Massachusetts Autism Commission

Adult Subcommittee

January 27, 2021

Via WebEx

**Participants**

Carolyn Kain, Christine Hubbard, Kathy Sanders, Janet George, Cynthia Berkowitz, Lea Hill, Dianne Lescinskas, Maria Stefano, Nancy Marticio, Elizabeth Zwick, Joshua Greenberg, Dania Jekel, Michele Brait, Sue Loring and Kathy Stern

**Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 19, 2020**

The meeting minutes were reviewed and Ms. Hill asked for two minor edits to the minutes. The edits were noted and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Discussion on Individual Service Plan (ISP) for individuals served by DDS who are ASD only**

Ms. Hubbard opened the meeting with the Adult Subcommittee priority of the ISP and how it works for “ASD only” individuals. The Northeast Region is currently doing a pilot (along with other regions) on a “new” ISP.

Ms. Hill gave the subcommittee members an overview of the pilot.

* They are calling this The Life Plan and it was developed from area coordinators and supervisors in the NE Region
* They have had many meetings looking at the existing ISP and issues with engaging with individuals and discussed what could be changed to make it a simpler/more engaging process
* Life Plan is more of a person-centered focused tool. They have found that most individuals don’t want to engage in the traditional ISP process and had said it was “uncomfortable” with a large group of people around the table talking about them
* Life Plan is more of a conversation and does not involve the required assessments of the ISP, as many of the assessments are not relative to the individual
* Many “ASD only” individuals are not under guardianship
* Life Plan focuses on the needs, desires, future plans and goals of the individual (the provider is still accountable for the goals in Life Plan)
* To date it has been working well and feedback is that individuals are more comfortable, it is easier to engage with the individuals and the service coordinator is getting to know the individual much better as they are more engaging in this process. The questions being asked in Life Plan are more relative to an individuals’ needs
* The pilot phase will not end on June 30th but will continue as long as needed – the date is fluid – other regions are trying Life Plan

It was asked if the ISP could be explained in more detail for those that are not as familiar with it. It

will be helpful understand Life Plan and how it is different from the ISP.

**ISP**

* Highly regulated process embedded in the departments’ regulatory framework, time sensitive, highly organized, rigid process
* Series of “required assessments”
* More like a “check list” – includes safety, health, financial
* It can take up to one hour to complete or in some cases up to 4 hours

**Life Plan**

* It is more like a motivational interview – conversation
* Uses some tools from Charting the Life Course, which is a framework that is Person-Centered, user friendly and has multiple stakeholders involved in planning with the individual but the individual is in the center of everything. It puts an emphasis on community and natural supports. There is currently an emphasis on training families in Charting the Life Course
* Life Plan extracts some principles from Charting the Life Course (Lifecoursetools.com)

***Discussion***

* A question was asked about DDS funding for “ASD only’ individuals and what they may need for for support services may not match what is offered under the funding categories. DDS has not heard of this as of yet.
* It was asked if meetings for individuals with service coordinators, happening during COVID, is different. It was reported that that there was much more engagement in the beginning of COVID but there are signs of Zoom fatigue currently.
* DDS reported that they had received permission from CMS to do support in a virtual environment (during COVID) and they are now seeking permission to continue some of the virtual supports/activities once the pandemic ends
* Public Hearing yesterday requested adding services to the waiver to add assistive technology services and remote services. DDS wants a much greater emphasis on the use of technology

**Next Steps**

Ms. Hill will put together a graphic presentation for the next meeting to show the differences between an ISP and Life Plan.

**Discussion on MassHealth proposed Waiver Changes that Concern Remote Services**

Proposed changes are for Assistive Technology and Remote Support Services. MassHealth is taking public comments on this for the next 10 days. The documents should be available on the MH website where you can read what DDS is seeking to do. The ability to offer these services will begin on July 1st. This is a different approach and not every provider will be able to the Assistive Technology and the Remote Support Services. This is a way for the department to help promote more independence for individuals.

***Discussion***

* DDS reported that they had received permission from CMS to do support in a virtual environment (during COVID) and they are now seeking permission to continue some of the virtual supports/activities once the pandemic ends
* Public Hearing yesterday requested adding services to the waiver to add assistive technology and remote services. DDS wants a much greater emphasis on the use of technology
* Embedded in the service is the coverage of internet access
* The move to remote support is not unique to MA. DD in Ohio presented to MA on how they are currently using remote support. DDS continues to seek consultation on how others are doing it
* A concern was raised on the end user of the technology and if there would be training for the individual user. A built-in requirement is an Assistive Technology Assessment to determine the best type of technology for the user and what training would be necessary
* Other state agencies could benefit from what DDS is doing to support individuals with technology and hopefully it will be applicable and transferable to other agencies
* The ARC Tank has generated a lot technology support ideas over the past few years

**Meeting Schedule**

March 24th

May 19th

July 14th

September 29th

All meetings will take place from 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. via WebEx. Kathy Stern will send an invite to members of the Subcommittee.

The next meeting of the Autism Commission is on September 9th.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned.