Autism Commission Meeting Minutes

May 30, 2019 – 2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA

Present: Jane Ryder (DDS), Carolyn Kain, Nora Bent for Rep. Christine Barber, Janet George (DDS), Christine Hubbard, Kathy Sanders (DMH), Russell Johnston (ESE), Toni Wolf (MRC), Dr. Ann Neumeyer, Amy Weinstock, Elizabeth Morse(DDS), Bronia Clifton (EOEA), Chris Supple, Glenn Gabbard (DHE), Theresa Schirmer, Julia Landau, Michele Brait, Rocio Calvo, Joan Rafferty (DPH), Catherine Canada (DCF), Vinny Strully, Laura Conrad (MassHealth), Judith Ursitti, Catherine Boyle and Dan Burke.

**Welcome - Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 6th, 2019**

Commissioner Ryder called the meeting to order and welcomed the Autism Commission members. She asked the commission members for a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting in February. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Updates from Co-Chairs on Work of Subcommittees**

*Birth - 14*

Co-Chairs, Russell Johnston and Michele Brait updated this committee on the work of the Birth-14 Year Old Subcommittee.

* Developed a set of recommendations of DESE on the IEP Improvement Project in order to ensure that the IEP process focuses on key topics related to ASD. Ms. Kain will send out this document to members of the commission.
* The subcommittee has developed two surveys to address the recruitment and retention of BCBA’s and related behavior therapists in public education settings. They are looking for information on the current practices being used to hire and maintain qualified staff in public settings.
* The subcommittee has identified the wait times for diagnosis of children ages 0-3 as a key issue. They are currently gathering information on this topic and will continue to investigate.

*14-22+ Year Old/Employment Subcommittee*

Co-Chairs, Toni Wolf and Judith Ursitti updated this committee on the work of the 14-22+/employment subcommittee.

* MRC is in the process of rolling out 2 new RFR’s
* A lot of the work is focused on training and the subcommittee has finalized a DDS training tool for providers
* Working with the Federation on a training for Pre ETs vendors
* Longer school days with support, after school is a topic being discussed
* Discussion on the visit to Dell/EMC Autism Advantage Program – many promising practices and transportation is a challenge for participants

*Adult Subcommittee*

Co-Chairs Dr. Kathy Sanders and Christine Hubbard updated this committee on the work of the Adult subcommittee.

* Ongoing pilot program with DDS and DMH for young adults with ASD who are self-isolating. The pilot will end in June and the subcommittee will be updated on the results via a report. The effort put forth for this pilot was larger than anticipated and the age range was broader than anticipated.
* Collaboration with the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) – the subcommittee is learning about their services for both individuals and the caretakers – information sharing in both directions.
* The subcommittee is looking at specialty ASD adult services to meet the needs of adults with ASD and challenging behavior. DDS and DMH are about to put out an RFI to look at current programs providing support that could be beneficial and what is needed that doesn’t currently exist. MassHealth will play a role in this work.

*Healthcare Subcommittee*

Co-Chairs, Laura Conrad and Amy Weinstock updated this committee on the work of the Healthcare subcommittee.

* MassHealth is reviewing the recommendation to provide ABA services to member 21-26
* Presentation by the Children’s Mental Health Campaign and an effective model of urgent care for children and adolescents experiencing behavioral health crisis. Looking at models that would meet the needs of youth with ASD and or I/DD. This work will help address ED boarding.
* Discussion around breaking down cultural barriers and if there is material created for health centers. Providers also need training on this topic. There is a lot of information out there and it is a question of how to get people to access it.
* The subcommittee continues to discuss their 3 priorities

*Housing Subcommittee*

Co-Chairs, Bronia Clifton and Dan Burke updated this committee on the work of the Housing subcommittee.

* The members are working with DHCD and DDS to develop Design Guidelines for housing that would support individuals on the Autism Spectrum. They have been reviewing 2 projects on Cape Cod.
* The committee continues to explore data collection on homelessness – who to contact and how to track ASD numbers. DDS and MassHealth provide services in shelters.
* Data collection at Hogan Unit for length of stay.

**Update 1, 2, 3 Grow project with animated videos regarding cultural barriers**

Elaine Gabovitch and Joan Rafferty updated this committee on the work being done with the 1, 2, 3 Grow videos. With an extension of a grant, they were able to further this work, looking at the parent interviews for the videos and created animated caregiver clips. Each video is under 3 minutes and there is a discussion guide that goes along with the videos. They were able to target the care giver stories on cultural barriers and this is also meant to help train pediatricians about other cultures. Ms. Kain will send the clips to the Autism Commission members. Both the 1, 2, 3 Grow videos and animated clips have been distributed widely and they have made every effort to get this out to the public.

**Presentation by Dr. Sanders on Expedited Admissions Process**

Dr. Sanders discussed the work that has been ongoing for three years with a diverse group of stakeholders addressing ED boarding and psychiatric inpatient admissions. They worked on creating a protocol to decrease boarding by finding placements.

* Every year, 70,000 acute admissions for psychiatry
* MassHealth tracked 500 per month boarding for 24 hours
* DMH tracked 50 per month
* Most people who need inpatient care get it within 24 hours but 20% do not
* After 96 hours in ED, the case escalates to DMH and they advocate for a placement case by case
* Division of Insurance (DOI) is a willing and prominent partner in this process
* Barriers to placement include: bed availability, lack of insurance, aggression, medical, acuity
* State agencies involved: DCF, DMH, DDS, DYS, IEP– 87% of individuals are state agency involved and it was noted that many do not report being on an IEP
* Westborough will have a capacity of 17 beds – currently only 3-4 beds open – workforce challenges
* To improve the process, the bed search needs to be more efficient – improve communication and make it reliable and electronic

Russell Johnston asked if this subcommittee could learn more about the newly opened Westborough facility at the next meeting.

Commission members were encouraged to provide comments and feedback regarding this presentation.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.