

## ***State of Nevada Autism Task Force***

### **MINUTES**

Friday, January 25, 2008

Nevada State Legislative Building / Carson City – Video-conferenced to:

UNSOM-Griswold Hall/Elko – Video-conferenced to:

Grant Sawyer State Building/Las Vegas

**Members Present:** Ralph Toddre, Mary Liveratti, Patrick Ghezzi, Flo La Roy, Korri Ward, Johanna Fricke, Assemblyman James Ohrenschall, Jan Crandy, Cynthia McCray / **Members Absent:** Assemblywoman Francis Allen, Senator Warren Hardy, Matt Tincani, Senator Bernice Mathews, Elizabeth Moore / **Staff:** Todd Butterworth, Winny Simmons, Paul Haugen / **Guests:** John Flamm, Randy Figurski, Angela Flora, Kris Christiansen, Diane Branson, Laura Coger, Joan Lowery, Jan Marson, Nancy Sylvania, Andrea Nichols

### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS, QUORUM CALL**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Toddre at 1:09 p.m. Introductions were made by all present for the record; it was established that a quorum was present.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 2007 MEETING**

*A motion was offered by Ms. La Roy to approve the minutes of the November 2007 meeting.* The motion was seconded by Assemblyman Ohrenschall and unanimously approved.

### **UPDATE ON THE WORK AND TIMELINE OF EACH OF THE 7 SUBCOMMITTEES**

**Financing Comprehensive Systems of Care** – Mr. Butterworth reviewed the questions asked by this subcommittee and the progress made in finding answers. A subcommittee report was provided. Chair Toddre asked the taskforce if there are any additional questions to be addressed. Dr. Fricke stated there is a code for developmental screening, 96110, that is accepted by Medicaid. Mr. Figurski stated in Nevada there are a number of self-insured programs. Chair Toddre suggested setting a meeting up with the Insurance Commissioner. Chair Toddre stated there are five states that have legislation for insurance right now and Autism Speaks is working with all of these states. The Pennsylvania model was the best piece of legislation for the taskforce to go by. Assemblyman Ohrenschall offered to request this bill draft. Ms. Crandy offered to get the Pennsylvania bill and the bills from the other states out to the taskforce members. Dr. Sylvania suggested viewing a presentation by Arzu Forough, Autism Speaks Legislative Advocacy Chair for the state of Washington, which she will send to Mr. Butterworth.

**Screening and Diagnostic** – Mr. Figurski stated his subcommittee hopes to have their initial recommendations ready after their next meeting on February 12<sup>th</sup>. The subcommittee will be able to use literature from the American Academy of Neurologists (AAN) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) screening and diagnostic guidelines. There was a discussion on the inconsistency issue of diagnosis and assessments through Early Intervention that will be reviewed at the February 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Best Practices Guidelines** – Ms. Crandy stated the consensus of this subcommittee was to look at the current services available in Nevada and the best practices guidelines of other states. The main focus should be best practices to serve an individual with Autism for their lifetime. The subcommittee is going to define what the best practices are across the lifespan of services. The Autism documents and articles the subcommittee has started reviewing from other states are included in her handout. There is also a handout showing an overview of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) waiver programs. The next subcommittee meeting is scheduled for February 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Training, Certification and ABA** - Dr. Ghezzi stated the subcommittee was unanimous about the state doing a miserable job in preparing undergraduate and graduate students to enter the realm of full board certified behavioral analysts and associate board certified behavioral analysts. The next subcommittee meeting is set for February 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss some of the strategic issues regarding this topic. Ms. Crandy introduced Richard Thompson, Board Certified Behavioral Analyst, from Las Vegas. Dr. Ghezzi suggested Richard Thompson meet with Dr. Tincani to discuss and provide practical training experiences and supervisory field experiences. Dr. Fricke asked if the community colleges in Nevada have been contacted. She will provide the contacts from Lili Claire.

**Transition, Employment and Community Inclusion** – Ms. La Roy stated documents and data collected were just sent out to subcommittee members for review and will be discussed at their next meeting on February 20<sup>th</sup>. The issues of data collection and information dissemination should be brought up, discussed and acted upon by the full Autism Taskforce. Ms. Crandy stated she will bring up the issue of having a uniform way of taking data to the Best Practices Subcommittee. Mr. Figurski stated he will contact Dr. Wei Yang to present to the subcommittee on his project and will have him contact Ms. La Roy.

**Workforce Development** – Dr. Sylvania stated she met with Dr. Tincani on December 11<sup>th</sup> to set up the purposes and goals of this subcommittee and to develop a plan of action which is outlined in the handout.

**Education** – Ms. Ward stated her subcommittee is interested in school districts sharing information about their programs, the current teacher training programs, and supports the university system and community colleges have for the adults with Autism. The subcommittee will identify barriers the parents experience as they go through agencies and the future training and alternative programs that could be useful. Ms. Christiansen stated Washoe County School District has not made the determination of where the budget cuts will take place. Ms. McCray stated the Clark County School District is at that same point. Chair Toddre stated if the budget cuts affect the Autism programs or Special Education, to let the taskforce know so they could possibly help. Dr. Sylvania stated there is a problem with educating staff in the schools to understand the definition of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Mr. Figurski stated the NAC that deals with education has dealt with the issue of different types of labeling for Autism Spectrum Disorder. The NAC does identify who are appropriate members of the eligibility team. Ms. Crandy stated that, to keep the special education teachers, they will have to support more money for training and increased wages. Ms. Christiansen asked if the subcommittee could look into whether student teachers are going to be allowed to do their student teaching in strategy classrooms with Autistic students.

#### **UPDATE ON THE STATE FUNDING APPROPRIATED FOR AUTISM SERVICES**

Mr. Butterworth briefly updated the taskforce on the state funding and provided a handout. Ms. Crandy asked if they are accepting the CHAT as one of the assessments required for diagnosis. She has plans written for families but does not have a proof of diagnosis so those plans are just sitting there waiting. Dr. Fricke stated the modified CHAT is a screening tool. She suggested using the GARS and CARS as tools to help. Ms. Crandy asked if they could make an adjustment to the rule by the taskforce to one assessment. Ms. Toni Richard stated she is having a difficult time getting even one assessment.

Chair Toddre suggested putting together a group to meet and come up with a recommendation on the assessment issue. Vice-Chair Liveratti stated this is a pilot program and they should be able to make changes. She recommended not bringing this back to the taskforce as a whole but that the group meet and give the program some direction to move forward.

Dr. Ghezzi asked if there was any data on age of the child. Mr. Butterworth stated he could gather this data from the database and will provide some of those demographics at the next taskforce meeting. There

is a budgeting system in place where once the Office of Disability Services begins offering services to a child they project their need through the end of the biennium and the funds are earmarked.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**SET NEXT MEETING DATE**

Mr. Butterworth stated the subcommittees could have as many teleconferenced meetings as they want but they have to go through Melanie Stevens to set those extra meetings up. Chair Toddre stated the next taskforce meeting is tentatively set for Tuesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 p.m.

**ADJOURMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 3:29 p.m.