

EHDI Newborn Hearing Screening Advisory Committee

Advisor Biographies

Updated 02/2019

Ingrid Aasan has worked in the field of special education for over 26 years. She is the Director of Special Education at Metro Educational Cooperative Service Unit (ECSU.) As such, she directs the Minnesota Low Incidence Projects (MN LIP) and is the Regional Low Incidence Facilitator (RLIF) for Region 11 (metro area.) As part of her work with the MN LIP, she supervises the Statewide EHDI Specialist, the Statewide DeafBlind Specialist and the staff of the Minnesota DeafBlind Project. She also works in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Education DHH State Specialist on many state initiatives and projects.

A Department of Education regional low-incidence facilitator representative

Rena Allen is a Public Health Nurse (PHN) at Dakota County. For 20 years she provided nursing home visiting services for families with children with special health needs. Since 2014 she has provided the local public health follow up for EHDI. She enjoys interacting with parents to provide support & connection to community resources. She participated in a MDH pilot project to create a plan of care based on the Omaha system. MDH implemented this plan of care for statewide EHDI follow-up. Her other roles at Dakota County include coordinating follow-up for family health intake, the Follow Along Program, & MDH birth records.

A representative from the early hearing detection and intervention teams

Kathy Anderson currently works as the Statewide EHDI Specialist under the MN Low Incidence Projects in addition to providing early intervention services to children with hearing loss and their families through Intermediate District 287. Together with the MN Department of Education Part C Coordinator and MDE State Deaf/Hard of Hearing Specialist, Kathy provides support, information resources, and staff development activities for early intervention programs and professionals statewide. She has worked with young Minnesota children with hearing loss and their families through the public school system for 35 years as a Teacher Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Speech Language Pathologist and LSLS Certified Auditory Verbal Therapist. Kathy has been a member/leader of MN's Regional EHDI Team(s) since 1999 and also participated in the MN Centers of Excellence Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CLD) Master Cadre training initiative.

A Department of Education regional low-incidence facilitator representative

Joan Boddicker is a parent of a daughter who is deaf and uses bilateral cochlear implants and Cued Speech as a mode of communication. She wishes her daughter had been screened as a newborn so they could have acted more quickly. Joan believes early access to language is critical for young children, and the newborn screening program is one of the best ways to insure that children have access to language from the very start. She is a strong advocate for families being presented with all options for communication so that they can make the best choice for their family based on their particular circumstances.

A consumer from an organization representing cued speech communication options

Nicole Brown is a certified pediatric nurse practitioner and has worked in Minnesota's Maternal and Child Health/Public Health field for over 15 years at both the state and local level. She has coordinated the Maternal Child Health Bureau's Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and Intervention grant at the Minnesota Department of Health since 2005. She is the MDH EHDI Follow-up Coordinator, facilitating ongoing supports and services for infants and children with hearing loss and their families. Nicole is also the parent of three young daughters; two of her daughters have a profound hearing loss.

A Department of Health early hearing detection and intervention coordinator

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Mary Cashman-Bakken has been involved in EHDI since she started her current job in 1992. At that time she worked with an informal group and feels MN has come a long way since then. Minnesota now has mandated screening, reporting and Regional EHDI teams but there still is much to do! Mary loves the way many people from inside and outside have come together to make this work. Early Hearing Detection and Intervention continues to be one of the highlights of her job.
A representative from the Dept of Education Resource Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Kirsten Coverstone is an audiologist specializing in Early Hearing Detection and Intervention. Kirsten has enthusiastically worked at the local, state, and national levels to promote universal newborn screening, timely follow-up for hearing, and early access to intervention. As part of the MDH EHDI program, she works directly with birth facilities to establish and maintain effective hearing screening programs, audiologists for timely follow-up & confirmation of hearing status, provides education and guidance to PCP clinics, and actively supports outreach to improve early hearing detection and intervention. In addition, Kirsten implemented a statewide hearing instrument loaner program for infants and young children in Minnesota. She serves as a member of the Joint Committee on Infant Hearing (JCIH), a board member for the Directors of Speech and Hearing Programs in State Health and Welfare Agencies (DSHPSHWA), is a member of the National CMV Foundation's Communications & Public Health Outreach Committee, & is Co-Chair of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) EHDI Data Committee. She is dedicated to making a difference in the lives of children and their families as the MDH EHDI Screening Program Coordinator.
A Department of Health early hearing detection and intervention coordinator

Laura Godfrey is a mother of a 16 year old son who was diagnosed with a severe hearing loss at birth. Laura is currently collaborating with the Minnesota Commission serving Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing individuals to evaluate the statewide system of disseminating materials for families with children aged birth to age 5. She served as a member and then the co-chair of Minnesota's Department of Human Services, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Board for 8 years. She has a passion for ensuring that all families with children that are Deaf or Hard of Hearing feel confident and empowered when making choices for their child. Laura has been involved with Minnesota Hands & Voices for almost 12 years and currently serves as the Director of MN Hands & Voices at Lifetrack. The primary focus of MN Hands & Voices is to provide support and unbiased information by trained Parent Guides to families just learning their child is deaf or hard of hearing, as well as supporting families with children of all ages.
A parent with a child with hearing loss, representing a parent organization

