

South Dakota Department of Education's
Administrative Review
Birth to Three Connections Program

Second Quarterly Report
October 1 – December 31, 2009

Introduction: The Joint Committee on Appropriations directed the Department of Education to provide four quarterly reports on the activities related to the recommendations which were set forth in the Administrative Review of the Birth to Three Connections program. The following report provides an update on activities during the October – December 2009 quarter.

Recommendation #1: Provide additional training for Birth to Three providers on Medicaid: how to bill for Birth to Three services; and understanding Medicaid's definition of Medical Necessity. The training should be open to both providers and parents.

Background: Birth to Three Connections' providers were confused about the billing process and Medicaid's definition for determining 'medical necessity.' It was the consensus of the workgroup that more training and education was needed. The Department of Social Services agreed to schedule and provide training specifically for Medicaid requirements and archive the training for future use.

July – September 2009 quarter: Medicaid training completed. See last quarter's report for details at <http://doe.sd.gov/oess/Birthto3/index.asp> .

Update for October – December 2009 quarter: New service providers are encouraged to access the online Medicaid training at <http://doe.sd.gov/oess/Birthto3/index.asp> . The online training seems to be working well. To date there have been no major concerns from providers about billing Medicaid.

Recommendation #2: Establish a flat fee per service for travel time reimbursement and structure the administrative rule so that the travel time reimbursement rates increase at the same rate of provider inflation.

Background: A flat rate for travel time would ensure correct billing for travel time and simplify the process. It was the consensus of the workgroup that ARSD 24:14:04:13 be revised as proposed by the Department of Education and that the flat rate would increase at the same rate as the provider inflationary increase.

July – September 2009 quarter: A proposed change to ARSD 24:14:04:13 was presented to the Board of Education. The proposed change would result in Birth to Three providers being paid a flat travel reimbursement rate. The change would simplify the way in which travel time reimbursement is calculated and eliminate the opportunity to base travel time reimbursement on varying codes and rates within a particular discipline. The proposed flat rates would not have a detrimental effect on the overall Birth to Three budget.

Update for October – December 2009 quarter: The travel time administrative rule was amended on December 8, 2009, to establish a flat rate based on 90% of the most commonly billed rate for a particular discipline. The new travel time rate became effective January 1, 2010.

24:14:04:13. Reimbursement for travel time. Travel time to and from service provision sites is reimbursed to the early intervention service provider at a flat rate as provided in this section. All other early intervention services not specified in this section are reimbursed at a travel time rate of \$13.14 per unit.

Services	Travel Time Rate
Physical and Occupational Therapy, Evaluations and Meetings	\$13.14 per unit
Speech and Language Therapy, Evaluations and Meetings	\$11.53 per unit
Assistive Technology, Evaluations and Meetings	\$13.14 per unit
Family Training, Counseling, and Home Visits	\$11.18 per unit
Health Services, Evaluations and Meetings	\$10.86 per unit
Nutrition Services, Evaluations and Meetings	\$11.50 per unit
Social Work Services, Evaluations and Meetings	\$11.18 per unit
Special Instruction, Evaluations and Meetings	\$7.20 per unit
Service Coordination, Evaluations and Meetings	\$7.20 per unit

Flat rates for travel time in this section are calculated at 90% of the most commonly billed early intervention rates pursuant to § 24:14:04:12. The flat rate for travel time, as described above, is effective January 1, 2010.

Source: 26 SDR 153, effective May 22, 2000; 28 SDR 105, effective January 31, 2002; 35 SDR 82, effective October 22, 2008; 36 SDR 96, effective December 8, 2009.

General Authority: SDCL [13-37-1.1](#)

Recommendation #3: Charging family fees for Birth to Three services is not feasible.

Background: Based on the analysis of the limited number of families who could be charged a fee, the amount of revenue which could be generated, and the negative impact charging a family fee could have on children, the workgroup recommended imposing no family fees.

July – September 2009 quarter: The Department of Education is proposing legislation to establish a fund for donations to the Birth to Three program. This would provide a way for families to voluntarily contribute to the program if they chose to do so.

Update for October – December 2009 quarter: SB 22, if passed by the 2010 Legislature, will establish a fund for donations to the Birth to Three program. The fund would provide a way for families to voluntarily contribute to the program if they chose to do so.

Senate Bill 22

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to establish a fund for the collection of donations to the birth to three program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA:

Section 1. There is hereby created in the state treasury a separate fund known as the birth to three donation fund. Any contribution or donation received from any source for the purpose of providing services to children participating in the birth to three program within the Department of Education shall be deposited in the fund.

Section 2. Moneys within the birth to three donation fund may only be used for activities related to the birth to three program. The secretary of education shall approve vouchers and the state auditor shall draw warrants to pay expenditures authorized by this Act.

Additional Activities:

As part of its continued commitment to outreach, the Department of Education, Birth to Three program, has conducted the following activities:

July – September 2009 quarter

- The Birth to Three director met personally with the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit staff at Sanford Health, Avera McKennan, and Rapid City Regional hospitals to provide information about the new eligibility criteria for premature infants, and the referral process.

- The Birth to Three program is working in conjunction with South Dakota Parent Connection to develop a DVD for parents on early intervention services.
- Expanded child find activities, professional development, equipment, and additional personnel for regional Birth to Three programs have been funded using Part C ARRA funds.
- Using Part C ARRA funds, the Birth to Three program is in the process of purchasing Otoacoustic Emission (OAE) screeners for each Service Coordinator so that children from birth to age 3 are screened systematically for hearing issues.
- The Birth to Three staff provided a workshop on early intervention services at the annual Parents' Conference in Rapid City.

October – December 2009 quarter

- The Birth to Three staff conducted four (4) regional provider workshops during the October – December quarter. The workshops were held in Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Aberdeen, and Pierre. Approximately 70 providers attended the workshops. Providers submitted questions and concerns in advance so that written responses to each question could be provided as a handout at the workshops.

The workshops included such topics as educational vs. medical models of service provision; evaluation vs. assessment; when and how to change services for a child; the process for graduating a child early from the program; using the BDI-2 to determine eligibility; and the billing process for services.

The workshops provided an opportunity for providers and staff to meet in person and discuss particular concerns which may not have been addressed during the meeting. The workshops were well received. The Birth to Three program plans to continue the workshops on an annual basis.

The Q & A document which was used as a discussion guide for the workshops has been posted on the Birth to Three Connections website at <http://doe.sd.gov/oess/Birthto3/index.asp> for on-going reference.

- OAE Hearing Screeners were purchased with ARRA funds for all Birth to Three Service Coordinators. The screeners will be used to identify hearing issues at the initial screening of a child and again at the child's

annual review. The hearing screen will indicate whether the child should be referred for a full audiological evaluation.