

A Few Good Pediatric Audiologists: Working with What You Have

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Challenges in California

- Shortage of Qualified Pediatric Audiologists
- Discrepancies in Practice Patterns
- Delays in Diagnosis



Multipronged Approach for Quality Improvement



NICU Refer Process



- Qualified pediatric audiology clinics were impacted; families waited months for initial appointments.
- Approximately half of all babies from the NICU were found to have normal hearing.
- Changed the requirements from diagnostic referral to Outpatient Hearing Screening for babies from the NICU
 - ABR required

One-on-One Consultation

- State Audiologists provide direct education to clinical audiologists on a case-by-case basis
- Hearing Coordination Centers (HCC) identify outlier cases and/or patterns outside of current standard of practice



Newsletters

- Periodic bulletin to audiology providers
- Solicited community audiologists for topics of interest to them
- Provide updates on:
 - Current standard of practice
 - JCIH update
 - NPI conversion
 - Billing
 - Promote access to our website and provide consultant contact information
 - Expansion of the California Newborn Hearing Screening Program
 - Cochlear Implant Candidacy and referral process

Collaboration with CA Speech Pathology and Audiology Licensing Board

- Partnered with the Board to promote the current standard of practice in audiology
- Sought their advice for substandard care
- Option to report a provider for investigation
 - Extreme last resort; prefer to work with and educate providers.



Personal Assistance with Claims



- Audiology consultant reviews provider claims
- Guide providers through problems from incorrect billing process
- Resolution of claims issues by state fiscal intermediary or authorizations that were issued incorrectly.

Conference Outreach



- Promotion of California program and resources at local, state and regional conferences
 - AAA
 - Alexander Graham Bell
 - ASHA
 - EHDI
 - Local NCHAM programs
 - Northern CA Cochlear Implant Conference
 - Training for California Children's Services Administrators and case managers

Teleaudiology Pilot Project

- Problem: Severe paucity of qualified pediatric audiologists in the rural northern region of the state
- Solution: MCHB grant to implement a teleaudiology pilot project
- Partnering with the University of California, Davis as the host site
- Primary Goal: reduce the loss to follow up by 50% in the region



Audiology Symposium

- July 2009 Newport Beach, CA
- 96 Participants; including speakers and guests
- One and a half days of instruction and participation in Guideline revision
 - Ice breakers: Mad Gabs, Jeopardy and Beach Ball games



Audiology Symposium

- Revision of the California Infant Audiology Assessment Guidelines
 - Divided participants in to 12 small workgroups; approximately 6 people per group
 - Designated a leader for each group who was responsible for making sure the discussion stayed on topic, moved along and delivered notes/materials to the conference organizers
 - CA audiologists had lots of input into the revision, including a follow-up comment period on the draft document.

Audiology Symposium

- Guideline Revision Summary
 - Small group format was implemented for two reasons:
 1. Revision of the document as stated
 2. To allow discourse among the participants; discussion of various approaches to clinical practice can be and was very educational.



Audiology Symposium

- Lessons learned:
 - There is an interest in the community for continuing education, especially for pediatric topics
 - Offering CEUs will generate even more interest
 - Chose a location that has a high concentration of audiologists
 - Evaluate resources within your own state.
 - Speakers: Alison Grimes, Yvonne Sininger, Margaret Winter
 - Access to the Executive Office of the licensing Board was very well received
 - The Board was also instrumental in helping publicize the event
 - If possible, work with an experienced conference planner
 - 1½ days was not long enough

Successes and Failures in CA



- NCHAM workshops weren't as well received initially as we'd hoped
 - CA audiologists cited time commitment as a problem
 - Criticism for not utilizing resources within California for teaching.
- Funding issues continue to plague our state
 - Long wait times for appointments
- Lack of Au.D. programs limits the number of new audiologists

Successes and Failures in CA

- Positive reactions to the Audiology Bulletins
- Good response to one-on-one consultations and claims assistance.
- Great feedback from our audiologists on the symposium
 - Practice pattern change



Looking to the Future...

- State EHDI conference if awarded CDC funds
- Outcome of the Teleaudiology Pilot Project will determine feasibility of expansion to other parts of the state
- Continued work with individual providers to promote the standard of care
- Continued collaboration with other state agencies to support our providers



Questions?