Hannah Herd is a pediatric audiologist at the University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital – Lions Children's Hearing and ENT Clinic. She earned her undergraduate degree from St. Olaf College where she participated in research on cochlear implant outcomes and had the opportunity to shadow and volunteer in the field of Aural Rehabilitation for children with hearing loss. She earned her Doctorate in Audiology at the University of Minnesota while working as a research assistant for the multi-disciplinary Lions Children's Hearing Center where she was able to observe complex cases and explore the wide range of outcomes for children with varying degrees and etiologies of hearing loss. As an audiologist, she engages daily with patients and families applying evidenced based practices and providing family centered care from the diagnosis of infants and children with hearing loss to treatment with hearing aids and cochlear implants. Additionally she has dedicated time to collaborate on research projects exploring the identification, management, and outcomes of childhood hearing loss.
Audiologist with experience in evaluation and intervention of infants and young children

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Tina Huang works as a neurotologist at the University of Minnesota, and often treats children with hearing loss. She is also part of the Lions' efforts to provide care to those children identified with hearing loss during newborn screening. Additionally, at least half of the cochlear implant patients in her fellowship in New York were children. These experiences have impressed upon Dr. Huang the importance of newborn screening and early identification of hearing loss.

An otolaryngologist

Colleen Ireland is a pediatric audiologist at the Mayo Clinic Health System in Mankato. She grew up in a rural community and did her doctorate schooling in Madison, WI. She is the coordinator of the newborn hearing screening program at Mayo Clinic Health System- Southwest Minnesota since 2015. This includes training technicians on inpatient screenings, meeting with pediatric physicians, and giving lectures on the importance of screening newborns, especially those that were home-birtherd. She developed an interest in pediatric audiology while fulfilling her externship year through Mayo Clinic. In addition to newborn hearing screening, she is passionate Auditory Brainstem Response testing and cochlear implants.

A birth hospital representative from a rural hospital

Kathryn Lein is a Speech-Language Pathologist who has 12 years of experience working with children and is currently employed in the Minnesota Public School District. Katie is the parent of a son who is deaf and uses bilateral cochlear implants to communicate. She is well aware that the newborn screening program is crucial in early identification and intervention of hearing loss. Personally and professionally, Katie recognizes that early intervention is essential in order to get children and their families the education and support they need, so that they can develop their communication skills. She personally recognizes the need for professional and family education regarding the early hearing detection and intervention process. Katie feels passionate about the education, access, and support of hearing related services to families and children with hearing loss.

A speech-language pathologist with experience in evaluation and intervention of infants and young children

Joscelyn Martin is a pediatric audiologist at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. She developed an interest in pediatric audiology while serving as a faculty member and preceptor at Northwestern University in the late 1990s. She has been coordinator of the newborn hearing screening program at Mayo Clinic since its inception in 1999. In addition to newborn hearing screening, she is passionate about child and family centered counseling, and the positive effect that it has on the diagnostic and re/habilitative process for the families with whom she works.

Audiologist with experience in evaluation and intervention of infants and young children

Abby Meyer is a pediatric otolaryngologist with Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota. She also serves in a leadership role at Children's as the Associate Medical Director of Audiology Services. She completed residency training in otolaryngology-head and neck surgery at the University of Minnesota followed by a fellowship in pediatric otolaryngology at Seattle Children's Hospital and the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington. In her practice at Children's Minnesota, she cares for many children with hearing loss and other ear-related conditions including performing cochlear implant surgery. She has a special interest in improving the evaluation and management of infants and children with hearing loss.

An otolaryngologist

Nathaniel Muesser-Herr is a pediatrician with Hennepin Healthcare where he teaches and supervises newborn care in their birth center. He has a background in ASL from undergraduate studies and he received his medical degree from SUNY Upstate in Syracuse, NY where he was an advocate for Deaf access in healthcare. He completed his pediatric residency at the University of Minnesota and focuses on primary care practice on supporting children previously cared for in the NICU and also children or families who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

A primary care provider with experience in the care of infants and young children

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Gloria Nathanson is a Deaf audiologist and a parent of four children, two of them Deaf. She obtained her self-directed B.S. degree in Language Development with Emphasis on Those with Hearing Loss from University of Minnesota and doctorate of audiology (Au.D) from Gallaudet University. She is an adjunct faculty member at Gallaudet and Associate Professor at St. Catherine University. Her passion for teaching and advocacy is reflected in her long-term goals of continuing to work with the state's EHDI and promoting more culturally sensitive practices in the general field of audiology. She also supports families as a mentor through Life Track's Deaf Mentor Family Program.

