

## **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Task Force Meeting Minutes**

February 24, 2020

**Task Force members present: Lacy Bergh, Krista Fremming, Holly Johnson, Teresa Larsen, Connie Lillejord, Vicki Peterson, Kodi Pinks, Myra Quanrud, Gerry Teevens, Kristi Wolff**

**Task Force members present via polycom/phone: Senator Joan Heckaman, Carol Johnson, Heather Opland, Samantha Stewart, Nancy Ulrich-Crotty**

**Absent: Dawn Hanson, Catherine Yeager**

A quorum of Task Force members was present.

Guests (present and via polycom/phone): Amy Armstrong, Kathy Barchenger, Cris Deaver, Kirsten Dvorak, Matt Dvorak, Susan Gerenz, Jodi Hulm, Vicki Larroway, Steph Nelson, Lorena Poppe, Roxanne Romanick, Jenna Weiss, William (Protection and Advocacy), Beth (Anne Carlsen Center)

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

**Review of minutes-** Dr. Quanrud made the motion to pass. Dr. Johnson seconded the motion.

No further discussion of minutes.

Yay 14/0 nay: motion passed.

### **Using Telehealth for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)-Carol Johnson and Cris Deaver, University of North Dakota:**

Evidence has supported utilizing ABA via telehealth for both parents instructing parents to implement procedures such as preference assessments, behavior assessments, as well as Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) or other therapists to implement the procedures.

Wide variety of specific interventions that have been trained and taught via telehealth, including the implantation of a functional analysis which would lead to functional communication training, so the client can learn a way to communicate.

There are articles on how to provide telehealth ethically and which systems work better than others.

Even though it is evidence based, utilizing ABA via telehealth may not work for every child/family but ABA via telehealth should work for the majority of children/families

Barriers to using telehealth for ABA: time (parents), equipment to provide telehealth, ensuring secure platform.

## **Advancing Students Toward Education and Employment Program (ASTEP)-Amy Armstrong**

The program has been with Minot State University since 2010 when they were awarded their first federal grant. The second grant was awarded in 2015. The current grant funding ends in September 2020. With the current grant funding, there is a requirement for the program to be for students with intellectual disabilities. The program is continuing in the fall of 2020, however, ASTEP will no longer be utilizing federal grant funding. The funds will now come from current vocational rehab funding, funding from Minot State University and the program will start charging a fee.

The program fee will be \$4,000/semester plus families will be responsible for tuition and fees, and room and board if the student lives on campus. The grant funding pays for professional staff and peer mentors.

Without the federal grant funding and the requirement to only serve individuals with intellectual disabilities, ASTEP can expand their eligibility.

The process to apply for this program are as follows: referral to ASTEP program, ASTEP reaches out to family or teacher for release of information for students most recent IEP and any other recent assessment records to determine eligibility, student and family tour the campus, ASTEP has an interview with the student and family (to ensure they can support the student and ensure safety), 3 letters of recommendation for the student to attend the program, the final step is to let the family know if they are eligible, if they are, the family starts the paperwork and registering for classes the following Fall.

Students need to be 18-26 years to participate in the program. The program takes about 3 years to complete.

## **Echo-hub of experts who give knowledge to providers who are working with families-Dr. Myra Quanrud**

Dr. Aurora, a physician and liver specialist in New Mexico started the Echo program. He had patients with hepatitis C waiting 8 months to see him. Echo brings 15-20 family doctors, nurse practitioners and anyone who was willing to treat hepatitis C. Dr. Aurora would train the team to be liver specialists. The team would bring their case(s) to him, he listens and advises, then the team can go forth and treat more patients.

Echo started with treating patients, who are remote, with hepatitis C and has expanded to HIV, Alzheimer's, chronic health and mental health. Echo has gone worldwide.

Dr. Quanrud also showed videos and spoke about her PowerPoint.

## **ASD Voucher-care coordination and assistance with planning for expenditures**

Care Coordination is the person-centered activity to assist parent, custodian or legal guardian with the development of a plan to address needs/deficits created due to an individual having an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis. This service may assist in identifying community resources, education and exploring

options with the intent to assist parent, custodian or legal guardian in communicating across agencies for continuum of care of identified child.

Care coordination would come out the \$12,500 that is allocated to each child. Families would have someone to talk to them about the voucher, make suggestions for how to utilize the funds through the voucher.

#### **ASD waiver-increase to number of slots**

The waiver is going to be increased by 14 slots, so total slots will be 110. The change will be effective August 1, 2020.

As of January 2020, the waiver now serves children through their 13<sup>th</sup> birthday.

#### **ASD operations budget: 2019-2020 enrollment/expenditures dashboard**

Waiver: 30 children are currently on the waiver waitlist. Increasing the slots will help alleviate the waitlist a bit.

1915(i) is a community-based behavior health services waiver. Autism Spectrum Disorder is an eligible diagnosis.

Voucher: About \$412,500.00 was allocated for the autism voucher for the biennium. Only spent about 5% of allocated funds.

1 letter of inactivity was sent out. The family was closed after reaching out and they no longer want/need the autism voucher.

ABA: 400 children are approved for ABA services.

#### **ABA workforce updates:**

As of February 1, 2020, there are: 2 BCBA-Ds, 39 BCBAAs, 0 BCaBAs and 69 RBTs. 2 BCBAAs were added, and the RBTs decreased by 19. The RBT decrease could be college students graduating and moving onto their career and/or moving out of state.

As of January 1, 2020, the licensing board changed to Integrated Health Board.

Board exam used to be only 4 times a year. It is now on demand exam as of February 1, 2020. When you leave you know if you passed the exam or not.

Krista and Holly worked on a proposal asking the Department of Health to specifically add BCBA student loan repayment program to their student loan repayment program. Bobbie Will who runs the student loan repayment program has given feedback that there are many requests for certain degrees be added to the student loan repayment program.

#### **ND Autism Conference-April 29-30, 2020**

Jennifer Flores is a keynote speaker at the conference this year.

Department of Human Services is providing stipends for parents or adults with autism for the conference.

The conference is providing childcare this year.

### **ASD State Plan**

Discussion at the November 2019 meeting was to possibly reorganize the ASD State Plan and the workgroups. A survey monkey was sent out and 3 new “buckets” were made to help reorganize the state plan: access to services and supports, training and education and communication and public awareness.

The workgroups are going to be reorganized as well to revitalize the ASD State Plan.

### **Other Topics for Discussion**

DPI tracks the diagnoses of students who have IEPs. ASD as the primary diagnosis has steadily increased by 5% every year.

Autism waiver survey was sent out in January 2020. 96 surveys were sent out to the waiver families. Families are slowly responding to the survey.

At the May 2020 meeting, discussion on how to address families concerns about not choosing their respite hours, who is on their team and where the meeting was held.

Connie Lillejord made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Gerry Teevens seconded the motion.

Yay 14/0 nay: motion passed.

**Adjourned: 4:45 p.m.**

**Next meeting: May 18, 2020. 1-4:45 p.m. (CDT)**

**Transcribed: 3/11/2020**