Autism Commission

Employment and 14-22 year old Sub-Committee Meeting

November 29, 2017, 11:00a.m. –1:00p.m.

500 Harrison Avenue

Present: Carolyn Kain, Amy Weinstock, Dianne Lescinskas, Dian Bohannon, Lea Hill, Judith Ursitti, Michael Stephansky, Terri Farrell, Jennifer Stewart and Maura Sullivan

Remote access: Elena Aubrey, Ann Guay, Michael Plansky, Michael Weiner, Tina Fitanides and Marisa McCarthy

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

The minutes from the 14-22/Employment and 22+ Employment meeting on October 25th were reviewed and Ms. Weinstock asked for one minor change to the minutes on page 1. The change was noted and with the change, the minutes were approved unanimously.

One issue that this sub-committee has continued to discuss is the need for additional ASD training for providers.

**Schedule of Meetings**

Discussion on meeting the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Wednesday may not work for all so a doodle poll will be sent out to members to schedule additional meetings.

**Training for Providers/Transition Age Youth with ASD**

Ms. Kain gave an overview of the trainings that she has been involved with thus far. This has been an unmet need and this sub-committee has been working towards addressing this issue.

* Pre ETS through MRC (vendors) – Ms. Kain has been in discussions with the Federation for Children with Special Needs and they will develop training for MRC and its pre-Ets vendors. It will be accessed through their LINK center as webinars – this is scheduled for next spring.
* Ms. Kain has requested that DDS will create three basic trainings on ASD addressing 1.) Children, 2.) Adolescents, 3.) Adults. This training is for DDS employees/providers/DMH and others. Ms. Hill will be involved in the development. This will be part of the DDS e-learning center.
* The ARC Think Tank awarded a YMCA swim program that is focused on water safety training for individuals with ASD.
* Autism Speaks and the ARC both have tool kits online for challenging behaviors
* The adult sub-committee had developed an Emergency Room card for patients to help better inform the hospital in an emergency situation (includes triggers, calming measures and contact info.)
* Mass General did a hospital wide training on ASD, and now has an ASD liaison on site. They have created ASD friendly units at the hospital.
* Boston Medical Center is developing video trainings for medical providers the training is focused on transition aged youth with ASD and the goal is to have this viewed by interns and residents. The long-term plan is to share with other hospitals across the state.
* Mass Act Early is in the process of filming videos in 7 languages to help parents identify the early signs of ASD and to seek diagnosis and treatment, the videos are also aimed at addressing ethnic and culture barriers that impact the early detection of ASD.
* DDS Northeast office is hosting training on forensic issues. Officer Michelle Maffeo (BPD) will provide the ASD training and will cover protocols that police are using now, techniques that work well and answer questions on what the police need from DDS as they encounter their clients. Officer Maffeo has trained many law enforcement professionals about ASD and she is the parents of a child with ASD.
* Maura Sullivan reported on the bill supporting ALEC training and correction officers are now included in ALEC training. There is still a need to have the training as part of officers “in-service” training. Departments are willing to do the training but they often report they cannot provide it due to financial restraints. Federal legislation would help on this issue.
* Mass Housing agreed to include training on ASD for its property managers in its spring trainings schedule. This training will be developed with input from the Housing Sub-Committee and will take place in the spring of 2018.
* DESE has Regional Meetings for their Special Education Directors and invited Ms. Kain to address the directors at these meetings. The brochures will be introduced to them to give them a better understanding of state agencies and services that exist – there will be 5 meetings in January and additional meetings in April.
* Cathy Boyle has a training for direct service providers through Autism Housing Pathways
* BMC -The Autism Program - has multiple trainings on ASD.
* The ARC Tank – Dr. Langer was awarded a grant for Pathways to Inclusive Healthcare, to have individuals going into the medical field serve as direct service providers during a “gap” year to better understand individuals with disabilities when they practice medicine in the future.
* Ms. Kain is in ongoing discussions with BTP, DESE, DDS and MRC on the 688 process and how to most effectively communicate changes that have come from the Omnibus Law and WIOA.
* Ms. Kain is meeting with the Providers Council next week to learn about their e-Academy platform – she will report back to this sub-committee next month.

\*Ms. Weinstock asked about trainings on Insurance for adults - this could be an addition to the trainings that DDS will provide

\*Ms. Weinstock also stated that the training is a bigger issue and asked if we should take this to the Commission to look at it more comprehensively.

Ms. Fitanides discussed transition coordinators and their training – she asked if using the Transition Endorsement language as guidance of the skills that are needed to work with ASD youth. The language in the guidance could be helpful to draw on topics to be addressed. This could be addressed by DESE as part of professional development. It was noted that not all school districts have transition coordinators. Would a formal survey that identifies gaps and needs be helpful?

Marisa McCarthy from Boston Public Schools updated this sub-committee on the work being done in their district to address transition services.

* Parent survey to be sent home each year (starting at age 14) to address gaps/needs
* Parent check list for families for manageable steps to be taken each year
* Embedded document in the IEP addressing community based services – to prompt conversations
* Working on the 688 process and have completed a step by step process on state agency referrals.

Other topics discussed:

* MPTE grant (DDS) – they are looking at big system thinking and mapping what works
* UMass Boston/Lesley Transition Program – who is getting this training and how can we connect? Are they addressing specific needs of ASD? It was said that some individuals receiving this endorsement are not sharing their knowledge and BPS has found that they take it back to their classroom and it is being self-contained. It is helpful to know who is participating and work with them on how it can relate to the larger districts.
* Ms. Ursitti asked if there is specific ASD trainings at the Federation – Ms. Kain said that she is not aware of any specific ASD training but would ask the Federation if this is something they would consider. MAC has done autism specific trainings in the past.
* Tina suggested that the Autism Endorsement requirements could be a good resource – the first section describes foundations and characteristics of ASD – this could give us a comprehensive view and could be used for trainings.
* Long term goal is to have a library of trainings available.
* Ms. Ursitti discussed the State of Texas and their VR councilors that are receiving autism credentials – providers that have the credential get paid a higher rate – we could think about pulling some ideas from it.
* PD would benefit college professors – many individuals with ASD do not self-identify but are taking college classes

Trainings should be put into groups to identify 1.) Groups that need training and 2.) Where training exists.

**Announcements**

* Target is hosting some sensory friendly shopping hours
* 2018 – Some self-funded insurance companies to include ABA coverage (including Raytheon) – Also Tufts and Anthem adopted coverage for their employees. Cigna announced that health plans nationwide will adopt ABA coverage and there is no age limit (including diagnosis)
* MassMutual and Brown Brothers opted out

With no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.