A representative of a consumer organization representing culturally Deaf persons

Jessica (Jesi) Novak is a pediatric audiologist at Children's Minnesota, St. Paul. She has been involved with the hearing screening process in many different aspects. While in graduate school in the Houston, Texas area, she worked as a newborn hearing screener at two of the area's largest birthing hospitals. Here in Minnesota, she continues to see infants for follow-up newborn hearing screenings. She also completes diagnostic testing, fitting and evaluation for hearing aids and cochlear implants, and provides re/habilitation services for children of all ages. Jesi strives to be family and child centered, focusing her treatment to meet the family's goals, no matter what they may be.

An audiologist with experience in evaluation and intervention of infants and young children

Sara Oberg is a certified speech-language pathologist at Regions Hospital and for over nine years at the University of Minnesota Medical Center, Fairview. She is specialized in evaluating and providing aural rehabilitation and speech-language therapy to children and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing and have hearing aids and/or cochlear implants. She is further specialized in voice disorders and provides evaluations, laryngeal exams (with videoendoscopy and videostroboscopy), and therapy for individuals with voice disorders. She previously conducted evaluations and provided therapy for individuals who have had traumatic brain injuries, strokes, and dysphagia. The majority of her time is spent giving aural rehabilitation and speech-language therapy at Regions Hospital. She received her bachelor's degrees in Vocal Performance and Music Education (grades K-12) and master's degree in Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences from the University of Minnesota. Sara has also earned a Certificate in Vocology from the National Center for Voice and Speech in Denver, Colorado, through the University of Iowa as well as a Certificate in Vocal Pedagogy from the University of Minnesota. For over five years she evaluated children to see if they were cochlear implant candidates for the Lions Children's Hearing Center. In 2011, Sara started and continues to lead as a volunteer an Adult Cochlear Implant Social Group, because many individuals expressed feeling isolated and/or the desire to connect with others who have hearing loss or have lost their hearing and have received a cochlear implant. Sara has personally been involved with the Deaf community since she was born, because her grandparents had accidents and lost their hearing at ages 5 and 14. She considers herself proficient, but not fluent in American Sign Language. Sara has been immersed in the Deaf culture her entire life and is very passionate about this community and making a positive difference in helping all of them reach their full potential.

A speech-language pathologist with experience in evaluation and intervention of infants and young children

Anna R. Paulson is the Coordinator of Educational Advancements and Partnerships with the Commission for Deaf, Deaf Blind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans. Anna's role within the commission is to coordinate the priorities and initiatives of the fifty stakeholders who participate in the Minnesota Collaborative Plan. The purpose of the Collaborative Plan is to improve educational outcomes so that each student, upon graduation, is prepared to enter the adult workforce or continue his/her education and be a productive member of the community. Prior to joining the commission, Anna was an Educational Specialist at the University of Minnesota; Department of Educational Psychology in the teacher preparation program for deaf/hard of hearing education. Anna has been involved in Part C and the EHDI system since its inception and is passionate about the collaborative work necessary to further advance EHDI for children and families.

Minnesota Commission Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing People representative

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Emilee Scheid is a Physician Assistant-Certified and has worked in Family Medicine for 10 years. She also has experience in NICU and Pediatrics both as a PA-C and EMT-B. In addition to her professional experience, she is a parent of 8 year old Elizabeth who has moderate-severe bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. She personally has experience with the healthcare system, school system and local resources that have helped her child grow. She is a strong advocate in Family Medicine to guide the providers to educate and promote follow up for the newborn hearing screen.

A primary care provider with experience in the care of infants and young children

Lisa A. Schimmenti is a Professor of Pediatrics and Senior Associate Consultant in the Departments of Otorhinolaryngology and Clinical Genomics at the Mayo Clinic. Dr. Schimmenti received her undergraduate degree from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. She received her medical degree from Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. She completed her pediatric residency at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, Torrance, California and her fellowship in Genetics and Metabolism at the University of Minnesota. . She provides genetic services for children and adults with hearing loss and other genetic conditions. Dr. Schimmenti conducts research in understanding the genetic basis of hearing and vision loss. Her research efforts have been funded by the National Institutes of Health and the March of Dimes.

A pediatric geneticist

Sonny Wasilowski is treasure of the Faribault Deaf Club. He attended Minnesota State University and Gallaudet University. Sonny worked closely with the Commission Serving Deaf/Deaf-Blind/Hard of Hearing Minnesotans for universal newborn hearing screening legislation in Minnesota. Sonny is currently an account executive at Communication Service for the Deaf in Faribault, MN.

A representative of a consumer organization representing culturally Deaf persons

Jay Wyant is a past president of the board of the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (AG Bell), Northern Voices, and the Hearing Society, a non-profit audiology clinic. For over a decade, he wrote a monthly technology column for AG Bell's national magazine, Volta Voices. Passionate about accessibility and maximizing opportunities for people with disabilities, Jay has presented on self-advocacy and communications technology, among other topics. Since 2012, Jay has served as the State's first Chief Information Accessibility Officer, or CIAO! Profoundly deaf since birth, Wyant was mainstreamed in first grade and wishes CART had been around when he was in college.

A consumer from an organization representing oral communication options