Autism Commission

14-22 years of age/Employment Sub-Committee Meeting

November 5, 2018 - 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

500 Harrison Avenue – Boston, MA

Present: Judith Ursitti (Co-Chair), Toni Wolf (Co-Chair), Carolyn Kain, Dianne Lescinskas, Janine Solomon, Jeanne Hoerter, Lea Hill, Ilyse Levine, Kevin Barrett, Michael Stepansky, Michelle Brait, Gregory Rosen, and Margaret Van Gelder

Remote access: Amanda Green, Terri Farrell, Glen Gabbard and Jennifer Stewart

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

The minutes from the 14-22/Employment meeting on September 5, 2018 were reviewed, and with one minor change, were approved unanimously.

Commissioner Wolf has had discussions with Work, Inc. about their Meaningful Jobs Program and asked the subcommittee if they would like for them to come and present at a future meeting to discuss their work. Ms. Kain also discussed that this subcommittee had presentations by JVS, Triangle and Aspire. It can be helpful to hear the work that is being done by providers.

**Strategic Planning for Future Work**

The chairs of this subcommittee have discussed the work and the recommendations that have been put forth to the Autism Commission but not yet approved. These recommendations will be monitored and they would like to discuss future work and have a strategic conversation on additional and future work by this subcommittee. The four areas that will be discussed at this meeting are as follows:

1. Higher Education
2. Employment Training
3. Employment Opportunities
4. Prevalence of autism of individuals 21 years or younger who will become adults

Higher Education – this subcommittee has discussed the MAICEI Program and also College Navigators (Easter Seals) which has a program to support individuals on campus for one year. This is a pilot program and being funded by DDS.

Employment Training – There are many changes happening at MRC and their Pre ETS program – these changes will be shared at a later date. Programs discussed were Project Search which is an internship model that helps with placement at the end of the year of the internship. There is a Project Search in Springfield College for ASD individuals - this is a new model being funded by DDS. There are differences between the typical Project Search and Project Search for ASD. AANE has training for employers and they are looking at a more comprehensive service to offer employers. Nashoba works on employment skills with the more significantly impacted individuals.

Employment Opportunities – It was discussed that more individuals need better planning and placement to occur, which will lead to a higher rate of success. Identifying employment sectors may be helpful.

Prevalence of Autism of Individuals 21 Years or Younger – Ms. Kain discussed the data she collected from MassHealth, DMH, DDS and DESE. The data went back to 2003 and was also broken down by level of need. You can see the rise in numbers and the increased need of support. That data is in the Autism Commission’s 2017 Annual Report. It was noted that this subcommittee should take a look at the data and analyze it.

**General Discussion**

* Creating a “clearing house” of information and share best practices
* Different agencies are doing different things but there is no master list for families
* The AANE survey has produced over 250 responses and many are saying they didn’t know services existed for them and that is why they have not applied to DDS
* Turning 22 budget was fully allocated and they are trying to capture ASD only in this budget prior to individuals leaving the school system
* The funding around “newly eligible” was discussed and having advocacy groups focus their efforts around additional funding for those found eligible but no funding available
* The Pre-ETS RFR was discussed and this subcommittee had given feedback to the RFR last year that captured the areas of need of ASD – MRC is currently in the process of getting feedback for the new RFR
* Discussion on understanding the numbers on how many people are asking for employment services – knowing the numbers will help on growing programs
* Mr. Barrett discussed the One Care Plan through MassHealth and the coordination of care – this is helpful and could also work well to help coordinate services (including employment services) through DDS/MRC. Having a dedicated person doing service coordination and to help with accessing additional services
* The Autism Transition brochures that were created as part of this subcommittee work, were discussed. These are on the Autism Commissions website, were shared with the Autism Support Centers and there has been outreach to present these at Sped PAC meetings – they have also been shared with Special Education Directors
* There was some discussion on letting the advocacy groups know about the recommendations coming from this subcommittee

**Trainings**

Survey Questions for the FCSN training for providers – a working group will meet to formulate questions for the survey and then report back to this subcommittee. Working Group Members – Dianne Lescinskas, Carolyn Kain, Judith Ursitti, Greg Rosen and Michelle Brait.

Draft DDS training – a working group will meet to discuss the draft training for adolescents that was developed by DDS. They will report back to this subcommittee with the changes/additions to the PowerPoint. Working Group Members – Dianne Lescinskas, Carolyn Kain, Judith Ursitti, Ilyse Levine, Michele Brait, Greg Rosen and a representative from MRC.

Gap Analysis – Survey to Providers on whom they serve and where they are located – a working group will meet to create draft questions for a survey monkey to send to providers of DDS/MRC/DMH.  This will help us better understand the gap in services, look at who they serve in terms of level of support needed and where employment opportunities and providers are located geographically.  We discussed gaining a better understanding of the population they are primarily serving, specific to ASD, and if they are serving all individuals and the level of support being provided.  Using the provider and employer list that was previously created, the survey monkey will be sent to those organizations. This will help to identify resources so we will gain better knowledge of the models. Commissioner Wolf also said she will look to see what MRC is doing (who they serve and geographically located) and they may see the gaps with this data. Mr. Barrett also mentioned looking at the Mass Accessible Housing Provider List that may have additional providers to contact. Working Group Members: Janine Solomon, Jeanne Hoerter, Michael Stepansky, Judith Ursitti and Kevin Barrett.

**Next Steps**

Commissioner Wolf will invite Work, Inc. to our next meeting and they will provide a 45 minute presentation on their work. The next meeting of the Autism Commission is on December 10th and this subcommittee will meet on January 7th at 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and the working groups will update everyone on their work.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.