Autism Commission

14-22 year old/Employment Sub-Committee Meeting

January 24, 2018, 11:00a.m. –1:00p.m.

500 Harrison Avenue

Present: Carolyn Kain, Amy Weinstock, Dianne Lescinskas, Lea Hill, Maura Sullivan, Madeline Wenzel, Judith Ursitti, Julia Landau, Ann Guay, Kathy Kelly, Kevin Barrett and Michelle Brait

Remote access: Elena Aubrey, Laura Conrad, Jennifer Stewart and Ilyse Levine

Carolyn Kain stated that the meeting was subject to the Open Meeting Law and that the Sub-Committee members present would need to vote to approve the remote participation of some members because of their geographic location, whenever any members were utilizing video and/or tele-conferencing. Remote access was approved unanimously by the members present.

The minutes from the 14-22/Employment meeting on December ,2017 were reviewed and approved unanimously.

**Review of draft Autism Commission Report - focus on 14-22/Employment (Judith Ursitti)**

The draft Autism Commission Report was shared with this sub-committee, and Ms. Ursitti went over the section that she highlighted and believes focused on 14-22/Employment. She read the highlighted areas to this sub-committee for comments/feedback.

Ms. Kain explained the history of the Special Commission in 2010 that resulted in the 2013 report. The recommendations set forth in the 2013 report are not mandates but recommendations from the Autism Commission and not all state agencies were in agreement with all of the recommendations. Ms. Kain said there was also the enactment of the Autism Omnibus Law in August 2014, which did include mandates that have occurred since that legislation was passed. Ms. Kain said the current gives the commission an opportunity to take a look at the status of the 2013 recommendations and make decisions on whether the commission will move forward with recommendations as stated in report or make changes.

Ms. Kain stated that the report this sub-committee is reviewing is a draft only and that the deadline for new recommendations from the subcommittees was at the end of October 2017. During the Autism Commission meeting on December 4th, 2017 the members reviewed up to recommendation #9 and members were given up to December 18th to give additional comments on the report. Ms. Kain received multiple pages of data requests and comments from the commission members after the December 4th meeting and is continuing to gather data that was requested from the respective state agencies. The next meeting for the Autism Commission is on February 7th and the remainder of the report, with changes/additions, will be reviewed and approved for submission to the Governor and Legislature on or before March 1st.

Ms. Ursitti reviewed the sections she highlighted from the report and asked for comments/input. Ms. Kain reiterated that the report is currently under the review of the Autism Commission and that the subcommittees were not part of that review process.

● Ms. Guay asked if DDS could provide demographic data on the 1374 newly eligible and Ms. Landau asked if that demographic data could be made available in the report in the future.

* Data on DMH clients that are found ineligible for services is not collected –it would be helpful to know why individuals are not found eligible. Mass. Advocates receives a lot of calls on this issue and the majority is from underserved communities – data would be helpful on identifying who is being turned away. Further discussion on this issue is needed and it was said that it could be a potential recommendation. Ms. Kain said the DMH eligibility regulations are on their website and encouraged members of this sub-committee to look at them.
* Ms. Guay suggested DESE issue guidance to school districts on mental health concerns to avoid ED Boarding
* MRC data – it was asked if it could be broken down further – Ms. Kain is waiting for that data from MRC
* DESE/DDS waiver – it was asked if the data could be broken down to demographics to understand the barriers. Should there be a 3 year evaluation of individuals that are in the program to help open up slots?
* Ms. Sullivan said the ARC is focused on the DESE/DDS program and looking for 2.5 million increase – it is a cost saving program that prevents residential placement
* Autism Waiver – talk to commission members about expanding this program
* Ms. Guay asked how many individuals between 19-21 years of age are receiving ABA through MassHealth. Ms. Conrad from MassHealth pulled the data and the numbers are small. 213 out of 3100 (FY17) between the ages of 13-20 receive ABA through MassHealth. The numbers do not reflect the DESE/DDS numbers and private insurance consumers
* Ms. Weinstock discussed 2 topics 1. Self-funded insurance plans and 2. lack of coverage for adults. She is working with the Division of Insurance and said that if the commission could state the issue as a problem for adults (discriminatory) it could give it a push
* Currently, there is work being done to address the lack of oversight on Center Based Programs – it was asked if it could be added to the report
* Para-training was discussed and noted that we need to be more specific on paraprofessionals and who we are talking about – this sub-committee has prioritized training and will be discussed at the next meeting
* AFC was discussed – Ms. Sullivan said the ARC is working with the ARC National on the issue and looking to change the regulations to ensure that guardians who are in direct care of individuals will be paid
* Ms. Ursitti asked if moving forward there could be specific timelines presented for the sub-committees to come up with recommendations.
* Transition Endorsement was discussed around having competencies to include working with youth and adults with autism – it was asked if this is a priority that warrants a regulatory change
* The MAICEI program was discussed and that it is not available in all state colleges. Ms. Kain suggested that we invite individuals from Higher Education to join this sub-committee. Bridgewater State University is piloting a program with individuals from MAICEI living on campus in the dormitories. It was said that we should invite someone from BSU to call into a meeting to discuss this program
* Augmentative and alternative communication was discussed – DESE does not issue licensing to speech therapists. This recommendation could be broadened in the future. There is also a bill that talks about teachers needing to have competencies in this area. This sub-committee will follow up with DESE on understanding the process licensing.

This sub-committee was not able to discuss the other items on the agenda – Training and Employment respectively. These will be put on the agenda for next meeting. Ms. Landau asked if this committee could dig deeper in issues around employment. Ms. Kain noted that it was on today’s agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.