

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Task Force Meeting Minutes May 18, 2020

Task Force members present via polycom/phone: Lacey Bergh, Jennifer Flores, Krista Fremming, Dawn Hanson, Senator Joan Heckaman, Carol Johnson, Teresa Larsen, Connie Lillejord, Heather Opland, Kodi Pinks, Dr. Myra Quanrud, Samantha Stewart, Gerry Teevens, Nancy Ulrich-Crotty

Absent: Kristie Wolff, Catherine Yeager

A quorum of Task Force members was present.

Guests (present and via polycom/phone): Katherine Barchenger, Marsha Dupre, Kristin Dvorak, Susan Gerenz, Jodi Hulm, Kaitlin Kurtz, Carolyn Meske, Vicki Peterson, Lorena Poppe and Tami Ternes

This was a virtual Microsoft Teams meeting due to COVID-19.

Meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m.

Review of minutes - Dr. Quanrud made the motion to pass. Gerry Teevens seconded the motion.

No further discussion of minutes.

Yay 15/0 nay: motion passed.

Autism Spectrum Assistance Program (ASAP) - Marsha Dupre from North Dakota Association for the Disabled (NDAD):

Program launched in 2020. The program serves children, youth, and adults with ASD when there is no other payment option available to them through local, state, and federal programs.

ASAP can help pay with medical travel expenses (gas card), these appointments can include occupational, physical, or speech/language therapy and behavioral health.

Respite can also be a service that is paid for. It would be up to 8 hours a week and up to \$650.00 dollars a month for the family. The family would choose their own respite worker and track the hours that were provided. NDAD would provide a check to the family, it would then be the families responsibility to pay the respite worker.

There are two parts to the application process, the application itself and the release of information. NDAD reviews the most recent household income tax return. If the family has not filed taxes, they can submit social security benefit letter, year end paystub, unemployment statement or other documentation of household income.

Families that are over in income guidelines could still be found eligible by “client contribution”. The family would need to show documentation that they have spent \$750.00 in medical expenses (prescriptions, hearing, visual, medical appointments, travel to medical appointments, etc.).

The application processing takes between 3-7 business days.

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction response to COVID-19:

Schools and children went to distance learning in Mid-March. Schools are looking to doing distance learning through summer school.

\$30 million federal funds were awarded to the state. The funds are being dispersed to local educational agencies. To date, 68 applications have been approved with 10-12 pending. The major ask from educational agencies is funds for technology needs.

Gerry stated there is a document that clarifies the difference between Compensatory Education and Extended School Year.

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction Guidelines of Other Health Impairment and Gifted and Talented:

Other Health Impairments has consistently been the third largest disability category in ND for the last 10 years.

Susan Gerenz and a group of others are working on reviewing and updating the guidelines for Other Health Impairments. The goal is to have it done by fall and then train professionals.

Gifted and Talented guidelines have not been updated since the 1970s, so Department of Public Instruction is working on updating those guidelines.

Medicaid 1915(i) State Plan Amendment:

The amendment was submitted to CMS on April 29, 2020.

The Department of Human Services received numerous public comments, such as option for family peer support.

The amendment has a table of diagnoses of which would qualify for the 1915(i). Individuals with a diagnosis of ASD will qualify for the 1915(i) if they score 50 or higher on the WHODAS.

The individual must qualify for Medicaid. The 1915(i) is a state plan amendment, not a waiver.

ASD Waiver:

During the February meeting it was discussed to increase the waiver by 14 slots. Since COVID-19 hit, the increase of the slots by 14 will have to be put on hold.

Department of Human Services leadership and the Governor has directed the Department of Human Services to cut their general fund budget by 15% for the next biennium. The Department of Human Services is waiting for clarification from the Governor's office to see if Medicaid is included or not in the general fund cuts directive.

Compared the autism waiver survey from 2019 and 2020. Discussion around the graph presentation.

For the next year survey questions - the questions will be revised with new questions to help families more.

Current Operations Updates- 2019-2021 enrollment/expenditure dashboard:

Discussion on spending with the autism waiver. What services could we look at adding to the waiver?

ABA Workforce Updates:

Discussion around the handouts Holly provided.

Since the last meeting, North Dakota has gained 19 new Registered Behavior Technicians.

Since the last reporting, North Dakota has not gained any new BCBA's.

ASD State Plan

After the February meeting, a survey was sent out to task force members asking if they would like to be part of the workgroup and/or lead a workgroup. The three workgroups are: access to services, training and education and communication/public awareness.

There were not many responses to the survey.

Krista will send out an email to the groups and to touch base on next steps.

Other Topics for Discussion

A letter has been drafted to the Insurance Commissioner regarding asking insurance companies in North Dakota to cover arena style diagnosing for ASD.

Krista has asked that the letter is not sent out on Department of Human Services letterhead, but that it is the will of the task force.

Lacey Bergh is going to check with Blue Cross Blue Shield about why they have said no to covering the arena style diagnostic. She will follow up with the Task Force.

Motion: Wait to hear from Lacey Bergh, then make the edits to the document and send it out to the Insurance Commissioner.

Motion: Carol Johnson

Second: Holly Johnson

Yay: 15/ Nay: 0. Motion passed.

Holly Johnson made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Teresa Larsen seconded the motion.

Yay 15/0 nay: motion passed.

Adjourned: 3:31 pm

Next meeting: August 24, 2020 1:00-4:45 pm CDT

Transcribed: 6/1/2020 KK