

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Task Force Meeting Minutes

May 14, 2018

Task Force members present: Maggie Anderson, Vicki Peterson, Connie Lillejord, Tom Carver, Dawn Hanson, Senator Joan Heckaman

Task Force members present via polycom/phone: John Watkins, Mary Ann Jaeger, Nancy Ulrich-Crotty, Heather Opland and Catherine Yeager

Absent: Teresa Larsen, Kodi Pinks, Gerry Teevens, Carol Johnson and Jennifer Flores

A quorum of Task Force members were present.

Guests (present and via polycom/phone): Katherine Barchenger, Kaitlin Kurtz, Melanie Phillips, Krista Fremming, Susan Gerenz, Lorena Poppe, Trisha Page, Dan Johnson, Stephanie Nelson, Tim Eissinger, Paula Johnson, Carmen Peck, Rachel Hafner, Drew Jaeger, Joan Carpicle, Myra Quanrud, Taylor Hill, Steph Wilke, Kaitlyn Kadma, Kim Hruby, Amy Clemons and Sandy Smith

Meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m.

Review of minutes- February 2018 minutes were reviewed.

Vicki Peterson moved approval; Connie Lillejord seconded. 10 yay/0 nay: motion passed.

Update-Task Force Membership

- There is one open position - behavioral specialist
 - The Medical Services Division is waiting for the list of applicants from the Governor's office.

Autism Unit Operations

Waiver (as of 5-14-2018)

- 52 children active on the waiver
- 12 families working on the level of care
- 13 families completing Medicaid eligibility
- 8 locating psychological diagnosis
- 2 working on scheduling their psychological diagnosis
- After the waiver is full at 96 slots, there will be a waitlist of 14 children. There will be a waitlist because some children have come off the waiver and those spots can't be filled until November 1st each year.
- Waiver services are: service management (case management), respite and assistive technology. One service per quarter is required.

- Families must have service management as that is how they will complete the single plan of care
- Diagnostic Criteria- the diagnosis must come from a psychologist or psychiatrist for families to be able to access the waiver.
- When the waiver is open in June for public comment, the public can address any recommended changes, including which practitioners should be considered for providing diagnosis.

Autism Voucher

- Applications for the new voucher year will be available June 1st for 53 slots. A public notice will be issued.
- Strategizing ideas on how to help families understand what the voucher funds can be spent on.
 - Some ideas- provide families with a handout that explains what the voucher will/will not cover. Discussion included whether families need case management to help with the purchases and whether every child needs the full \$12,500?
 - Families receiving voucher funds for numerous years and/or have multiple children on the voucher at the same time. The discussion confirmed the Task Force would like children to be eligible for multiple years and each child to be eligible for the full amount.
- Medicaid staff will meet internally to discuss changes to the voucher and will plan to discuss with the Task Force at the August meeting.

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

- On average, ND Medicaid is receiving five applications a week for pre-approval for ABA services.
- Expenditures are low so far this biennium - but summer is coming, so we expect children will be utilizing more hours. There was discussion on how to accurately project expenditures to build the budget for the upcoming biennium.
 - It was noted that ABA services are being rendered but not billed yet due to waiting on denial letters from primary insurance, getting new providers enrolled, etc.
 - Kathy will send an email survey to providers to ask about workforce/hiring plans and estimates on numbers of children they project to serve in the upcoming biennium.
- It was reported that licensing for BCBA's seems to be extensive and not done in a timely manner.
- It was noted that the barrier of the licensing should be included in the letter to the Governor for his annual report.
- Providers should consider utilizing telemedicine for BCBA's to do the program oversight.
- DPI Special Education has invited ND Medicaid to provide information on IEP Medicaid services at the Special Education Leadership Training on June 5.

Autism Voucher Survey

- Doing a survey for the autism voucher was discussed at the February 2018 meeting. The survey would assess families' understanding of the voucher and how it can be used, suggestions for improvement, etc.
- Refer to the handout 'Autism Voucher Survey'.
- ND Medicaid will send a survey and bring back the results to the August 2018 meeting.

Workgroup Updates

- Children's Workgroup
 - There was discussion around the handout 'ASD Task Force Plan Update'.
 - The group worked to include the recommendations from the last Task Force meeting in the state plan.
 - The children's workgroup will look further at the goals and objectives in their section of the state plan to see which ones need to stay for the final version of the plan.
 - The survey that was sent this spring to the American Academy of Pediatrics (ND State Chapter), and the state physician assistant and nurse practitioner organizations has had less than five responses.
- Adult's Workgroup
 - The workgroup contacted agencies to see how they are serving people with ASD and if they had any data related to people they serve with ASD. They looked at developmental disabilities, vocational rehabilitation, foster care/adult foster care and the justice system
 - Suggestion was made to finalize the state plan before deciding on surveys/focus groups, since a few different surveys are suggested in the state plan.
- ASD Task Force State Plan
 - A suggestion related to the plan format was made - try to make it easier to fill out and read.
 - The Task Force should be working with outside people to help meet the goals of the ASD State Plan.
- The goal for the ASD State Plan is to have it approved at the October meeting and published on the Task Force web before the end of the year.

Survey completed in 2010 and 2014-do we need another survey in 2018?

- Past surveys were done in 2010 and 2014; does another survey need to be completed?
 - The purpose of the past surveys was to obtain input from families, providers, policymakers and people with ASD regarding supports, resources and challenges faced by people with ASD in ND.
 - There was a discussion on a 2018 survey to show how providers are doing better with their screenings. It was decided that no surveys would be issued until the State Plan is finalized.

Out of Home Placement

- DPI reported that in 2017-2018 (last 5 quarters), there has been a range of 2 to 11 children with primary ASD diagnosis placed in out of state residential treatment facilities at any given time.
 - As of May 2018, of the 23 children placed in out of state residential treatment facility, there are two children with an ASD diagnosis.

Department of Human Services 2019-2021 biennial budget

- Governor issued budget guidelines in April 2018.
 - Most agencies need to budget for a 10% general fund reduction. The guidelines also included a 5% FTEs reduction and a 3% contingency savings plan.
 - Medicaid is excluded

Services to kids/families in rural areas of the state

- How can we work together to make it feasible to serve families that live in rural areas of North Dakota?
- Strategizing ideas on how to get services to families in rural areas-telemedicine was discussed.
- Trying to find the workforce in the rural areas is a challenge.

ABA Services Discussion

- Since Medicaid is generally the payer of last resort, if a service is covered by Medicaid but not the primary payer(s), providers must obtain a denial letter from the primary payer(s) for Medicaid to pay for the service.
- The claims processing system (MMIS) currently has no option to upload attachments. The work around for providers is to fax the denial letters to the Medicaid claims processing department. A change request has been filed to add the upload attachments feature in MMIS, but it is unknown when this feature will be available.
- Submitting different claims for each provider causes a back log of claims that need to be submitted.
- Consideration of any education degree as an approved degree for RBTs – if there are degrees that you would like ND Medicaid to consider, send the request to Kathy along with the curriculum for the degree.
 - Agencies must wait to submit claims under new providers until they are enrolled with ND Medicaid, and enrollment takes a few weeks to process.
- Regarding ABA services for children who do not have an ASD diagnosis - evidence would need to be presented to show support that ABA works for children that have diagnoses other than ASD.

Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Transcribed: 5.18.2018