Massachusetts Autism Commission

Adult Subcommittee

November 23, 2023

*Via Zoom*

**Participants**

Co- Chairs: Christine Hubbard and Kathy Sanders, Dianne Lescinskas, Karen Wylie, Cynthia Berkowitz, Josh Greenberg, Beth Zwick, Carol Gracia and Janet Barbieri

**Meeting Minutes** – Dianne Lescinskas

**Guest** – Kerri Topi (Mass Options), Richard Conway (Mass Options), Adam Frank (Council on Aging), Rachel Weiner

**Welcome and Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 3, 2023**

Ms. Hubbard welcomed the members and asked that they introduce themselves. Ms. Hubbard made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 3rd, Ms. Zwick seconded the motion and with no objections, the minutes were approved.

The purpose of the meeting was to hear from Eldar Affairs and the Council on Aging on the resources available for those aging with Autism, including their caregivers who are not connected to services.

*Karen Wylie gave an overview of the work and resources from Elder Affairs:*

* The Council on Aging has a monthly training forum for outreach – typically 90-100 participants and this is already built into a schedule.
* There is also an annual conference in October on aging – it is a 3-day event, and they send out a call for presentations in May – they will circle back with this group to see if anyone would like to present.
* Starting a support group for caregivers/consumers to attend
* They could add anything we might find useful in their weekly newsletter.
* DDS is interested in this topic – unfortunately, they had a conflict today, so they were not able to attend.
* Aging Service Access Center – staff does training – help individuals already getting services and connected – or could be people who are calling and looking for services – staff is trained and know the resources.
* Home Care Team – if an individual has as a care manager they will visit once every 3 months – they ask questions about medical conditions – they could possibly add a question regarding an ASD diagnosis.
* There is also a caregiver program – if a caregiver calls and says, “someone we care for may be ASD” they could help to identify resources.
* Mass Options – program for older adults living with a disability – walk callers through a series of questions based on the need. They will refer to MRC, DDS, DMH, ILC and ASAPS based on the need.
* It was noted that some older individuals may not have an “official” diagnosis – this is part of the challenge with the older adults – they won’t have a paper trail to then get connected to services.
* A lot of ASD without ID shows up on the mental health side – it is an area that requires more specialization
* What can we build to help this population that is still struggling?
* Older individuals are looking for community and connection.
* Mass Option councilors – work with older adults with disabilities – meet in person or by phone – they have recently met with DDS as they are also looking to help this population.
* DDS provided a training for staff.
* DDS has a grant for respite.
* Autistic Adults also need help with state planning – future planning.
* It is a priority to create a welcoming space for ASD individuals and caregivers – both have compelling needs – we need to do future planning and look at sibling/extended family/state planning.
* Bridging silos – just knowing about AANE is helpful – list of resources can be helpful even if there isn’t an official diagnosis.

**Next Steps**

* Look at the training that was done by DDS and draft an action plan.
* Very helpful to hear from various organizations – can work towards a better-defined action plan.
* Do a doodle poll for next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.