Massachusetts Autism Commission

Meeting Minutes

February 1, 2021– 2:00 p.m.– 3:30 p.m.

Via WebEx

Present: Katie Mick, Undersecretary (EHS), Carolyn Kain (EHS), Jane Ryder (DDS), Elizabeth Morse (DDS), Janet George (DDS), Rep. Christine Barber (HOU), Sen. Joan Lovely (SEN), Ann Reale (EOE), Samantha Aigner-Treworgy (EEC), Kate Ginnis (EHS) ,Kathy Sanders (DMH), Jason King for Sen. Fattman, Christine Hubbard, Russell Johnston (DESE), Amy Weinstock, Bronia Clifton (DHCD), Michele Brait, Joan Butterfield (DPH), Toni Wolf (MRC), Tania Hurley for Katherine Canada (DCF), Sacha Stadhard (EOL), Dania Jekel, Felix Martinez, Jo Ann Simons, Julia Landau, James Vander Hooven and Kay Abeling for Vinnie Strully

**Welcome - Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes from December**

Undersecretary Mick called the meeting to order and welcomed the Autism Commission members. The agenda was reviewed, and the meeting will focus on finalizing the Annual Report, which is due to file with the Governor and Legislature by March 1, 2021. The Autism Commission members were given an opportunity to give feedback on the draft Annual Report and Ms. Kain incorporated the feedback in the final report to be reviewed today.

Commission members were asked to review and give comments or feedback on the meeting minutes from December 17, 2020. Kate Ginnis moved the motion and Jo Ann Simons seconded the motion. Ms. Kain called for a roll call vote and the minutes were approved unanimously with James Van Hooven abstaining from the vote.

**Review and Approval of 2020 Annual Report**

Ms. Kain had previously sent out the draft 2020 Annual Report to members of the Autism Commission with additions/changes, highlighted in yellow. She presented a PowerPoint, highlighting the changes/additions and welcomed any feedback.

***Slide One***

Page 5 of Annual Report regarding MassHealth AAC Devices. Ms. Kain added the following language “including any adverse impacts based on race, ethnicity, and primary language”.

***Slide 2***

Page 8 of Annual Report regarding the prevalence data for Autism and Affordable Supportive Housing. In 2017 the Housing Subcommittee worked with TAC on a survey that included data. Ms. Kain updated the data with the most recent 2020 prevalence data by the CDC as well as data from DESE that showed the number of individuals with ASD enrolled in special education and reflected how the numbers of individuals with Autism rose during a 12-year period. (2003-2015)

***Slide 3***

Page 11 and 12 of the Annual Report regarding Mobile Crisis Intervention (MCI). The information was added by the co-chairs of the Health Subcommittee. MassHealth develop and implemented an ASD/ID specialty consultation for individuals with ASD/ID up to age 26 in behavioral health crisis. The goal of the program is to increase the capacity and expertise across the Commonwealth to support children, adolescents, and young adults with ASD/ID and their families when they are in crisis.

***Slide 4***

Page 15 of Annual Report regarding Covid Impact and Recovery Issues. This came from the Birth – Fourteen Subcommittee – additional language was added in bold “including any inequitable impact related to race, ethnicity, or primary language across age groups”.

***Questions and/or comments***

* It was asked if DDS and MassHealth had any data broken down by race/ethnicity to include in the annual report. DDS has data (voluntary by individuals) of the Turning 22 Class that will be included.
* MassHealth is working on improving how they capture data (race/ethnicity) and is moving towards accurately gathering information. This work is currently underway at MassHealth.
* It was asked if the word “any” could be removed (pg. 15 of report). The sentence would then read “including inequitable impacts related to race, ethnicity, or primary language across age groups”. There was no objection to taking out the word “any”. Ms. Kain will remove it from the language in the report.
* In terms of priorities that were reviewed, it was suggested that the Covid Impact and Recovery Issues (pg.15) move to recommendation #1 on the Annual Report. There were no objections to moving this to the first priority in the Annual Report.

With no further discussion on the 2020 Annual Report, Ms. Kain asked for a roll call vote of the Autism Commission members for approval of the report. Commissioner Wolf moved the motion and Mr. Martinez seconded the motion. The 2020 Annual Report was approved unanimously.

***Updates***

Ms. Kain informed the commission members that Ms. Ursitti has moved on from her role at Autism Speaks and will therefore no longer be on the Autism Commission representing Autism Speaks. Ms. Kain thanked her for her work and commitment while on the Autism Commission and wished her well in her new endeavors.

For the 5th year in a row, the Governor fully funded the Turning 22 class as part of the budget that was released this week. Undersecretary Mick thanked the families and advocates for their deep commitment in supporting individuals with disabilities.

The next Autism Commission meeting will be held on May 13th, 2021.

With no further business to discuss there was a motion to dismiss the meeting the motion was moved by Mr. Johnston and seconded by Ms. Reale.