

# Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Task Force Meeting Minutes

October 29, 2018

**Task Force members present:** Maggie Anderson, Jennifer Flores, Dawn Hanson, Holly Johnson, Teresa Larsen, Vicki Peterson, Gerry Teevens, Nancy Ulrich-Crotty

**Task Force members present via polycom/phone:** Senator Joan Heckaman, Mary Jaeger, Connie Lillejord, Heather Opland, Catherine Yeager

**Absent:** Dr. Thomas Carver, Carol Johnson, Kodi Pinks, John Watkins

A quorum of Task Force members was present.

Guests (present and via polycom/phone): Cheryl Hess-Anderson, Katherine Barchenger, Molly Carmody, Amy Clemons, Shannon Cone, Cristine Deaver, Rebekka Freije, Krista Fremming, Susan Gerenz, Lynette Horn, Kaitlin Kurtz, Marisa Misek, Melanie Phillips, Lorena Poppe, Sandy Smith, Heather Steffl, Farrah Thoreson, Ashley Toth

**Meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m.**

**Review of minutes-** August 2018 minutes were reviewed.

Gerry Teevens made the motion to approve the minutes. Vicki Peterson seconded the motion. 12 yay/0 nay. Motion passed.

## **ABA/BCBA program at UND- Cristine Deaver, ABA Graduate Director**

- UND started offering the ABA/BCBA program in the fall of 2013. The program was approved by the national board.
- The program started with four students the first semester. The program now admits around 15-25 students every semester and of those, around five are typically from North Dakota.
- Admissions are done three times a year: summer for fall semester, fall for spring semester and spring for summer semester.
- The program is completely online except the intensive practicum and group supervision. UND has two full-time faculty teaching the coursework and providing the supervision. From time to time, UND will have adjunct faculty to assist with the courses.
- 18 credits are required if the student is only completing the core sequencing and they already have a master's degree in education, psychology or applied behavior analysis.
- Students can obtain their experience hours in 3 ways: Supervised independent field work- students can start this once they have enrolled in their first courses.
  - 1500 hours and supervision of five percent of the student's work. The student meets with their supervisor every 2 weeks.
  - 1000 hours and supervision of 7.5 percent of the student's work. The student meets with their supervisor every week.

- 750 hours and supervision of 10percent of the student’s work. The student meets with the supervisor every week.

### **Employment for adults with ASD-Cheryl Hess from DHS Vocational Rehabilitation services**

- Individuals who apply for service needs to have a documented medical or psychological condition that would substantially affect their ability to either obtain or maintain employment. The individual requires services through vocational rehabilitation (VR) to be successful in their employment situation.
- After the counselor and the individual complete the intake, the next step is to complete a diagnostic interview which includes the medical condition and how the condition affects their employment situation. The counselor also obtains information on the individual’s social and medical history.
  - Counselors obtain documentation of diagnosis through medical professionals or information through the school system if the individual is of transition age.
- The counselor has 60 days to determine eligibility.
  - An eligibility extension can happen if further documentation is needed such as a medical examination or psychological assessment to determine eligibility. The extension is for another 60 days.
- The next step is completion of the comprehensive assessment. The counselor helps to identify the individual’s abilities, capabilities, strengths, interests, needs and desires as it relates to their employment goal.
  - The counselor matches the comprehensive assessment to an employment goal and writes the employment plan. The counselor has 90 days from the eligibility date to complete the employment plan.
- There are slots designated for individuals who need extended /ongoing services that don’t qualify for developmental disabilities (DD) waived services. These slots are designated for individuals with a serious mental illness (SMI). To qualify, the individual needs a diagnosis of SMI and be receiving case management services through a human service center.
  - There are “other” slots for individuals who don’t qualify for DD or SMI services but still need supports. There are 51 “other” slots.
- VR served 3,555 individuals in the Federal Fiscal Year 2018. Nine percent (324) of these individuals had an ASD diagnosis.
  - Of the 324 individuals with an ASD diagnosis, it was the primary disability for 247 individuals. For 77 individuals, it was listed as an “any” disability cause, which could be the second, third or fourth diagnosis.
  - Successful VR closures for FFY 2018 included 28 individuals with ASD as the primary disability and 14 individuals with ASD listed as any disability cause.
  - Supported Employment Services -64 individuals with an ASD diagnosis have supported employment services listed in their plan.
    - For 45 individuals, ASD is listed as the primary disability.
    - For 19 individuals, ASD is listed as any disability cause.

