Autism Commission

Adult Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes

January 26, 2018 12:00pm –1:30pm

Department of Mental Health - Boston, MA

Attendees: Maria Stefano, Lea Hill, Mark Dumas, Kathy Sanders and Janet George.

Accessing the meeting remotely: Carolyn Kain, Dianne Lescinskas and Dania Jekel.

It was 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. There were no minutes to review since they were reviewed at the last meeting.

**Discussion about Health Care Access:** Access for general health care was discussed. Access for behavioral health improving. Individual needs for specific health care services from scheduling appointments to understanding directions from doctors problematic. Individuals require supports in general to access health care and for all types of other services. The issue about the availability of medical professionals to take on patients with ASD coupled with the length and complexity of visit time was discussed. D.Jeckel, M. Stefano and L.Hill concurred that access of well -trained medical professionals continued to be a barrier.

**DDS Emergency Room Fact Sheets and Wallet Cards:** Fact sheet and emergency wallet card ready for broad dissemination. Discussion about how to obtain feedback occurred. J. George agreed to have DDS create a mailbox address to be added to card and fact sheet for those who are interested in providing feedback about utility. M Stefano and L. Hill from DDS will take lead to distribute card. Card will be distributed incrementally through DDS providers. D. Jekel will explore post and share electronically in PDF the card. Discussion about clarifying the difference between the DDS Health Care Record and the Emergency Wallet card and the need to keep language and requirements clear for providers and individuals.

**Open Discussion around other Services and Priorities:**  K. Sanders and J. George reviewed the history of utilization around DMH Club Houses. Thinking behind decision to make available based on the hope that social connections which would minimize social isolation could be mediated. However, utilization to date has been minimal. Further discussion about whether mental health services from DMH would be helpful including the use of technology in the digital world, Recovery CBT and whether the other types of day services offered by DMH could be helpful. D. Jekel offered to explore and share other models of successful day programs for ASD adults.

This led to a discussion about the need to create opportunities for social connection for adults and the difficulties around engagement. The group identified social skills trainings using Cognitive Behavioral Treatment would be helpful including modifications using visual supports.

K. Sanders and J. George discussed the status of the Fellowships including the development of a regular Fellowship meeting with the three participating hospitals beginning in 2018. Plan is to meet every 4-6 weeks.

K. Sanders shared the new expedited emergency policy effective 2/1/18.

The group discussed the possibility of expanding the ESPS for 7 days with a focus on supporting individuals with ASD in their home environments.

K. Sanders shared that the Administrative Bed Day Rates would no longer drop for individuals who were waiting for admission into DMH long term care beds.

Homework: K. Sanders and J. George asked the group to identify priority topics for the sub-committee to consider for 2018 and provide feedback to the Chairs. D. Jekel agreed to share other successful models from around the country and will post Wallet Card on her website. L. Hill and M. Stefano will take lead on implementation of Wallet Card and J. George will oversee mailbox creation for feedback.

C.Kain, D. Lescinskas, and D. Jekel ended their participation at approximately 12:30.

Meeting for the remaining participants adjourned at 1:15 p.m.