

DSS Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council (ASDAC)
Meeting Minutes
September 16, 2020

Members Present: Jennifer Abbatemarco, Representative Catherine Abercrombie, Judy Dowd, Marcia Eckerd, Ann Gionet, Bill Halsey, Bryan Klimkiewicz, Mickey Kramer, Andrew Komarow, Jim Loomis, Kathy Marchione, Aileen McKenna, Jimnahs Miller, Donyale Pina, Yana Razumnaya, Lynn Ricci, Katie Rock-Burns, Lois Rosenwald, Carole Ryan-Hanlon, Kari Sassu, Doriana Vicedomini, Julie Wolf,

Members Absent: Jill Caron, Melissa Gagne, Disability Rights of Connecticut/designee,

Others: Amy Dumont, Jennifer Krom

Call to Order: 10:02 am

Welcome and Introduction by Bill Halsey and Yana Razumnaya

Impact of pandemic on individuals with ASD – continued discussion

- Anxiety/Depression
- Isolation
- Are individuals going backwards?
- Lack of housing options is a barrier
- Bill suggested subject matter expert on housing and Medicaid laws to attend a meeting and present to Council. Bill will set this up.
- Goal to receive legal limitations

Return to school – SDE Discussion (Bryan Klimkiewicz)

- 13 addendums in document. Guidance is growing
- Addendum 6 – special education requirements
- Addendum 3 – more supports for students with high needs
- Collecting data weekly on school level. Schools will present models used to engage in learning
- Percentage of students not engaged in learning
- Moving to student level data collection system, race, etc.
- School based data will be available to the public

- Challenging topic – PPE, masks, students with exemptions. Few medical exemptions for masks
- Concerns about access
- Transportation companies not allowing students on bus or van without mask, making effort to ensure transportation companies understand exemptions
- Bryan will share
- Rep. Abercrombie is hearing from her families that this is now the new challenge. No place for children to go when at home. Which parents will have to leave work to be home with children? (Meriden area)
- Bryan has not received these concerns or complaints as of yet.
- Childcare, daycare is a concern
- Remote instruction support for families
- Impacts families in many ways
- Rep asked Council Are there any communities, etc. that have come up with solutions for these issues?
- Bryan – they emphasize that these individuals are considered to have more days in schools. Asking districts if they have the capacity and space to add more days. Some programs are doing this, but others are still struggling.
- Representative Abercrombie added that Meriden works closely with superintendent on these issues
- Some families are unable to work remotely to be home with their children
- SDE has given flexibility with districts
- Doriana – Suffield special education students go in more often. Staff has a concern about this due to more risks. Kudos to CT in comparison to other states. Amazing creativity, a lot of time and planning has been placed in Suffield
- Kari – Question – Can Bryan be more specific in how to obtain data. Bryan will share when he has this data
- Public facing document will be accessible on website and will share
- Kari – if there is any data being collected in regards to delivery of services?
- Bryan – not collected by the state department but have created a required template, implements IEP as if school in process. IEP implementation (tool) document, frequency and duration in collaboration with parents
- Bureau of Spec Ed is working on this
- Bryan – Addendum 6 – link to this form
- Jim – Has there been any work on practicing these models? Any progress to better provide services. Bryan said they are constantly looking at this. There's not a lot on the national level but it is being looked at. There are some resources to share with families. What is working and why and will share across the state. Open to suggestions. Best practice strategies.

- Mickey – would be important to provide the exploration of best practices, and information and ideas how to better support children. It would be important to share this information. Figuring out how to get strategies and information out more often. What are the things being discussed. Engagement process is important. Families who have children with significant disabilities is a challenge
- Problem solving needs to be focused on
- Bryan – CCSN – advisory workgroup, guidance, evaluations. Impact of pandemic. Ongoing workgroup working on Best Practices. Engagement is a concern. What is the level of disengagement? Will have to retrain PPE teams on different strategies. Needs successful collaboration. Open to suggestions.
- Jimnabs – Comment as a parent. Her son’s school district provides 5 half days. She struggles job hunting finding a position with the flexibility with school. This is a struggle for parents.

Update from Kathy Marchione – has been remotely open for business during COVID

- Offices are open for appointment only
- Will be working remotely at least until the end of year
- Will wear masks and use checklist
- Transition to remote work has been successful
- Yana brought up need for respite as more supports are needed, in-person is needed. Stress causing mental health issues. Services on waiver are good but not enough right now. Feels isolated. Negative health consequences. Suggested partnering with DMHAS. Suggested Rep Abercrombie put in a word. Bill asked Amy if waiver has respite services.
- Carole mentioned that respite is provided in waiver. Everyone is in same situation. Worried about safety issues. High risk
- Mickey – Needs to plan for consistent respite
- Bill – mentioned it sounds like it’s a different kind of respite.
- Amy Dumont – waiver defines respite in a particular way in regard to need. It’s a little bit different from the way DDS offers respite.

Beacon update on state plan services (Jennifer Krom)

- Presentation – (slides were sent to Council)
- CTBHP- Beacon Health Options Autism Services Data Update
- ASD Medicaid Open Authorizations
- ASD Medicaid Youth Monthly Admissions Report
- ASD Medicaid Youth Demographics
- ASD Provider Enrollment as of 9/1/2020

- ASD Care Coordination and Peer Specialist Activity
- The Future of Telemedicine: ASD Provider Round Table Discussions, Trends and Outcomes
- Broken down by 6 DCF Regions
- Representatives from DSS and DCF attended
- 68 Providers joined
- Agenda items included:
 - How would you like to see telemedicine continue?
 - Benefits of telemedicine for members/families/providers?
 - Challenges of telemedicine for members/families/providers?
- Benefits reported by providers
- Challenges provided by providers
- Assessment for appropriateness
- Suggested guidance
- Future training opportunities

ASD Waiver Update by Amy Dumont

- Resource information is provided to family and organizations
- Nate – updates the ASD library database
- 1744 on waitlist
- Working closely with DDS to individuals coming off DDS
- Contact with CCSN working with Dr. Palmieri and his team. Aug. 3 - Statewide training
- Nate will represent DSS at the ASRC resource fair. Yana offered to assist
- As of today 122 active providers
- Currently, 118 active individuals on the waiver. There are a few spots available and will be
- 3 spots were offered and in process
- Will be at 124 by the end of the year
- Yana – suggested adding feature on website where families can ask question. Amy will explore with the DSS IT department

Adding tri-chair to committee

Discussion of technology update – Andrew Komarow

- RFP under review
- Situation is not good
- Password management system
- Monthly service fee isn't covered under Medicaid

- Consulting group for technology
- Per Amy, assistive tech is a waiver service

Other Business

Public Questions:

- Jerel Edmonds – Has the proposal to remove the age restriction for Applied Behavior Analysis coverage in CT been on anyone’s minds and also, is anyone on board to participate in the subsequent legislative session coming up in 2021 in regards to this proposal? What does the Council think of Applied Behavior Analysis coverage having no age limitation in CT, joining the other nine states including Massachusetts and New York?
- Removing the age limitation is not under discussion/review at this time.
- Kari – spoke with her colleagues and CT aba(?) is advocating on this to follow up on. We can direct to them
- Radio station contacted Doriana and asked if Council would like to share. Yana offered to assist
- Lois discussed model Yan is speaking of. Suggested to think regionally as is needed throughout CT.

To Do:

- Bill will look into experts on housing and Medicaid law to share at meeting
- Social support groups
- Reconvene technology workgroup

Adjournment: 11:59am

Next Meeting: **Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 10:00am**