- For successfully closed VR cases with a supported employment plan, 10 individuals had an ASD diagnosis.
  - For 7 individuals, the ASD diagnosis was listed as the primary disability.
  - For 3 individuals, the ASD diagnosis was listed as any disability cause.

#### **Current operations updates:**

#### **Waiver**

- As of September 30, 2018, 88 children were enrolled.
- DHS is working on transitioning children from the waitlist to enrolled.
- There is still concern about service management provider shortages. The autism services staff will be sending a letter to currently enrolled Medicaid behavioral health providers to seek individuals and entities interested in providing service management.

#### **Voucher**

- There have been families that have come off the voucher program this year for various reasons: the family moved out of state, the family called and stated they have received everything they need and no longer need the voucher, or the child has aged off the voucher.
- DHS is still receiving voucher applications and is encouraging families to apply for the program.
- Two families who applied didn't qualify due to being over the 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

#### **ABA**

- Since coverage began in August 2017, there have been 180 children approved for services.
- There are 34 board-certified behavior analysts (BCBAs) and 56 registered behavior technicians (RBTs) in the state.
- Currently, there are no approved service plans for ABA during school time. All the service plans are for after school.

#### **Autism Waiver renewal**

- The waiver renewal has been approved. The waiver approval is for November 1, 2018.
- There were some major changes that were approved as part of the waiver renewal :
  - Assistive technology purchases will no longer be made through the fiscal agent. The purchases will now be made by autism services staff. The item(s) purchased will be shipped directly to the child's home.
  - Service management is changing from 4 hours per week to 16 hour per month.
  - Practitioners who are able to make a diagnosis of ASD will be consistent with providers who are required to report diagnoses made to the Department of Health's autism database.

## **ASD State Plan**

- There was discussion on changes that should be made before the plan can be approved:
  - Page 4, #5- remove the progress notes about how the clinics are funded.
    - Krista Fremming suggested to remove all progress notes. The workgroups can meet and clarify and fill in the progress section.
    - Add December 2018 to the timeline.
  - Page 9, objective #1, #1-edit draft, so it reads “DOH Autism Database Administrator Conduct Analysis”
    - The timeline also needs to be changed from December 2018 to July 2019.
  - Page 9, objective #1, #2-remove Family Voices, so it reads “Family Organizations secure grant funding.”
  - Page 3, #2- add the timeline of December 2019.

Teresa Larsen made the motion to approve the Autism State Plan as amended. Nancy Ulrich-Crotty seconded the motion. 13 yay/0 nay: motion passed.

- **Workgroup updates**
  - **Children’s**
    - No updates from the children’s workgroup.
  - **Adult’s**
    - No updates from the adult’s workgroup.

## **ASD Task Force State Plan Report to Governor and Legislative Council-due December 2018**

- The workgroups will meet to write progress notes for the ASD State Plan to be included in the report to the Governor. The workgroups should email their written progress to Melanie Phillips and Krista Fremming by December 7.

## **Task Force recommendations for legislation for 2019 legislative session**

- Increase the age (by at least 2 years) and increase the number of slots (minimum of 12) for the ASD waiver. The department would have the discretion based on looking at the trajectory of the budget in December 2019; if funding allows, submit a waiver amendment for the increases. If a waiver amendment is submitted, the department could look at adding in-home support for children 12 years and older who no longer can go to daycare.
- Training dollars-ask for \$160,000. The Task Force would provide input to DHS on how the training dollars could be utilized.
- Create separate slots in VR for employment and ongoing services for people with autism. The task force recommends 24 slots (estimating 3 per region).
- Parent to parent assistance for the voucher-would assist parents with setting up informal supports and decrease their dependency on voucher funds.
- Split the voucher into two vouchers-one for ongoing services and one for assistive technology.

- The ongoing services would include respite and tutoring. The task force would also like to propose a tiered system based on age for the number of hours that are approved.
- Increase loan repayment slots and funding for BCBA/ABA professionals. Increase the total number of slots or set aside a certain number of slots for BCBA/ABAs.

**2019 Task Force meeting dates**

- Proposed dates: February 4, May 13, August 19 and November 18

**Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.**

Transcribed on 11.15.2018