

State of Nevada Autism Task Force

MINUTES

Monday, March 31, 2008

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

UNSOM-Griswold Hall/Elko

Grant Sawyer State Building/Las Vegas

Members Present: Ralph Toddre, Mary Liveratti, Patrick Ghezzi, Flo La Roy, Korri Ward, Cynthia McCray, Matt Tincani / **Members Absent:** Assemblywoman Francis Allen, Senator Warren Hardy, Senator Bernice Mathews, Elizabeth Moore, Jan Crandy, Johanna Fricke, Assemblyman James Ohrenschall / **Staff:** Todd Butterworth, Winny Simmons, Paul Haugen / **Guests:** Jane Gruner, Toni Richard, Diane Branson, Joan Lowery, Connie Anderson, Jan Marson, Angela Schuft, Andrea Nichols, Nancy Sylvanie, Valerie Soto, Kathy Patten, Kathryn Armstrong

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS, QUORUM CALL

The meeting was called to order by Chair Toddre at 1:11 p.m. Introductions were made by all present for the record; it was established that a quorum was not present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 2008 MEETING

This agenda item will be placed on the next meeting agenda for approval.

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

Financing Comprehensive Systems of Care – Mr. Butterworth stated this subcommittee has gathered Autism planning documents from seven other states and are going through the financing sections to identify best practices. They will begin drafting their committee report this week and will hope to have it together by the end of April. Chair Toddre stated he has been in contact with the people dealing with United Health and Sierra Health with the merger of the two companies, and it is expected that funds from the merger will be used to support Autism.

Screening and Diagnostic – Ms. Branson stated this subcommittee met on February 12th and came up with two recommendations. One recommendation has to do with making Autism Spectrum Disorder a reportable condition in Nevada and setting up an Autism registry. The second recommendation was to ensure all children prior to age three have the opportunity to participate in a developmental and Autism-specific screening by qualified personnel for the purpose of promoting optimal growth and development. At the next subcommittee meeting they will be discussing diagnosis and making recommendations.

Best Practices Guidelines – No report.

Training, Certification and ABA – Dr. Ghezzi stated this subcommittee's next meeting is on April 8th and hopes by that time to have a rough draft of their report. Their subcommittee report will be completed well before the deadline.

Transition, Employment and Community Inclusion – Ms. La Roy stated this subcommittee met on February 20th and discussed the pieces of information they needed including data collection. One of the big obstacles they are facing with data collection is there is not good data collected across the state for those individuals who are employed.

Workforce Development – Dr. Tincani stated this subcommittee met on February 14th and prepared a rough outline of their final report. He asked the members for information on workforce needs in Nevada.

Education – Ms. Ward stated this subcommittee met on March 19th and further discussed the issues on paraprofessional training, teacher training, and parent training across the state.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DELIBERATION AND DECISION ON THE FORMAT FOR THE ROUGH DRAFT OF THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chair Toddre stated Vice-Chair Liveratti put together a suggested report format that was provided in a handout to the taskforce members. Mr. Butterworth stated the Task Force doesn't have to vote on the format of the report, and that subcommittee doesn't have to hold meetings on their pieces of the report, as long as they are not deliberating. Mr. Butterworth suggested his subcommittee members give him their verbiage for the report. In turn, he will then come up with a draft and email it to the subcommittee members. If there are any grammatical, vocabulary, or spelling issues, the members can get those back to him. If there are any other concerns, the members would ask him to put it on the next subcommittee agenda.

Vice-Chair Liveratti reviewed the suggested report format. The Executive Summary will be short, concise, and will be an extrapolation of the fuller report. Mr. Butterworth will draft this Executive Summary. The draft of the Overview could be started by Ms. Branson and Mr. Figurski. Mr. Figurski could also draft the Values section of the report. Chair Toddre suggested each subcommittee when they put their report together to do an Executive Summary with it. Mr. Butterworth stated this gives the reader a third level of detail and encouraged everyone to make their subcommittee reports very concise.

Ms. Branson suggested that each subcommittee add Values as part of their Executive Summary or send suggestions to her office. Chair Toddre stated it is really important that all the members of the taskforce are involved rather than an individual state department. Vice-Chair Liveratti suggested the discussion of the Values section should be placed on the next Task Force meeting agenda.

UPDATE ON THE STATE FUNDING APPROPRIATED FOR AUTISM SERVICES

Mr. Butterworth presented a Demographic Report for the Autism Services Program which was provided as a handout to the Task Force. Chair Toddre asked if there are any problems with the intake process. Mr. Butterworth stated one of the issues was the need for multiple assessments in order to confirm diagnosis. A group, which Chair Toddre previously suggested meet on this subject, decided that one diagnosis is sufficient unless circumstances dictate a second opinion is needed; this has made a big difference in the number of kids now receiving services.

Chair Toddre stated he would like to get as many people into the program before the next round of budget cuts are made. Mr. Butterworth replied the program dollars will soon be fully committed. The Office of Disability Services hopes to be able to make any necessary additional budget cuts without having to touch the Autism Program funding. The agency will also put forth an enhancement in the new biennium to request continuation of the Autism Program, at least at the current funding level.

PRESENTATION ON THE OPEN MEETING LAW

Ms. Andrea Nichols from the Attorney General's Office stated if there is no quorum present then it is not considered a public meeting so, today's meeting basically just deliberation in public. Vice-Chair Liveratti asked why subcommittee meetings, where they don't have a quorum present, are considered public meetings. Ms. Nichols replied the subcommittee is its own separate public body. Ms. Nichols stated she could email a copy of the Open Meeting Law Manual to Task Force members. Chair Toddre asked what a quorum was in one of the subcommittees. Ms. Nichols replied a quorum is a simple majority. Vice-Chair Liveratti asked if the chair sends out a draft report to people and he wants input, could they respond back to the chair as long as they are not responding back to the group as a whole. Ms. Nichols replied the actual deliberations have to be done in public including serial communication about what should be

included in the report. She also advised that the approach suggested earlier by Mr. Butterworth was an acceptable process.

Ms. La Roy stated there are people on her subcommittee that don't participate and asked in order to have a quorum does she need to eliminate those people from her list. Ms. Nichols stated yes, but once they are removed, they could still participate as members of the public. Mr. Butterworth stated the chair of the Task Force delegated authority to the subcommittee chairs to invite people to participate in subcommittee meetings; thus, they have the ability to remove subcommittee members.

Dr. Tincani suggested each of the subcommittee chairs include as one of their next agenda items the matter of limiting or prohibiting email communications altogether. Mr. Butterworth stated he will ask Melanie Stevens to add this as a standard agenda item on all the upcoming subcommittee meeting agendas. Ms. Ward suggested the Attorney General's office help with the wording of the agendas to remove members of the subcommittees.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Kathryn Armstrong stated it is really important to have report statistics correct because Autism is a spectrum disorder and there isn't any data on if there is a bulge in a certain area. Chair Toddre stated the lack of data has been discussed many times and is indeed a concern. Ms. Richard stated she has been in contact with Dr. Wei Yang's office and there really hasn't been a lot of follow-through from him with the family support groups. Chair Toddre asked Ms. Richard to contact Dr. Yang's office and let them know the Task Force had this discussion and would like to hear from his office at the next meeting to hear what their progress is.

Vice-Chair Liveratti announced the United Healthcare settlement has allocated \$87,000 towards Autism and there is no timeline as to when to spend it.

Chair Toddre stated April 2nd is World Autism Awareness Day and all the media groups will be doing a lot of coverage on Autism.

SET NEXT MEETING DATE

No comment

ADJOURMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:29 p.m.