

Autism Spectrum Disorder Task Force Meeting Minutes September 11, 2013

Parent training ideas were discussed. SAND grant is able to provide this type of training. There are varied resources around the state in this area.

Discussion on method to better reflect the actions and efforts of the task force. A subcommittee was formed (Cathy Haarstad, Teresa Larsen, Carol Johnson, Trisha Page) to consider options and make recommendations to the task force at the next meeting.

Dr. Darrin Dobrinski shared that a research study is being done on the role of school psychologists in rural schools in autism 5 – 6 state study. He will keep the task force informed of this study.

Pathfinders has hired an outreach coordinator, Kirsten Dvorack, and she is located in Bismarck.

DPI reported they have a plan to implement the Common Core Standards in ND. These standards are being implemented in 47 states.

Protection and Advocacy shared that referrals have increased. There are more reports of difficulty obtaining approval for out of state services.

Department of Health reported that they have had significant staff turnover.

Trisha Page introduced herself to the task force. DHS hired her as the state autism coordinator. Her phone number is 701-328-8949.

Department of Health reported they hope to have the autism registry staff hired by the end of the year. Department of Human Services hired the coordinator, Trisha Page, who started September 4th. It was shared that a request for an extension of the current waiver was submitted but denied. This means that current efforts are on renewing the waiver as it is, not with changes. Once approved, an amendment will be submitted with the changes needed to reflect legislative additions, direction, and those items noted over the first waiver time period. Work is being done with DPI on training. Department of Public Instruction reported their training efforts in the autism area.

Public Comment

Task force urged to consider child safety and referred to the several situations one, in which a child with autism drowned. There was recommendation that the task force look

at the autism assessments be viewed in a more flexible manner and not a 'one-size-fits all' approach. It was felt that the huge expense of these clinics serves a small amount of kids. Task force member shared that the goal is to have the capacity for regional multidisciplinary clinics. A recommendation was forwarded to address the gap for children that are non-verbal. A question was asked if the an evaluation for autism will go onto the autism registry and if so, if that evaluation could be used for the waiver. There is no evaluation on the registry. A comment was made about the lack of services post diagnosis.

Task Force was asked to consider options and make recommendation to DHS on how to prioritize within the transition from the current to the new autism waiver.

Task force recommends to first prioritize children served in the current waived, second, those that were in the current waiver and aged out but would still be eligible for the new waiver, followed by first come, first serve.

Task Force reviewed the prior plan and made comments on updating and moving things forward. The areas reviewed were funding needs, training needs, and infrastructure. The updates will be reflected on a handout for the next meeting.

Next meeting will be December 16, 2013.