with developmental delays.

Doing a good job, with effective outcomes for the increased numbers of children in need, does cost money.

While it is optional for states to participate under Part C of IDEA - when a state does participate, it must abide by all the rules and regulations. States are not allowed to have waiting lists for services, discontinue certain services, etc.

WV Birth to Three Finance Issues

- In the past year we have had numerous conversations about the financial challenges facing the BTT system operations.
- WV Birth to Three has provided information to keep local practitioners and state offices

updated regarding the financial situation.

- The primary cause of the fiscal issues is that the number of infants and toddlers with disabilities identified as in need of early intervention services continues to increase, with WV Birth to Three serving 2,000 more children annually than just five years ago.
- The medical community, specifically the AAP, is emphasizing the importance of identifying children with development delays as early as possible in order to reduce the need for future services, and to provide support during the first three years of life when brain development is greatest and can be impacted the most.
- West Virginia also has state demographics that lead to increased risk of developmental delay, which would project that WV would have a higher percentage of children in need of services than many other states.

Congressional funding for Part C of IDEA has not increased.

- Congressional funding for Part C of IDEA has not increased and the funding formula for allocating the federal funds is based on a state's population of infants and toddlers, not on the number or percentage that are served under Part C.
- West Virginia is projected to receive fewer federal IDEA dollars this year than we did 5 years ago - despite the increased numbers of children being served and increased accountability measures from the U.S. Department of Education.
- In 2003 West Virginia received \$2,153,453 in federal Part C funds. The projected allocation for the year beginning July 1, 2008 is \$2,135,437.
- The per child ratio of federal funds to number of children served in Part C/BTT has declined from \$1,458.48 in FFY 2001 to \$767.66 in FFY 2007 (calculations completed by Infant Toddler Coordinators Association, based on state's annual Part C allocation divided by Dec.1 child count figure).

West Virginia is fortunate to have been able to maximize opportunities to draw down other federal funds through Medicaid and Title V, without which we would be unable to maintain our system.

- However these funds along with Part C early intervention/BTT line item of \$3,000,000 in the State budget, are not sufficient to cover the costs of providing the services and all components of the system as required under Part C of IDEA.
- WV Birth to Three is projected to have a short fall of approximately \$3,000,000 this fiscal year (thus the reason for the delayed payments).

West Virginia, along with many other states, is struggling to find a way to manage the

increased costs associated with providing early intervention services for increased numbers of infants and toddlers with developmental delays and their families, within the federal requirements of IDEA.

- WV Birth to Three, as with other DHHR programs, must operate within the funding/budget that is provided.
- DHHR is committed to examining all options that will allow West Virginia to continue to provide early intervention services within available resources.

I'm sharing these updates because I want you to know where our funding comes from - you can see that I don't have control over allocating additional funding for BTT.

I know this doesn't help much to address the day to day problems that you have to deal with when payments are running at the current timeframe.

I also know that the last thing that I want to happen is to lose quality providers/service coordinators from our BTT system - because that affects outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. We have worked hard to get needed developmental services to children and families, even in the most rural parts of our state.

Please know that we recognize your commitment and we will all be working toward a successful resolution.

I will continue to try to provide updated information as it is available to me.

Thank you!

Pam

Pam Roush, Director
WV Birth to Three