The Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia (ITCVA) action report series focuses on efforts underway to improve the long-term sustainability of Virginia’s Part C early intervention system. You’ve told us about the fiscal challenges and provider shortages you are facing on the local level. We hear you, we understand you, we appreciate your hard work, and we are working on your behalf every day to address these challenges. These are challenges we have faced and successfully addressed before in the ITCVA, and we can do it again by working together and focusing on actionable strategies to make improvements.

**Actions to address Medicaid managed care challenges:**

- The EI-MCO Workgroup convened by the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards (VACSB) met again on January 23. During the January meeting, the group continued to work on identifying the most efficient ways for local systems to submit the Decline to Bill form, when needed, and to request interpreters.
- DMAS has developed a chart that covers all of the process topics discussed through the VACSB workgroup and details the specific points on which each MCO will provide a brief description. MCOs have submitted the requested information, and DMAS has been working to ensure each procedure is clear. Once clarification is complete, the local Part C systems will receive a copy of the final process document.
- In order to address ongoing denials of claims for reimbursement code T-1024 (IFSP reviews and assessments after the initial), DMAS sent clarification to all MCOs in January specifying that this code, along with T-1023 and T-2022, must be excluded from the requirement for the billed service to be listed on the child’s IFSP.
- The new provider roster process that allows local systems to submit one roster to DMAS, rather than submitting to every MCO, went into effect in January. DMAS is working with local systems and MCOs to continue refining the template and the process, as needed. DMAS will be adding a tab to the roster spreadsheet with local system manager contact information to facilitate communication from MCOs back to local systems. Once DMAS has received a roster from all local systems, local system managers will only have to submit changes to the roster each month.

**Actions to address provider shortages:**

- Representatives from Virginia’s Early Intervention Professional Development Team and ITCVA state office met in December with representatives from New York to learn more about an academic partnership they have established between the state and city universities and the New York City Bureau of EI. The partnership addresses early intervention preparation in college and university OT, Speech, Special Education and Social Work programs. Interesting ideas from New York’s program that we will consider as we explore options for building Virginia’s early intervention work force include the following: (1) establishing foundational early intervention
concepts to be covered in all partner university programs; (2) regular meetings among the participating university programs and the early intervention office; (3) a student field work manual; and (4) connecting universities with people in early intervention who might be interested in faculty positions.

Actions to address broader fiscal picture:

- The new infrastructure work group met for the first time on January 16 and will meet monthly moving forward. As a first step, this group will be collecting information from and about all local systems to understand how local systems are structured, the mechanism(s) they use to maximize revenue and how well that is working, and other local factors that impact revenue and costs. This data will inform next steps.
- The Governor’s proposed budget includes additional funding for early intervention in the current fiscal year, as well as increases in 2021 and 2022. In addition, there is budget amendment language in both the House and Senate to increase the rate for early intervention case management. We are closely monitoring the budget process to see how these proposed increases fare.
- At the national level, federal funding for early intervention will increase by $11 million for 2020. This will result in approximately $237,000 in additional federal funding for Virginia.