Massachusetts Autism Commission

Health Care Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes

October 8, 2020, 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Via WebEx

Present: Carolyn Kain, Amy Weinstock (co-chair), Kate Ginnis (co-chair), Dianne Lescinskas, Christine Hubbard, Maura Sullivan, Julie O’Brien, Robert Azeez, Matt Selig, Laura Conrad and Kathleen Stern

Ms. 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 members because of their geographic location, whenever any members were utilizing video and/or tele-conferencing. Remote access was approved unanimously by the members.

**Review of Meeting Minutes from February 27, 2019**

The minutes from the Health Care Subcommittee, on February 27, 2019, were reviewed and approved unanimously.

**Update on Behavioral Health Urgent Care Project – Kate Ginnis**

* Kate Ginnis had left her position at Children’s Hospital and has been at MassHealth for about a year now
* Ms. Ginnis will share the link to the Urgent Care Report by the Children’s Mental Health Campaign
* The report has a lot of relevant information and some came out of the discussion from this subcommittee on the lack of crisis capability for ASD youth and families
* When COVID-19 began, a group of folks got together to discuss the needs of youth and families and a plan rapidly developed that included consultative services for ASD – this was put together with MassHealth, along with other stakeholders and includes 7 days per week consultation to a crisis team with consultation with a doctor available as well
* Launched on July 8th and runs through MCPAP
* It is too early to discuss the impact but the narrative suggests it is working – need more data to support
* Amy Weinstock did a webinar on MCPAP for ASD and will send out her PowerPoint to the members of this subcommittee

**Review of 2019 recommendations and General Discussion of New/Changed Priorities vis-à-vis COVID**

This subcommittee reviewed the three priorities from the 2019 Autism Commission report. These priorities are still relevant but this subcommittee will review and discuss these priorities and come up with an action plan

1. *Extension of MassHealth coverage for persons over the age of 21*

* The legislation that was filed last year has not moved forward and will be refiled and will combine language for one bill – it was said that it will most likely not pass due to current situation and will be refiled.
* The ARC will keep this on their priority platform
* Ms. Weinstock asked for data on the number of individuals currently receiving ABA
* Ms. Weinstock recommends keeping this recommendation as a priority

1. *Expansion of training on ASD*

* Part of a bill (by the ARC) that got attention during COVID
* It is important to keep this as a priority
* The ARC reached out to 35 hospitals (during pandemic) to direct them to a triage training and got thousands of hits. The hospitals that participated wrote letters of support for a grant to support training for ASD and ID

1. *Expand Mental health emergency and treatment services*

* It makes sense to keep this as a priority and a recommendation
* We now have a resource to address this recommendation
* ED boarding has gotten a lot of attention over the past 2-3 months and DMH and MH meet every day to discuss this issue – COVID-19 has provided more clarity around this issue and there is a lot of energy going into solving the problems
* Look at the language of the recommendation – Ms. Weinstock will update the language “Expand Mental Health Emergency and Acute Stabilization “

**Establish new priorities including focus on disparities in healthcare for people with ASD**

* Discussion on racial disparities and it was asked if other subcommittees are looking at these disparities
* Other subcommittees have only met once during the pandemic and this issue has not yet been discussed
* Ms. Weinstock asked about having this topic discussed at the next Autism Commission meeting
* Late diagnosis of ASD is where disparities begin and are typically given a wrong diagnosis of behavior issues
* The ARC is looking at Transition and different outcomes based on race – are individuals becoming employed or getting appropriate services
* This subcommittee will consider adding disparity and race as an overarching goal rather than a separate recommendation – there are many that do not experience the healthcare system the same as others
* This may require data – possibly start as a hypothesis of “black/brown child getting late diagnosis and recommendation on reducing barrier”
* Telehealth has worsened the disparities as it relates to access
* The grant that the ARC is seeking is using research on disparities related to ASD
* This issue was addressed by Elaine Gabovich and Joan Butterfield (DPH) with efforts to address early detection and access across cultures by using videos to give information (multiple languages/culture) in a pediatrician’s office. The videos were also widely shared
* This is a broad issue and will involve multiple ways to address it – the subcommittee should consider zoning in on one priority; diagnosis, age , healthcare services – think about having a discreet priority to “identify and quantify the age gap in diagnosis in ethnic groups”
* A goal to educate pediatricians on the age of diagnosis disparity
* How to increase access to services (wait times)
* Trust is also an issue – also it is difficult to access interpreters
* The chat box captured many links for review and discussion (provided at the bottom of this document)
* It was asked if this group was opened to new members to help address healthcare and ASD as well as racial disparities. The group is very open and Ms. O’Brien will look to recruit a psychiatrist and a developmental pediatrician

**Other Business**

Ms. Kain discussed that in past years, recommendations for the annual report would be due by September but due to the pandemic, they will now be due in December. The annual report will be issued in March of 2021.

Ms. Weinstock will send out a date for the next meeting of this subcommittee – it will be held at 8:00 a.m.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

***Resources from chat box***

Page 13 has relevant information

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/addm-community-report/documents/addm-community-report-2018-h.pdf>

from Kate Ginnis

[https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/145/Supplement\_1/S35.full.pdf](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com_-3Furl-3Dhttps-253A-252F-252Fpediatrics.aappublications.org-252Fcontent-252Fpediatrics-252F145-252FSupplement-5F1-252FS35.full.pdf-26data-3D02-257C01-257CAmy.Weinstock-2540umassmed.edu-257Cc597515720644030f86908d86b895d94-257Cee9155fe2da34378a6c44405faf57b2e-257C0-257C1-257C637377585014115421-26sdata-3DG1-252FPr2P9jvYKOPXN07UCa0JWlIUPzW67F6eOg3AUPf0-253D-26reserved-3D0&d=DwMFAg&c=lDF7oMaPKXpkYvev9V-fVahWL0QWnGCCAfCDz1Bns_w&r=p9xg8DOokPV0l_joECOGljFAavoF6-dsAb-v06eqU2s&m=i3267KjzkJw4XKimdc0EjKv89QB6VBJPVgk80KV1ylc&s=6HJqYyp1SAhptRohl8guAFzkZHVXprnNuZA3m6YAxSM&e=)

article from earlier this year about disparities in treatment

from amy weinstock

[naacn.com](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__naacn.com_&d=DwMFAg&c=lDF7oMaPKXpkYvev9V-fVahWL0QWnGCCAfCDz1Bns_w&r=p9xg8DOokPV0l_joECOGljFAavoF6-dsAb-v06eqU2s&m=i3267KjzkJw4XKimdc0EjKv89QB6VBJPVgk80KV1ylc&s=eZcr0v560zeeOjMewtijsPSkPTYwaMBo1jawYQytRvU&e=)

from amy weinstock

national african american autism community network

from amy weinstock

[autisminblack.org](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__autisminblack.org_&d=DwMFAg&c=lDF7oMaPKXpkYvev9V-fVahWL0QWnGCCAfCDz1Bns_w&r=p9xg8DOokPV0l_joECOGljFAavoF6-dsAb-v06eqU2s&m=i3267KjzkJw4XKimdc0EjKv89QB6VBJPVgk80KV1ylc&s=fqXmor4eOTTbsJ1WDCP-thC-od1yOJcwuck9svAPaaI&e=)

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