Massachusetts Autism Commission

Adult Subcommittee

September 17, 2020

Via WebEx

 **Participants**

Carolyn Kain, Christine Hubbard, Kathy Sanders, Janet George, Lea Hill, Dianne Lescinskas, Dania Jekel, Michele Brait, Karen Seck, Sherri Hannigan, Josh Greenberg, Rita Gardner, Nancy Marticio Maria Stefano and Herb Cabral

**Remote Participation**

Dianne Lescinskas stated that the meeting was subject to the Open Meeting Law and that the subcommittee members would need to vote to approve the remote participation of members. Remote access was approved.

**Welcome and Introductions**

Christine Hubbard welcomed subcommittee members to the meeting and reminded members that they had last met in February, prior to the pandemic. During that meeting a list of priorities were set and it was said that those priorities may now change and will be discussed later in the meeting.

**Presentation by Herb Cabral - Technologies Used By His Son on the Spectrum**

Mr. Cabral talked about his son Joe and his use of technology. Joe lives with caregivers and works at a restaurant. The presentation discussed the many ways that Joe is using technology and how it is used to support him and some of his needs.

Joe’s Devices

* Apple iPhone
* Apple iPad
* Apple Laptop
* Headphones
* VR Goggles
* DVD Player

How Joe Uses Technology

* Video Modeling
* Movies
* Music
* Texting
* Distance learning
* Exercise
* Photos/Video
* Calming Application
* WAYS for directions
* Grocery List
* Calculator

 Joe independently uses the applications and has had help from providers and family members on how to use. Currently, he is distance learning three days per week.

*Comments*

* Some individuals are doing a tremendous amount of gaming and Netflix Parties
* Some older individuals are having trouble accessing technology or they don’t want a computer in their home because it causes anxiety
* There are many individuals hiring personal trainers and that has become a natural support for them

**Presentation on EnvisionSMART MEDS at Melmark– Software Technology to Improve Academic and Clinical Outcomes and Organizational Decision Making**

Rita Gardner from Melmark presented to the subcommittee members on EnvisionSMART – a software program used at Melmark to support the individuals that they serve.

* The technology can be used to collect data in the clinical setting across all disciplines and areas of the organization
* Data from individuals and settings across the organization combine to form new insights and discovery that would otherwise go unnoticed at the individual data level
* Analysis of this “big data” informs organization-level improvement
* The Health Informatics Suite tracks: WellBody (skin integrity), Protective Hold Module, Unusual Incident Module, BedChecker, Weight/BMI Tracker (it tracks the weight of all clients over time), BM/Menses Tracker (can help with having a successful day) – most of the individual supported at Melmark need 24 hour support
* Some individuals use FitBit and My Fitness Pal and the data can be exported into the system
* The data collected is helpful to physicians that see the individuals
* Collects data on BM – constipation can cause severe behaviors – it shows a pattern of the cause of behavior
* Staff are required to have a 6 week training to go through the software in onboarding process
* Melmark was able to see a lot of critical health issues that allowed them to see trends that needed to improve to then provide better services and allow individuals to stay healthy and safe so they can enjoy their lives
* Data tells a story and it informs their Executive Board on the allocation of resources to improve outcomes of the individuals they serve
* Melmark uses fundraising and grants to pay for the technology – a lot of foundations are interested in supporting technology

**Discussion of Innovation and Technology**

* DDS and the ARC have put out a survey on the use of technology
* DDS, prior to COVID, discussed that the goal of the department was to embrace technology
* There was a meeting at DDS Central Office (pre-COVID) where different states presented on their use of technology to help with the workforce issue
* Prior to COVID, DDS engaged with Mass Challenge and 2 start-up companies to look at Health and Employment and how to use technology in regards to these two topics – currently, this initiative is on hold
* DDS is thinking about how they can best serve people and the need to embrace technology has become more important during the pandemic – they are thinking differently in the ways to use technology
* Using more technology has helped at DMH – the “no-show” rate of appointments has improved. Using telehealth doesn’t require individuals to have transportation or childcare
* It was reported that there is a cost associated with the use of technology for individuals and for providers – there are places in the state where internet access in almost non-existent
* AANE has been doing remote activities and they are now seeing clients from all over the world
* MassHealth is not able to support the technology needs – they are not fee for service (unless it is a waiver service). They do have an iPad program with low utilization

**Next Steps**

The Autism Commission meeting will be held on October 22nd and there will be an opportunity to get updates and gather more information to assist this subcommittee with its priorities. This subcommittee will look at re-establishing priorities at the next meeting. Ms. Kain reminded the subcommittee members that there is not requirement to submit new recommendations but to look at the current recommendations and that work progression.

It was asked that the subcommittee look at the mental health impact on individuals at the next meeting.

A doodle poll will be sent out to the member of the subcommittee to plan the next meeting in early November.

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