Massachusetts Autism Commission

Adult Subcommittee

May 22, 2024

*Via Zoom*

**Participants**

Co- Chairs: Christine Hubbard and Kathy Sanders, Dianne Lescinskas, Carolyn Kain, Danielle Sheehan, Cynthia Berkowitz, Beth Zwick, Maria Stefano, Brenda Dater, Carol Gracia, Karen Wylie, Christine Tosti

**Meeting Minutes** – Dianne Lescinskas

**Welcome and Approval of Meeting Minutes from April**

Ms. Hubbard welcomed the members and asked that they introduce themselves. Ms. Kain made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the meeting in April and Dr. Sanders seconded the motion and with no objections, the minutes were approved.

Ms. Hubbard is working on a summary of the work that has been done by the Adult subcommittee from 2023 – she will send the summary to Ms. Kain when it is completed.

A representative from the Division of Insurance was not able to join the meeting today and Dr. Sanders will reach out to ask if they would be available another date. The subcommittee would like to hear more on Autism and Insurance as it relates to adults and ABA services. Ms. Kain reviewed the ARICA Law which relates to private insurance and the Autism Omnibus Law and the age limit of ABA of up to 21 years. The Healthcare Subcommittee has been discussing insurance and one of their priorities is looking at the age limit of ABA and MassHealth. There are some cases where individuals over the age of 21 are receiving ABA and DDS has covered those services – this is on an individual basis. There is also a way to get ABA under Behavioral Supports – it looks like ABA but won’t be referred to ABA but falls under Behavioral Supports.

There is a pilot in 3 different Day Habs (MassHealth) that are tracking the use of ABA. It can be helpful to adults in learning or maintaining new skills. There is very little literature on the use and effectiveness of ABA in adults but there are a number of providers that do use it for delivery of services. This pilot project has been shared with Division of Insurance.

Care coordination was discussed and the use of case management – without case management the role traditionally falls on the parent. MassHealth is doing a great job with case management – private insurers are behind in this work.

LifeNet at AANE, Jay O’Brien is leaving as the director of the program and will be replaced by a clinician who is currently working with the program. LifeNet is only in MA and works with autistic adults ages 22-92. There are currently 70 individuals in the program. It is a team approach, and services are individualized – a case manager is part of the team. Most of individuals are living at home, some are in group homes or supportive housing. The biggest piece is the mental health challenges and there are mental health clinicians on the team.

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Ms. Wylie discussed Aging Service Access and free case management regardless of insurance. She will send information to the Autism Commission to add to their website.

Next month, the Adult Subcommittee will have Ellen Kilicarslan speak on the efforts being made by DDS on aging adults with ASD.

With no further business to discuss, Ms. Kain made a motion to end the meeting and Dr. Berkowitz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned.