

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

### **MINUTES**

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

Nevada State Legislative Building / Carson City – Video-conferenced to:  
Great Basin College / Elko  
Grant Sawyer State Building / Las Vegas

**Members Present:** Ralph Toddre, Mary Liveratti, Patrick Ghezzi, Korri Ward, Cynthia McCray, Matt Tincani, Jan Crandy, Assemblyman James Ohrenschall / **Members Absent:** Assemblywoman Francis Allen, Senator Bernice Mathews, Elizabeth Moore, Flo La Roy, Johanna Fricke, Senator Warren Hardy / **Staff:** Paul Haugen, Winny Simmons / **Guests:** John Flamm, Jane Gruner, Toni Richard, Judy White, Scott Reynolds, Andrea Nichols, Trish Shaffer, Nancy Sylvania, Diane Branson, Catherine Armstrong

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Toddre at 1:13 p.m. Introductions were made by all present for the record; it was established that a quorum was present.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MAY 2008 MEETING**

*A motion was offered by Dr. Ghezzi to approve the minutes of the May 2008 meeting.* The motion was seconded by Ms. Crandy and unanimously approved.

### **DISCUSSION ON THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE SEVEN SUBCOMMITTEES FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Financing Comprehensive Systems of Care** – Ms. Crandy stated on page 2, where the states are listed, Kentucky should be taken off because it is the weakest one. She would like to add the states of South Carolina, Texas, Arizona, and Pennsylvania and volunteered to do a write up on these, if needed. On page 4, under the Recommendations, there needs to be a recommendation stating specifically mandate coverage for ABA and other structured behavior therapies. Ms. Ward stated on page 4, recommendation f., will put a huge workload on the physicians and the physician may recommend something the insurance company may not want to pay for. Ms. Crandy stated on page 6, there needs to be a statement added that Medicaid and Nevada Check Up are covered by ABA. Vice-Chair Liveratti stated on page 6, under Medicaid Waiver-Issues, they would keep recommendation 1 but would add Ms. Crandy's recommendation on page 7. She also suggested under Medicaid Waiver Recommendations taking out Waiver from that title. Ms. Crandy stated she will provide a list of the other states that provide ABA through Medicaid.

Ms. Crandy asked if this subcommittee decided not create any caps. Assemblyman Ohrenschall stated there is no verbiage on the bill draft and as soon as he gets something he will email to the taskforce. There was a discussion of having a reasonable amount rather than putting a fixed number in statute so the state through the Nevada Administrative Code could change it. Chair Toddre stated this should be put into the report as a reasonable and appropriate amount.

**Screening and Diagnostic** – Ms. Branson stated the appendices were left out of the report and will be put together soon. Ms. Crandy suggested adding a recommendation number 7 to the last page of the report stating to develop a suggested list of best practices instruments that may be acceptable to use for eligibility and identification. Chair Toddre suggested adding to develop and continually update. Ms. Crandy asked if there is a recommendation by what age they are going to receive the diagnosis. Ms. Ward replied under Recommendations: Screening for Autism Spectrum Disorders, numbers 8 and 9, should cover this. Ms. Crandy stated those recommendations don't seem strong enough.

Chair Toddre stated they need to change the way they are doing things from a state standpoint in the lack of diagnosis. Ms. Janelle Mulvenon with Nevada Early Intervention Services (NEIS) stated their department has a policy if they have qualified professionals they are able to diagnose. Chair Toddre stated a lot of parents are being told the NEIS can't make a diagnosis. If the taskforce is going to make a recommendation on where to go to get this diagnosis, there needs to be a lot clearer direction from NEIS as to what those services are. Ms. Branson stated the subcommittee chose rather than pinpointing a particular agency it should be a team of trained individuals. Chair Toddre stated the state, universities, and a private group should be involved to ensure that all the correct methods are being used and up to date.

Vice-Chair Liveratti suggested going back to Ms. Crandy's original issue and to make a recommendation that children are evaluated and diagnosed by age three and this could be done through a public/private partnership that would include NEIS, the university system, or private partners. Ms. Crandy agreed with this recommendation except for the age needs to be younger. Vice-Chair Liveratti stated on page 3, there is goal in the middle of the page that could be changed into this recommendation.

Ms. Ward asked why there is no reference to insurance. Chair Toddre stated this should be a recommendation on insurance coverage for screening and diagnostic. Ms. Ward stated physicians will want to get paid for screening and not have it wrapped into the well baby check. Screenings will then need a separate CPT code. Ms. Branson stated there is a CPT code that many pediatricians are not aware of so this is more an educational issue. Ms. Crandy stated she will send out a copy of the bill from last Legislature regarding educating doctors. Chair Toddre stated this should be added as a recommendation.

**Best Practices Guidelines** – Ms. Crandy stated the subcommittee made 16 recommendations which they think would address best practices across all environments and ensure that best practices are happening in Nevada. Vice-Chair Liveratti asked on page 8, recommendation 1, if the schools need to be involved. Ms. Crandy stated the problem with the Department of Education count is it's the single label and not the multiple label count. She could go ahead and add the Department of Education to this recommendation.

Ms. Ward stated she is concerned with the different authors of the reports using both ASD and PDD and if they could come to a consensus on what to use. The different authors use different numbers for the estimated prevalence of Autism throughout all of the reports. Chair Toddre stated ASD should be used throughout each of the reports. Ms. Crandy stated if the 2006 numbers are available she could change those numbers to update the population.

Vice-Chair Liveratti asked if they should repeat information or not in the different sections of the report. Ms. Crandy stated it makes the recommendations stronger if it is mentioned in other reports. Vice-Chair Liveratti suggested in the Executive Summary to list all the recommendations as one master list and then have a full report including all the subcommittee's reports. Ms. Crandy stated this is what Washington State did.

Ms. McCray suggested on page 8, under the Findings section, to take out the individual names mentioned and replace with the organization/department those people represent. Ms. Crandy stated there is no need to mention a name there.

**Training, Certification and ABA** – Ms. Ward stated her concern after reading this section that there will be a tendency to only fund programs for young children. Dr. Ghezzi stated the principles are not age or disability specific. The subcommittee focused on the large scale outcome data on ABA which is young children's data. Ms. Crandy asked to add young adults to the last paragraph on page 2. Dr. Tincani suggested adding a sentence stating principles of behavior are effective when applied to individuals with

ASD across their lifespan. Ms. Ward suggested on page 5, under Recommendations, to take out young in the first sentence.

**Transition, Employment and Community Inclusion** – No Comment.

**Workforce Development** – Ms. Crandy suggested using Behavior Interventionist rather than Discrete Trial Therapist.

**Education** – Vice-Chair Liveratti asked on page 2, recommendation 13, if this is a limit of 30. Ms. Ward replied this is for a caseload of 30 because there is currently no cap. Vice-Chair Liveratti asked on page 5, under Findings, what the term high stakes tests mean. Ms. McCray stated this test relates to the GED. Vice-Chair Liveratti asked on page 7, recommendation 3, if the two sentences should each be an individual recommendation. Ms. Ward stated those are on the same recommendation because the Connection Center is a model program that could be used in the Reno/Washoe area and Clark County but will not work in the rural areas. The State Autism Team does work in the rural areas. She will change NE Nevada to NW.

## **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DELIBERATION AND ACTION ON THE FORMAT AND CONTENT OF THE COMMITTEE'S LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

Chair Toddre stated he would like to put four to five people together to do the editing and formatting of the final document. The volunteers include Jan Crandy, Mary Liveratti, Todd Butterworth, Ralph Toddre, Catherine Armstrong, and Toni Richard. This group will meet on July 24<sup>th</sup> and July 25<sup>th</sup>. *A motion was offered by Assemblyman Ohrenschall to accept the volunteers to edit and format the final document.* The motion was seconded by Ms. Ward and unanimously approved.

Chair Toddre stated the chairs of each subcommittee should have their revised documents sent to Winny Simmons by Friday, July 18<sup>th</sup>, and she will then send out to the editing group.

Ms. McCray asked if the subcommittees could add their references or sources to the end of their document. Ms. Ward asked if the sources are to be cited like they are on the Training, Certification, and ABA document except the information will be on the back page rather than footnoted. Chair Toddre replied yes.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. Bridget Watters discussed her handout regarding REM Nevada, Inc.

## **SET NEXT MEETING DATE**

Chair Toddre stated they could take a look at all the taskforce members and see who wants to leave or potentially put different people on the taskforce.

Chair Toddre stated the next meeting will be held off until the taskforce hears back from Assemblyman Ohrenschall on the Bill Draft Request.

Vice-Chair Liveratti stated the executive report and the full committee report will be available to the public on the Department of Health and Human Services website.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 3:44 p.m.