

NIA NEWSLETTER

Providing Unmistakable Value

IMPORTANT DATES

November 30, 2021

Written notification of significant reduction to the FY23 service request (>1.0 FTE) due to NIA.

February 15, 2022

NIA provides the results of annual needs assessment to all partners.

March 30, 2022

Final request for FY23 services due to NIA.



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Partners,

It is an honor to serve each of your districts this year! I speak on behalf of my entire team when I tell you we feel amazingly fortunate to be invited to work alongside your teams.

Customer Satisfaction Survey:

NIA seeks to create "unmistakable value" for our partners by using partner feedback to improve our processes and by providing hard-to-find, specialized services. Thanks to each partner who gave open and honest feedback this year. We share the spring survey results with you soon and use your feedback to create action plans for making our services better next year.

FY22 Service Meetings:

This year nearly all partners participated in our annual service discussions for next year. We have received lots of feedback supporting the Zoom format for these meetings as they can be efficiently organized and save you valuable travel time. **If you have not already turned in your signed Request for Service, the deadline is March 30th, 2022.**

NIA plans new BCBA Service for 2022-2023

BCBA services are the number one requested service from our partners and we are excited about offering this new service for next year. As of this writing, we are in the planning phase of this project. We look forward to providing more detailed information in the coming months. In the meantime, if you are interested in purchasing this service for next year, don't hesitate to email or call me to discuss.

Thanks again for your ongoing partnership. As always, please don't hesitate to reach out if there is anything I can do to help support your schools.

JON

DID YOU KNOW...



NIA offers expert support and consultation to assist you with providing professional development for your Speech Pathologists? And did you also know that NIA provides support for your Autism Teams?

Cindy Poegel has 21 years of experience in the field of school-based speech-language pathology. She holds the ISBE supervisory endorsement and is approved by ISBE to complete staff evaluations. She currently provides supervision services for 20 member districts within the NIA region. In addition to staying current on research and trends in school-based speech-language pathology, Cindy keeps a close watch on rules and regulations within ISBE, IDFP, Medicaid FFS, and ASHA that impact school-based service delivery and licensure requirements for SLPs. [Click here](#) to see a sample of the support she provides to district SLP teams as she discusses eligibility and [click here](#) to see her with a team discussing classroom supports related to science vocabulary.

NIA also provides expert support and training for your Autism Teams. In addition to her expertise in Speech-Language Pathology, Cindy has been leading our Autism Support Team for about 8 years. During this time she has spent many hours researching evidence-based practice in Autism as well as annually attending many hours of continuing education related to supporting educational teams and students to maximize student success. [Click here](#) to see a sample of how Cindy supports educators during her visits.

SURVEY SAYS:

At NIA we believe what gets measured, matters! Our current survey data is below. The survey questions and results are based on a 5 point scale.

Our Employee Engagement Survey (EE Survey) measures the engagement level of all our employees. The Member District Satisfaction Survey (MDSS Survey) measures how our district partners are feeling about NIA's services and procedures. It is considered our customer satisfaction survey. Our Customer Satisfaction increased from 4.67 to 4.82. We believe this increase was largely due to the mutual communication efforts and partnership during COVID planning. Thank you for your feedback and continued support!

**APRIL 2021
EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT
OVERALL MEAN
4.63**

**OCTOBER 2021
CUSTOMER
SATISFACTION
OVERALL MEAN
4.82**

NIA Satisfaction Trending Data



3 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT FINANCE

1. Our Business Strategy Team has put together the FY22 Service Rates Guide to provide our partners high-level financial information. As a brief summary NIA spends 93% of our annual budget on salaries and benefits. NIA continues to review salary and compensation plans regularly, and we adjust these plans according to current market conditions. We hope this information is useful for decision making and procurement of Special Education services in the future. The FY22 Service Rates Guide can be downloaded at: www.thenia.org/newsletters.

2. As you may know, the Illinois Medicaid Program Guidelines require an 85% moment response rate for the Random Moment in Time Study. Although only an 85% response rate is required, NIA is committed to achieving a 100% moment response rate and we recently met this goal for the October-December quarter. Achieving this goal allows NIA to maximize our Medicaid funding. NIA utilizes this funding to offset our expenditures and maintain competitive Service Rates for our customers.

3. The Finance Department is in the process of reviewing our customer billing information. Shortly you will receive a brief survey that will help us to update our customer contact information for billing purposes. We appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey. We want to make sure our billing process goes smoothly for you.



NIA REGIONAL CLINICS

NIA Provides a variety of clinics within our communities and districts to support our student's low incidence needs. Despite COVID, in school year 2021-2022, NIA provided clinics, at no charge to families, to support hearing, vision, orthopedic and durable medical equipment needs. These clinic are available to all students within our 10 county region.

VISION CLINICS

NIA sponsors Difficult-To-Test Vision clinics in collaboration with its member districts. We have 10 Clinics set up this spring. Examples of students served are those who have physical or multiple disabilities, are deaf or hard of hearing, have limited expressive communication skills, or have difficult behaviors. Often there is not a local eye doctor who is skilled in providing services to this population.

