Autism Commission Sub-Committee for Workforce Development Meeting Minutes

September 26, 106, 9:30am-11:30am

1881 Worcester Rd, Framingham

Attendees: Co-Chairs: Dr. Patricia Gentile, Dr. Patricia Marshall: Members: Sue Houle, Katherine Johnson, Jeff Keilson, Dr. Carolyn Langer, Liz Martineau, Mike Moloney, Steve Sullivan and Susan Senator; Exec. Director Commission: Carolyn Kain. There were no members participating remotely at this meeting.

Michael Moloney gave an update on the direct care worker lattice, developmental specialist, need to look at the hourly rate and annual salary for this position. Michael said they have been in discussions with the state about adding direct care workers to the GIC. He also said there is a loan forgiveness program with state colleges. Michael said that are expecting a report from the Donohue institute at UMass regarding 156,000 workers and he will share that report with us.

Dr. Carolyn Langer provided an update of the environmental scan, and explained the updated information on the direct care worker lattice, and that she will look at incorporating the lattices together.

Jeff Keilson mentioned the new issue of overtime pay for any respite or PCA worker performing more than 40 hours a week and hat also pertains to a provider working for more than one individual and the combined hours also triggered when overtime was required. The OT for PCAs is estimated to be $39 million and programs are currently being cut and no expanded.

Community college systems, RBT certifications, direct support staff get free tuition at state colleges but the cost of fees is higher than the actual tuition costs. Dr. Gentile mentioned that the Board of Trustees at each college sets the fees for state colleges.

Susan Senator said that she felt that the entry level staff needed to be viewed like those in public education, to continue the supports and services that individuals have received in school.

Liz Martineau talked about the cost of service over a lifetime for individuals with ASD and a recent report by Michael Gantz. She mentioned that additional monies are available for folks through the S-Qual but many parents do not know about this funding and to ask for it.

Sue Houle said they should look ask the Department of Labor to look at this pathway and show a clear career development for people entering the field.

Carolyn Kain mentioned the Best Buddies program and their employment support program which provides longer term support.

Katherine Johnson reviewed the developing workforce and compared the rates of doctors and nurses being billed on an hourly basis and how BCBAs get about 56% of a nurse’s salary even though the same level of education is required. The BCBA rate is 50% opf a nurse practitioner’s billable rate, and that makes it harder to compete for the same workforce. Katherine agreed to do a cost analysis on the position of paraprofessionals. Carolyn Langer commented that there are competing professions at each level of the lattice.

The group agreed that they needed to explore some out of the box thinking to motivate people to enter into the workforce for direct care, ABA therapists and BCBAs to increase the volume to meet the current demands. Michael Moloney talked about the need for a tuition remission program. Carolyn Langer talked about the need to expand programs like Operation House call to dental schools and all providers that come into contact with individuals with ASD.

How do we market ABA to students, can this occur through MassABA?

Jeff K mentioned the need to staff ESPs, and that this required a level of understanding to work with individuals in crisis.

Next steps, Liz Martineau will do a cost benefit analysis, Katherine Johnson will look at paraprofessionals. Sue H will look at technical high schools and what they are offering, and P. Gentile will contact the Voc. tech associations.

There being no further business, upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the Chairs Dr. Gentile and Dr. Marshall adjourned the meeting at about 11:30am.

Next Meeting: Monday, October 31, 2016, 12:30 – 2:30 PM, Advances Offices, 51 Water St #200, Watertown, MA 02472 (same office as the meeting on July 25th)