

DDS Autism Spectrum Disorders Advisory Council (ASDAC)

Minutes

February 19, 2014

**Members Present:** Commissioner Terrence Macy, Catherine Abercrombie, Jennifer Bogin, Judy Dowd, Marcia Eckerd, Ruth Eren, Ann Gionet, Zachary Laudano, Tierney Gianotti, Yana Razumnaya, Sara Reed, Lynn Ricci, Lois Rosenwald, Carole Ryan-Hanlon, Maria Synodi, Doriana Vicedomini

**Members Absent:**

Wendy Campbell, Bill Halsey, Beth Leslie, Jim Loomis, Kathy Marchione, Nikki Richer, Sara Lourie, and Robert Shea

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 10:13 am.

**Welcome and Introductions**

**Public Comment:**

Mr. John Miller – Grandfather of two 5 year-old female twins with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Expressed his concern for his daughter and his granddaughters and their struggles over the last 5 years. He had no specific requests. Just wished there could be more support from DDS.

**Introduction and Appreciation by Commissioner Macy:**

Discussed the role of the Autism Spectrum Disorders Advisory Council and the focus of work – to implement recommendations and complete work. He welcomes and recommends input from the subcommittees as well as the public.

**Autism Division Updates by Jennifer Bogin:**

- Introduced new Case Managers, Heather Bentsen, Margarida Carbonell, Diana Sadjadifard and Alison Hummel
- Introduced new Administrative Assistant for the Division of Autism Spectrum Services, Lisa Bonetti

- Introduced Mike Blaszkowski, Autism Case Management Supervisor
- Introduced Chris Damato, Autism Resource Specialist
- Distributed the fact sheet for the new home and community based waiver for ABA services for 3 and 4 year olds. Designed to assist families and bridge the gap after Birth to Three. (30 slots at \$30,000.00/year). Anticipated to begin taking children in April 2014.
- Explained that new waiver manager and case manager will be hired to serve with new waiver clients
- Announced a Save the Date – Peter Doehring, author of Autism Services Across America, is coming to the University of St. Joseph, 1678 Asylum Ave., West Hartford, CT on Tuesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at 1:00 pm

**Subcommittee Reports (see attached reports from each subcommittee):**

- Qualified Professionals and Effective Services (Jim Loomis & Brian Reichow)  
 Subcommittee charged with coming up with a system to credential providers and endorse effective measures. Neither liaison was in attendance. Jennifer Bogin and Carole Ryan-Hanlon described the activities to date. Activities included cataloging different disciplines and what would be required by their respective associations. Suggestions included the potential credentialing of parents and family members as well as utilizing the skills of individuals on the spectrum. It was suggested that this group meet with the training group to collaborate on training/credentialing activities. Ohio has a tiered credentialing system for ASD that we could look at. Their program is modeled after brain injury prevention programs.
- Training, Consultation and Learning Opportunities (John Molteni & Tierney Giannotti)  
 Discussed the Brief Needs Assessment Survey they developed – 6 Item Survey  
 Very successful response rate – 800 in less than a week for a total of more than 1,500 responses. The highest percentage of respondents was educational professionals with family members the second highest. The responses by type and priority are detailed below:

**Table 3: The Most Desired Topics by Role**

	Percent agreement
Family	Supporting individuals with ASD in navigating the various systems and state agencies (66%); Helping individuals with ASD to develop self-determination skills (65%); Developing and implementing transition plans for individuals with ASD (65%)
Medical-Clinical	Supporting individuals with ASD in navigating the various systems and state agencies (47%); Developing and implementing intervention and supports for individuals with ASD (44%)
Educational Professional	Understanding the characteristics of students with ASD (38%); Developing and implementing intervention and supports for individuals with ASD (37%)
Community Service Provider	Developing and implementing intervention and supports for individuals with ASD (41%); Helping individuals with ASD to develop self-determination skills (33%)
Related Service Provider	Supporting individuals with ASD in navigating the various systems and state agencies (52%); Developing and implementing intervention and supports for individuals with ASD (51%); Helping individuals with ASD to develop self-determination skills (51%)

(For more information see attached executive summary handout.) Next steps include analyzing results and prioritizing areas to make proper decisions where to go next. Comments included: the fact that this survey is really the “tip of the iceberg” and training needs are even more significant.

- Access to Comprehensive Resource Guide (Sara Reed & Ann Gionet)  
This subcommittee is charged with developing a user-friendly resource guide. They are working on details and an application for funding. There was a suggestion that information gathered should include identification of individuals’ different levels of needs and costs of services as many individuals are not covered. They said they would try to include that information when it is available. Yana suggested creation of a crisis line for after hours. Ann said she wasn’t sure that recommendation would come from this workgroup. .

- Implement Effective Services/In-home Behavioral Support (Doriana Vicedomini) This subcommittee is charged with establishing a pilot program for effective home-based behavioral supports for adolescents with ASD and co-occurring mental health challenges at risk for hospitalization. This group has 16 active members. They are working on partnering with school districts that are providing behavioral supports during after school programs. This committee is also looking at the possibility of setting up a screening tool for youth at risk for hospitalization.
- Implement Effective Services/Social/Recreation/Respite (Carol Barans) This subcommittee started in January. Members are selected from across the state. This subcommittee is responsible for creating social and recreational opportunities for the ASD population. These opportunities could be in schools, churches or the community. The subcommittee has been working hard. 8-10 of the 16 members attend regularly. Group is working on partnering with school districts to coordinate recreational programs to fit numerous needs of all individuals. Suggestions included consideration of partnering with scouts, little league and boy scouts. This committee plans to meet in early March.

### **Discussion of Subcommittee Reports:**

- It was suggested that the training and credentialing committees work together to collaborate on activities
- It was brought up that the role of school psychologists cannot be overlooked when talking about credentialing. Some school psychologists do a lot of diagnosing regardless of their level of training.
- One member suggested looking into training programs at community colleges for certification/credentialing for ASD

### **Other Business:**

- CT's Act Early Ambassador, Tierney Gianotti announced the release of the new "Connecticut Guidelines for a Clinical Diagnosis of Autism." The document was given to all Council members with a copy of the DDS supplement. More hard copies are available through DDS and the CT

University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at UCONN.  
Guidelines can also be found on the UCEDD website at:  
[http://www.uconnucedd.org/pdfs/CT\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Clinical\\_Dx\\_of\\_ASD.pdf](http://www.uconnucedd.org/pdfs/CT_Guidelines_for_Clinical_Dx_of_ASD.pdf)

**Adjournment:**

Meeting adjourned at 11:31 am.

Next meeting is **Wednesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2014**

10:00am-12:00pm

Legislative Office Building

Room 1C

300 Capitol Avenue

Hartford, CT 06106