Autism Commission

Subcommittee for Workforce Development

May 21, 2018 – 10:00am – 11:30pm

500 Harrison Ave, Boston, MA 02118

Attendees: Pat Gentile, Jason Albert, Carolyn Kain, Dianne Lescinskas, Mike Maloney, Katherine Johnson, Jeff Keilson and Sue Houle

Remote Access: Liz Martineau

Dr. Gentile called the meeting to order and welcomed the members to the meeting of this subcommittee. Ms. Kain stated that the meeting was subject to the Open Meeting Law and that the subcommittee 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.

Minutes from last meeting in June of 2017 were reviewed and approved unanimously.

**Updates**

Pat Marshall has stepped down from the Autism Commission and Glenn Gabbard, Coordinator, Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative and from Department of Higher Education, has taken her place. Jason Albert, Department of Career Services, has joined this subcommittee and was invited to co-chair alongside Pat Gentile.

Mike Maloney announced that Rewarding Work is merging with TILL and they are working closely with DDS on respite.

**Summary of Subcommittee Work**

Dr. Gentile handed out a packet that included the memorandum from Executive Director Carolyn Kain, which reviewed the restructuring of all subcommittees and discussed duties of each subcommittee –all subcommittees are expected to develop up to three (3) priority recommendations that are inspirational and achievable for consideration by the Commission. These recommendations must be submitted one week prior to the September 27th Autism Commission meeting and will be included in the annual report.

Also included in the packet was a list of community colleges and the programs that are being offered through Human Services. Dr. Gentile included the EAB report entitled *Market Demand for an Autism Certificate Program.* It was sent to faculty and she met with Teaching and Learning to discuss and in the fall it will be presented to a Curriculum Committee to move towards additional certificate programs and/or associate and bachelor degrees. She will follow up with this committee once the meeting takes place.

This subcommittee identified issues in the workforce at it relates to providers and direct workers. The intent is for this committee to strategize solutions to meet the challenges.

Ms. Kain informed the subcommittee that she had met with Building Pathways and they are actively seeking workers with disabilities and part of the apprenticeship individuals can earn credits towards a degree while learning a trade.

Ms. Kain suggested that they contact the Office of Immigrant and Refugees to help promote the need for direct care workers, she will reach out to the director. Some immigrants come to this country with high level degrees but those degrees are not transferable in a new country. Dr. Gentile commented that there are ways to transfer a degree – she will provide more information.

Mr. Maloney discussed the Providers Council and the pending legislation that was tucked into the opioid bill. The purpose of the legislation is to provide $100 per month for loan payments directly to lenders for direct human service providers. This loan forgiveness bill was voted out of Health and Finance and is bundled with the opioid bill. This bill was reported out favorably and is sponsored by Jeff Roy in the House.

Cambridge College – 3+1 Degree Program – first 3 years spent at a community college and the 4th year at Cambridge College – reducing the cost of getting a bachelor’s degree. The 4th year also has an online option.

Cambridge College masters’ program allows for internship opportunities with BCBA supervision. This sequence provides 1500 hours of supervised coursework.

Boston Public Schools works with Elms College for teachers to receive their BCBA.

There was discussion on the 257 rates and provider staff being paid less than the state staff. It can be difficult to incentivize staff with the rate discrepancies.

This subcommittee would like to look at the least expensive way for best outcome to a path to entry level position that builds to master’s level. What models exist and how to expand with loan forgiveness, cost effective and developing continuum ladders at the community college level.

**Goal Setting for the Current Year**

This subcommittee will look at the following priorities and come up with suggested recommendations. These will be discussed at the next meeting and members will bring models for the discussion. Up to three (3) recommendations will be provided to the Executive Director at least one week prior the September 27th Autism Commission meeting to be considered by the full commission and added to the annual report.

1. Tuition reimbursement/loan repayments to mitigate cost for credentials
2. College level ladders to aide in reduced cost of bachelor/master degrees and will give students opportunity to see a career path. (all committee members to work on this)
3. Compensation packages – salary levels and benefits – equity in compensation state vs. provider
4. (a)Marketing to recruit in Health and Human Services field

(b) Dissemination of a career path in marketing material – people are not aware of the career choices and the path – marketing is critical. (Advocates has a grant for outreach specific to respite workers)

**Autism Commission Update – Executive Director, Carolyn Kain**

Ms. Kain gave a brief update on the work of the Autism Commission.

* DDS is creative on how they are reallocating funding to ASD individuals
* Turning 22 budget will capture ASD only individuals – it is fully funded
* Three fellowships – BMC, UMass Worcester and MGH – they are looking at forensic issues with ASD and mental health. Identification and diagnosis of older adults.
* Data is looking at ID and ASD and differentiating the needs for services. DDS is using a person centered approach which helps identify what services would benefit an individual.
* Autism Commission has an updated website and the office has created brochures for families. 1. Turning Three, 2. Resource Guide for individuals and families ages 3-14 (in process) and 3. Resource Guide for ASD individuals ages 14 to 22. There were 4 statewide meetings hosted by ESE and the 14-22 guides were presented to sped directors.
* Mass Act Early released their new videos 1, 2, 3, Grow – looking at helping with early detection and they are in 8 languages and culturally linguistic.

The next meetings for this subcommittee were scheduled:

June 18, 2018 – 10:00am – 11:30am

July 23, 2018 – 10:00am – 11:30am

August 21, 2018 – 10:00am – 11:30am

The location of these meetings is still to be determined. The conference room at 500 Harrison Avenue, Boston will be reserved for all 3 meetings but that will change if other members have space for a meeting at another location.

With no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.