Autism Commission

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

March 12, 2019 - 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, Michael Stepansky, Kevin Barrett, Gyasi Burks-Abbott and Maura Sullivan

Remote access: Amanda Green, Pamela Ferguson, Terri Farrell, Kathleen Kelly, Chris Supple, Ann Guay, Greg Rosen and Michelle Brait

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 January 7, 2019 were reviewed and approved unanimously.

**Update on Pre ETS Process**

There is a new RFR and vendors are submitting applications at this time. There will be further updates at the next meeting of this subcommittee.

**Results from AANE Survey**

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 and IQ above 70). She is currently in the process of writing a report based off the findings from the survey. 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
* Work, Inc. presented in January and is using both employment and clinical support with individuals as part of a grant and Maura Sullivan discussed the ARC and a bill that promotes collaboration of both DDS and DMH
* 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
* Results show the need for more supports related to housing and it was suggested we share the results of this survey with the co-chairs of the Housing Subcommittee
* 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 – what models are out there currently?
* Suggestions for Service Delivery – peer mentors – DMH is doing this model now and is effective

***Action Items***

* Ms. Hoerter would like to create a focus group to go through the qualitative data for types of services needed
* Front door access state agency
* Other subcommittee work that is related to the results of the survey
* Ms. Hoerter will look at Greg Rosen’s presentation and combine with her findings of the survey
* Early education in schools on “what exists” in terms of support – IEP checklist (Brockton Public has a checklist – DESE working on a new IEP)
* It was asked that subcommittee members send their thoughts on “action items” to Dianne Lescinskas. She will compile a list and share with the co-chairs to be discussed at the next meeting

**Employment Presentation**

Greg Rosen joined the meeting via telephone to present his PowerPoint; *Solutions for Autism Issues in Massachusetts.*

* High School Level Need – better career counseling, internships, improved special education and introduction to autism friendly careers. Career education starting in 8th and 9th grade
* More emphasis on vocational opportunities – not everyone wants to go to college – career guidance
* Internships to include the trades – Unions that support ASD, look at union #25 (Teamsters) they host a gala each year and funds are donated to ASD related organizations – meet with them to discuss workforce development for ASD
* Post High School – improved vocational training and looking at Autism Advantage programs
* List of Autism friendly colleges and trade schools
* College – Expand program at Salem State University (support groups, internships)
* Buy in for employers – look at the high retention rate of ASD employees – it is a cost saving measure and this is critical to employers. The ARC of Philadelphia and SAP are working together and collecting information on retention and outcomes
* Post College – mentors, support activities and improved training with MRC and DDS

The next meeting of this subcommittee will be in April. The co-chairs will come up with a date and email members.

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