

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Task Force Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2019

Task Force members present: Krista Fremming, Senator Joan Heckaman, Holly Johnson, Teresa Larsen, Vicki Peterson, Kodi Pinks

Task Force members present via polycom/phone: Dawn Hanson, Mary Jaeger, Carol Johnson, Heather Opland, Nancy Ulrich Crotty, Catherine Yeager

Absent: Dr. Thomas Carver, Jennifer Flores Connie Lillejord, Gerry Teevens, John Watkins

A quorum of Task Force members was present.

Guests (present and via polycom/phone): Katherine Barchenger, Susan Gerenz, Kaitlin Kurtz, Melanie Phillips, Lorena Poppe, Sandy Smith, Scoti Welder

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

Review of minutes- February 4, 2019 meeting minutes were reviewed.

Teresa Larsen made the motion to pass the minutes. Kodi Pinks seconded the motion. 13 yay/ 0 nay. Motion passed.

2019 Legislative Session-impacts on ASD Services

- SB 2012 (DHS budget)
 - ASD waiver- Legislature added language for DHS to consult with the Task Force at the November 2019 meeting to assess biennium spending to date-then to possibly add slots or increase the age of the waiver to allow for additional children to be served.
 - HB 1115 modifies North Dakota Century Code 50-24.1-26 to increase the age of the autism waiver to 14.
 - ASD voucher-Legislature added language that reads, DHS has the flexibility to consult with the Task Force on additional flexibility for administration of the voucher program:
 - Have one voucher solely for technology support and one voucher for in-home supports.
 - Case management and parent to parent support as an allowable service.
 - Also, looking at reducing the amount of time which a household may use their funds.
 - DHS is going to review and start making proposed edits administrative rules-DHS will bring the proposed changes back to the Task Force meeting in August. The voucher rules need to be effective on April 1, 2020.

- Extended Services
 - DHS received funding for extended services to be used specifically designated for individuals with autism.
 - Starting January 1, 2020, 24 slots for individuals with ASD will be available. The extended services are meant to be an extension for individuals who have completed Vocational Rehabilitation programs to continue and keep being successful with their employment.
- SB 2236 (licensing of behavior analysts)
 - Changes from current licensing board, Psychology Examiners to the ND Integrated Healthcare Board passed and will be effective January 1, 2020.
 - One applied behavior analyst (ABA) will be appointed to the board. An advisory group of 3-5 ABAs will advise the board.
 - Once there are 100 ABAs in ND, they will have to have their own regulatory board.
 - Currently there are 32 ABAs in ND. There are 2 assistant ABAs in ND that are inactive due to not having a supervisor.
 - The requirements for students will be changing in 2022. More coursework and hours will be increased. The timeline for degree completion will be lengthened.
- SB 2143 (student loan repayment)
 - Holly Johnson worked with Bobbie Will from the Department of Health (DoH) to write testimony for ABAs to be added to the list for the student loan repayment. ABAs were not added.
 - DOH budget was finalized before the recommendation to add ABAs to the repayment program. This is something the task force will look at working with DoH on sooner in preparation for the 2021 legislative session.

2019 ASD Task Force survey results and discussions

- ASD Task Force distributed a survey to Task Force members who sent out to their networks. DHS sent out a media release about the survey to encourage anyone who has a connection to ASD to complete it. There was also targeted outreach to region 3 as the initial responses from that region were low.
- There were 374 respondents to the survey which was an increase from the 2010 (187 respondents) and 2014 (110 respondents) ASD Task Force surveys.
- Common findings from the survey were: There needs to be more services, supports and training.

Current Operations updates:

- There are currently 22 children on the autism waiver waitlist.
- The 96 slots for the autism waiver have been offered out.

DHS Autism Services and Task Force webpages-analytics information and ideas to increase reach

- DHS will start working with Information Technology Department updating the department's website.
- Using social media as another platform to reach families (Facebook and Twitter).
- Each of the workgroups (children's and adults) should come up with some message ideas for press releases that could be proactively sent out throughout the year.

ASD State Plan

- Workgroups didn't meet during legislative session.
- Workgroups are asked to meet between May and August meeting to go through and make updates to the progress column of the ASD Task Force State Plan.

Other Topics for Discussion

- On May 11th Minot held "Wings for Autism" which brings an empty airplane to the airport for children with disabilities. The airport is empty between flights and the children get a real-life experience:
 - Receiving their boarding pass at the counter
 - Going through security
 - Waiting for their airplane at the gate for about an hour or so. They get to board the plane.
- Community Project in the Fargo area- "Safety Jacket"- this is a project targeted towards first responders and how they can become autism friendly.
 - Parents will fill out the child's information on the site. When a call is placed to 911 for either the address or specifically for the child, it will pull up the address or child and have the jacket linked-the responders can click on the jacket and it will bring the child's information up and how they can de-escalate a situation and what to do/not to do in certain situations.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Transcribed: 5/15/2019