

July 2024
President's Notes



Dear Membership,

I hope this message finds you all doing well and enjoying your summer! It is hard to believe the National EHDI conference and DSHPSHWA meeting took place over three months ago. Each year it is always a great way to reconnect with old friends, meet new people, connect with our national partners and catch up on the latest best practices, research, and ways all of you are creating a sustainable system within your state or territory. It renews our energy and gives us ideas that we may be able to implement in our own states! Now we are plugging along again at 100 miles per hour doing all things EHDI.

Years ago, when I served as your DSHPSHWA President I started sending out President's Notes, as a way to share all the work the DSHPSHWA Board does throughout the year on your behalf and to keep you informed of new resources, learning opportunities, and request feedback or input into the next annual meeting. I am returning to that format as your President one last time. First things first, I want to say thank you to the 2023-2024 DSHPSHWA board members. They worked hard to meet the goals outlined in the yearly strategic plan and make our annual meeting in Colorado a success! I know I could not have done it, when I had to step in last minute to facilitate the meeting, without their support in taking notes, being a runner, greeter, photographer, providing updates to membership about our important work and the list goes on. You underestimate how much time and planning goes into our meeting each year until you are a part of it, so THANK YOU!

Next, I would like to welcome all the new board members elected to serve on the DSHPSHWA Board. With new board members comes an opportunity to build on the work of past board members and generate new ideas. We have had a couple of board meetings already and I could feel the energy! I also want to say welcome to the EHDI community to all of you new EHDI coordinators out there. You will come to love this community and the support from your peers! Never hesitate to reach out as we are all here to help.

I would also like to thank all of you that contributed to our work group activity at the annual meeting in March when you made suggestions on how DSHPSHWA could improve their work on your behalf. A few of the ideas were already included in the strategic plan and new ideas have been incorporated following our first two meetings either through advocacy efforts through advisory committee assignments or activities we have planned in the months ahead. I have summarized some of the activities we have been working on below.

Advisory Committees

Various board members have been invited to serve on the following committees this year and in many cases already attended a meeting or will be in the next month:

- Joint Committee on Infant Hearing
- Health Care Economics Committee
- Audiology Quality Consortium
- Parent Choice Alliance
- Deaf and Hearing of Hearing Alliance
- Implementation and Change Center (ICC)

- Family Leadership in Language and Learning Center (FL3)
- Provider Education Center (PEC)

We met with our national partners (CDC, HRSA) and the new technical assistance centers (ICC, FL3, PEC) at the DSHPSHWA board meeting in May and will be meeting with them quarterly in an effort to keep each other informed about various initiatives and collaborate where possible, while avoiding duplicative efforts.

National EHDl Meeting

Planning is already underway for the national EHDl meeting being held March 9-11 in Pittsburgh, PA. If you have ideas for plenary speakers who will appeal to many conference attendees, is a topic that will help improve EHDl systems of care or is engaging/interesting, please send your suggestions to the DSHPSHWA email, board@dshpshwa.org, and we will submit your suggestions at an upcoming planning meeting.

Something we are also doing is exploring collaboration with the technical assistance centers hosting the EHDl coordinator meeting. I had the pleasure of meeting with Tawny Holmes Hlibok two weeks ago to discuss ways we can collaborate at the national meeting next year to engage coordinators, share best practices utilized across the nation and provide resource information to support ongoing efforts by all of you to build a sustainable system of care. Stay tuned. There will be more to come. In the meantime, if you have ideas for topical areas that would be helpful to you in your states or territories at the DSHPSHWA membership meeting or EHDl coordinator meeting, please let us know at board@dshpshwa.org,

DSHPSHWA Website

You heard it correctly, we have an updated website, <https://dshpshwa.org>, and we are excited to share it with all of you. You can go there to meet the board officers, review the strategic plan, see president's notes, learn more about the organization and partnerships with other entities, including the various committees where you have representatives working on your behalf. It is a work in progress, but we hope to continue to build on its contents and make this a resource you can add to your arsenal. Other items in the works, to be included on the website, includes the DSHPSHWA Directory. Some of you may recall, the directory includes a picture of each EHDl coordinator/director and follow-up coordinator or designee for each state and territory. It has all their contact information. It is a great way to connect with other states and learn about their programming or know who to contact to make referrals for families moving to another state. The directory also includes our federal partners and their contact information. If you did not get your picture taken at the national EHDl meeting in March, please email a head shot to Liza Then who is lead on directory development at liza.then@health.ri.gov. If you have pictures from any of the annual DSHPSHWA meetings in the past that you don't mind sharing, please send those our way. We plan to add more pictures soon.

Mentoring

We have a small workgroup currently finalizing procedures and content for mentoring new EHDl coordinators. Suzanne Foley from Indiana and Marcia Fort from North Carolina are taking the lead. The mentoring will be similar to efforts in the past with outreach and ongoing support as new coordinators navigate grant or cooperative agreement requirements, data sharing agreements, reports, program evaluation, programming, family support, databases and more. Current mentors include Tammy O'Hollearn, Marcia Fort, Liza Then, Linda Hazard and Bradley Bakken. Brian Shakespeare also served as a mentor until his most recent departure. We have had two more coordinators reach out in the last couple of weeks and volunteer to serve! If you have been in the position of EHDl coordinator for at least three years, and you would like to mentor new coordinators as they are hired, please reach out to DSHPSHWA by emailing board@dshpshwa.org. We do our best to match coordinators based on region, experience and availability.

EHDI Chats

The overwhelming majority of EHDI Coordinators have said they want this meeting to continue. The DSHPSHWA board believes this fits within the mission and strategic plan of our organization and are working to finalize a new name, put together a small workgroup and a final schedule so these meetings can return in the fall. Most likely the meetings will be held every two months and more often, as needed during grant writing or other times where coordinators feel the need for more support. The meetings will only be for EHDI coordinators or designee. We will work hard to continue the rich history of making the meetings a safe space where coordinators can come to talk about all things EHDI without our national partners, discuss challenges, opportunities for collaboration, learn from each other, share best practices, support one another, celebrate the wins and cheer each other on during difficult times both within EHDI, as well as our personal lives. We are all so busy, so we need your help to make this a success! We are looking for volunteers to assist with facilitation of the meetings and planning. If you are interested, please reach out to us at board@dshpshwa.org. It is a pretty easy way to get involved and contribute to the DSHPSHWA mission without being a board member (just yet anyway). We are also looking for a new name. Send us your suggestions! We cannot see the creative names you come up with!

Finally, I want to leave you with this message: please take care of yourselves and each other. Self-care is important as we navigate the challenges of our roles and responsibilities as coordinators. We know this job is difficult as we are often answering to or being pulled in multiple directions with limited resources by our national, state, local partners and families all while navigating bureaucracy and dealing with life events outside the office or at home. Self-care is what sustains our energy and motivation and can be a tool of resilience to help us move through challenging times. Kindness is always helpful too, especially in this day and age. Thanks for all you do!

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tammy O'Hollearn". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Tammy O'Hollearn
DSHPSHWA President