There is no cost to the parent for attendance at the Clinic. The clinics are designed to provide one-time-only optometric examinations. There should be some questions regarding the student's vision that prompts the referral. The clinics are provided on-site in a school building or local administration center.

With parental consent, the student can be dilated to fully evaluate eye health and provide an accurate prescription for glasses, if needed. If a prescription is written, it is the responsibility of the parent, with appropriate support from the district, to pursue obtaining the glasses. The district is responsible for payment to the doctor for services and mileage. Questions can be directed to Jean Deptolla at jdeptolla@thenia.org or by phone 779-248-1945

AUDIOLOGY CLINIC

We have updated our brochures to reflect changes on our office locations. Click her for updated [Audiology brochure](#).

ORTHOPEDIC CLINIC

The NIA Orthopedic Clinic is free and available to students from all districts that NIA serves who may have difficulty accessing/paying for specialist care. We typically offer our clinic on a monthly basis at Hope Wall School in District 129. During each clinic we have an orthopedic doctor and physical therapist present to assess the students' needs. The doctor may complete a brief assessment of the student and perform other services such as recommending orthotics, suggesting x-rays, and occasionally recommending surgery or follow-up with a different specialist. NIA keeps a list of students in need of these services and schedules them in the next available clinic whenever possible.

Despite the challenges of the 2021-2022 school year, we have held 4 clinics and seen 34 students. We have at least 3 more clinics planned through the remainder of the school year.

DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT CLINIC

The NIA collaborates with DME vendors facilitate student access to proper fitting equipment. These visits focus on wheelchair and seating evaluations, equipment repairs and input for other equipment to improve access to the school environment. To date, we have completed 84 in person DME clinic visits. Students are seen by equipment specialists and their PT. These visits are provided at no charge to the district.

PROGRAM UPDATES

AUDIOLOGY, DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING ITINERANTS AND INTERPERTERS

The Aurora Noon Lions Signing Santa event returned this year at Luigi's Family Fun Center! East and West Aurora DHH team members were able to connect with students and their families.



SIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES FOR FAMILIES AND EDUCATORS

Family Sign Language Classes are starting up in St. Charles and remotely. Sign language classes are taught by certified interpreters or educators and run for 8-10 weeks. We are running both on site and virtual classes this year. CPDUs are available for educators. For more information or to register, please visit our Workshop page on our website: <https://www.thenia.org/workshops-continuing-education/>

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PROGRAM

The NIA DHH Program has a total of 48 students from 16 school districts. The high school students are back to community trips! Future trips include Meijer, Aldi, Fitness Center and Platt Nursery. We have had several guest Zoom speakers to help plan for life after high school.

Many of our students are using AAC devices to improve receptive and expressive communication at school and at home. These devices are provided by the district.



TECH UPDATES

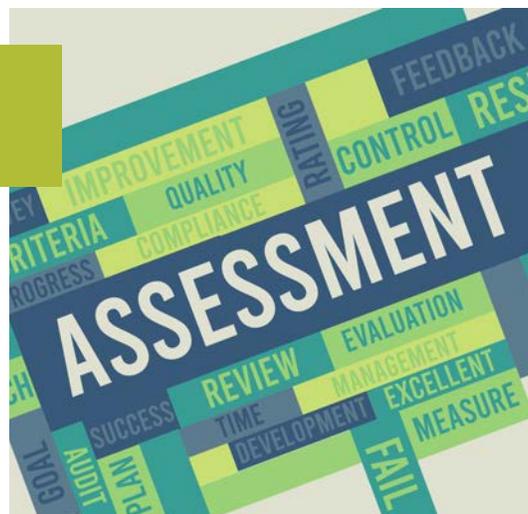


NEW INTRANET

The Tech Department is currently working with various NIA teammate led committees to build a new intranet. The new platform will be an intranet, social network and collaboration platform all in one place. It will provide a single source of information, applications and knowledge together in one easily structured and searchable platform. The platform will enable teammates to connect and engage with one another by letting them form channels and pages around projects, interests and areas of study. We will have 40 beta testers in April and May and gather their feedback for a full deployment in August.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

NIA is currently collecting feedback about the Needs Assessment process. We will begin working with multi-disciplinary teams to improve the process by streamlining systems and eliminating data silos. The goal is to be able to provide our districts complete and accurate information in the most efficient process possible. If you have feedback, please contact Rebecca Moody, Jill Tabone or Jon Malone so we can potentially incorporate your recommendations into our future processes.



IMPROVING ACCESS TO DATA

As we continue to eliminate data silos, we are improving accessibility to data reporting. We are currently at the very beginning stages of planning data reporting and dashboarding needs. The goal is to provide cloud access data to various stakeholders at the click of a button. If you have feedback, please contact Rebecca Moody, Jill Tabone or Jon Malone so we can potentially incorporate your recommendations into our future processes.