

Testimony
Human Services Committee
Representative Kathy Hogan, Chairman
August 2, 2017

Chairman Hogan and members of the Human Services Committee, I am Maggie Anderson, Director of the Medical Services Division for the Department of Human Services. I appear today to provide a report regarding the state Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) plan pursuant to N.D.C.C. 50-06-32.

The ASD Task Force (Task Force) members are appointed by the Governor, and include a legislator, representatives from state agencies, providers, parents, and other professionals with an interest in autism. 2017 Senate Bill 2115 added several new members to the Task Force: a behavioral specialist, an enrolled member of a federally recognized Indian tribe, and an adult self-advocate. The Task Force meets four times per year and reviews:

Early intervention, family support services that would enable an individual with ASD to remain in the least restrictive home or community-based setting,

Programs that transition individuals from schools to adult day programs or employment,

The cost of providing services, and

The nature and extent of federal resources that can be directed to the provision of services for individuals with autism spectrum disorder.

There have been various membership changes with the Task Force over the past year. The Task Force originally developed and presented a state plan to the governor and legislative council in 2010. The plan has been reviewed and periodically updated to best serve the needs of individuals with ASD.

Testimony provided to the Interim Human Services Committee in January 2016 expressed the goal of the Task Force to update the 2014 state plan by integrating the Collective Impact design. Collective Impact is a framework that facilitates a collaborative process between multiple organizations and agencies, focusing on existing issues. The model focuses on strengthening joint efforts and expanding available resources to achieve a greater impact around the initiative. The theory suggests that the work occur in three phases. Phase 1 initiates action, phase 2 organizes the work of the group to make an impact, and phase 3 creates a plan for sustainable action. The Task Force is actively in phase 2 of the model reviewing and revising the current plan while organizing the next actions to maximize the impact of the initiatives.

The Task Force has continued to meet quarterly and the Collective Impact Model remains a standing item on the agenda. The June 2017 Task Force meeting included a discussion of refocusing the work including a review of the 2014 plan. A work group met on August 1, 2017 to begin reviewing the previous plans, updates. The work group will present to the Task Force at the next meeting in September 2017.

I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.