**Autism Commission**

Adult Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

July 24, 2019, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

500 Harrison Avenue, Boston, MA

Present: Christine Hubbard, Dianne Lescinskas, Lea Hill, Carolyn Kain, Cynthia Berkowitz, Kathy Sanders, Victor Hernandez, Maria Stefano, Nancy Marticio, Jessica Solomon Sanders, Jeanne Hoerter, Olga Yulikova and Dania Jekel

Remote Access: Sue Loring, Josh Greenburg, Michelle Brait and Chris Supple

**Remote Participation - Review and Approval of Minutes**

Carolyn 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 teleconferencing. Remote access was approved unanimously by the subcommittee members present.

The minutes from the May meeting were reviewed and were approved unanimously.

**Discussion regarding housing issues for caregivers and people aging with autism**

Mr. Hernandez joined the subcommittee members today to discuss DDS and ASD housing related issues.

* DDS is evaluating their approach to this issue
* There is no funding for ASD housing with no IDD - Individuals can use ASD funding for support services in the home
* Currently working with Elder Affairs and MassHealth to address some housing issues
* Aging with Autism – how to expand or enhance public housing through what is available or through various housing programs (HUD, Mass Housing, tax reduction set asides)
* Looking at other services that may be out there that we haven’t considered yet
* How can technology support individuals?
* Mr. Hernandez is overseeing a DDS, ASD working group addressing some of these issues
* Question on ASD and IDD residential supports – 2,400 group homes – state operated and private providers
* Mortality numbers – average age of death for DDS clients (Mr. Hernandez will get data)
* DMH – average age of death is 52/53
* DDS continues to identify issues to better meet the needs of individuals
* Is the MA policy Community Settings Rule too restrictive?
* Housing subcommittee is addressing some of the questions being raised at the meeting
* The Housing subcommittee has provided multiple trainings to the MA Housing Authority managers including at a state conference
* DDS has a prioritization process when it comes to housing – ASD only is not provided with housing through DDS but with supportive housing supports to help maintain housing

**Presentation of results of AANE Needs Survey by Jeanne Hoerter**

Jeanne Hoerter presented to this subcommittee with results from a survey that was distributed across the state. This survey evolved out of legislative advocacy when she asked a question, “What services exist for adults”. The Autism Omnibus Law opened up many services for the “newly eligible” (no ID and an IQ above 70). This survey is focused on DDS services and found that many individuals do not know about state agency support.

* 260 respondents – the survey is broken down into needs and services
* Survey participants were: 18 or older, on the autism spectrum, IQ greater than 70 and living in MA
* There is a need for more education and awareness on DDS and their services/eligibility
* Services needed – on the job support/how to keep a job – executive functioning and self-advocacy – mental health support and housing and social/community support
* Questions arose regarding DMH services – mental illness needs to be the primary diagnosis but DDS and DMH have been working together to better serve individuals with co-occurring ASD and mental health issues. The Adult subcommittee is addressing some of these issues as well
* As part of the AANE survey and mental health needs, when reported by someone other than individual, it showed a much higher need
* Issues of transportation and housing – there is a need for more support and that is true across other state agencies
* Discussion on the need for more social opportunities – the Autism Support Centers have been expanding their offerings based on what they have learned and are having more success with different types of activities. There is now a closed Facebook group for individuals to start to get to know one another prior to meeting for the first time
* Transportation needs are a large issue and that is true for all disabilities

*Discussion*

* Social isolation – need to address early
* Executive function – address earlier in younger ages in school. Some skills you can teach but many you cannot
* This population is looking for a flexible model (from DDS) with different types of services to meet the needs of individuals
* Service coordination/navigation is critical for this population
* Mass Options – it is a navigation program through Elder Affairs and could be helpful – State Plan policy groups are working on how to develop a Mass Hire for individuals with disabilities
* Promote DDS services to encourage individuals to apply
* Services are being offered in the community so not to stigmatize – interest based and not disability based
* Inclusive opportunities that are age appropriate would be beneficial
* Discussion around the challenges on finding adult providers - Dr. Solomon Sanders, new to this subcommittee, discussed the challenges including that this population doesn’t bill at a high rate, no formal training for adult specialty and no fellowships – currently looking at neurodevelopment through the lifespan

**Next Meeting**

* There will be a presentation from DDS on the self- isolation pilot program results.
* Review of the current recommendations and thoughts on new recommendations (members were encouraged to send any suggestions to Ms. Kain in advance of next meeting)

Ms. Kain reminded members that there are no requirements to submit new recommendations but an update on current recommendations could be provided for the upcoming Autism Commission report. If state agencies are involved in any new recommendations, it will require their input prior to moving forward.

State plan for Mass Hire and barriers to employment – the first draft is due to the state board by the end of September – it will then go to vote by the State Work Force board and then to the governor in November. An update on this could be added to the Autism Commission report.

The next meeting of the Adult Subcommittee is scheduled for September 11 at 10:00 a.m.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.