

The Michigan Autism Council



AUTISM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Friday, April 24, 2020

9:00 am – 11:00 am

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT	ORGANIZATION, REPRESENTATION
Farah Hanley, Chairperson	MDHHS, Financial Operations Administration
Amy Matthews, Vice-Chair	Grand Valley State University, State-funded Initiatives
Colleen Allen	Autism Alliance of Michigan, Non-Profit Organization serving those with ASD
Mary Chaliman	MDHHS, Child Welfare
Krista Clancy	Wayne State University, State Universities
Brian DeBano	Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs
Krista Clancy	Wayne State University, State Universities
Stefani Hines	Beaumont Hospital, Medical Centers/ Health Care Providers
Kent Rehmann	Summit Pointe, Recipient Rights
Dana Lasenby	Detroit-Wayne Integrated Health Network, Pre-Paid Inpatient Health Plans/Community Mental Health Service Programs
Rebecca McIntyre	Michigan Department of Education
George Mellos, MD	Michigan Department of Health & Human Services
Amy Miilu	Michigan Department of Insurance and Financial Services
Jenny Piatt	Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Employment Services
Stacie Rulison, Secretary	Parent, ASD Community
Frank Vaca	Self-Advocate, ASD Community
COUNCIL MEMBERS EXCUSED	ORGANIZATION, REPRESENTATION
Krista Boe	Autism Centers of Michigan, Certified Behavior Analysts
Lauren Ringle	Public Schools of Petoskey, Intermediate School Districts and Local Schools
MDHHS STAFF PRESENT	MDHHS REPRESENTATION
Lisa Grost	Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Administration / Policy and Planning Administration
Mary Luchies	State Hospital Administration
GUESTS PRESENT	ORGANIZATION
Kara Brooklier, PhD	Children's Center
Josh Diehl, PhD	Logan Center, MI Behavior Analysis Providers Association
Mike Dow	MI Behavior Analysis Providers Association
Erin Duncan, MD	HealthCall
Jennifer Jager	Autism Alliance of Michigan
Ebony Lawson	Detroit-Wayne Integrated Health Network
Karen Ley	Autism Alliance of Michigan
Melissa McKinley	Kelly-Cawthorne
Jeremiah Mankooof	MGS Consultants
Mark Laman, PhD	Developmental Enhancements

CALL TO ORDER

The Autism Council meeting was called to order by Farah Hanley at 9:05 am. A quorum was present for the meeting.

ROLL CALL

A roll call of Council members, MDHHS staff, and guests was completed.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Farah Hanley called for a **MOTION** to approve the February minutes. Stacie Rulison made a **MOTION** to approve the February minutes. Kent Rehmann **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION** carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Josh Diehl reported from Michigan Behavior Analysis Providers Association position is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services must be made on an individual basis during COVID-19. ABA treatment is an essential service; however, the guidance from PIHPs and CMHPs is inconsistent with approval of telehealth and eligibility. Council members and guests discussed additional guidance for ABA providers utilizing resources from national agencies. Josh Diehl, Mike Dow and Erin Duncan will provide a recommendation to the Autism Council and MDHHS. Council members agreed to review and work with the MDHHS for guidance and implementation of it.

Josh Diehl also provided written testimony indicating 80 percent of the members are not providing direct therapy and the Association estimates the reduction in billable services is down \$2.5M-\$3M per week. It also included a request for ABA services to be considered to be reimbursed for lost services due to COVID-19 similar to services under Appendix K.

Mark Laman from Developmental Enhancements Behavioral Health reported his organization is in support of modifying the ASD re-evaluation policy to make better use of clinical resources. He also shared a Proposal for Temporary Changes to the Medicaid Autism Evaluations and Re-Evaluations during COVID-19 to utilize highly experienced evaluators to provide evaluations without the ADOS-2 through telehealth. This formal suggestion was sent to Al Jansen from himself and Colleen Allen.

MDHHS UPDATES

MDHHS COVID-19 and Budget: Farah Hanley reported the Department and State have been focused on responding to the needs related to COVID-19. Additional sites such as TCP and Novi Showcase are being activated, hotels are being identified, several policies have been modified to expand telehealth and accommodate services. The MDHHS is staffing the COVID-19 Hotline and Email Response Team. The state budget is being affected by COVID-19 and state agencies are laying off staff. Federal funding being sought and received for Michigan include: the CARES Act, grants, and Disaster Relief Funds. All state department budgets will be affected by COVID-19 in FY20 and FY21. It is estimated the FY21 budget will be set by June 2020.

Lisa Grost shared the BHDDA and Michigan COVID-19 websites for resources:

COVID-19 Michigan Resources: <https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus>

COVID-19 MDHHS Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Administration Resources: <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71545-524138--,00.html>

MDHHS State Hospital Administration: Dr. George Mellos reported Center for Forensic Psychiatry and Walter Reuther Hospital have been challenged with staff and patients having COVID-19. Hawthorn has not had any patients test positive. He reported patients with fevers and symptoms have been isolated on units to minimize the exposure throughout the hospitals.

MDHHS Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Administration: Al Jansen was unable to attend the meeting. If there are updates, they will be emailed to members.

ASD Legislative Workgroup Report

Lisa Grost and Kara Brooklier reported members from the ASD Legislative Evaluation Workgroup met to develop recommendations on the standardization of the administration of ASD evaluations and services and modification of the ASD evaluation and re-evaluation policy. The drafts were shared with members and guests prior to the meeting.

ASD Evaluations and ABA Services Administration: The 2019 ASD Legislative Workgroup, 2019 ASD Evaluation Workgroup, Michigan Autism Council, Michigan Behavior Analysis Provider Association and Autism Alliance of Michigan have all recommended the MDHHS take action to increase standardization of ASD evaluation and ABA services statewide. This recommendation is due to the inconsistent approval, payments, credentialing and allowable codes among PIHPs and within some PIHPs due to these managed care responsibilities delegated to CMHPs.

The Council motioned to recommend the amendment of the 2021 PIHP contracts to require the PIHPs to provide the managed care responsibilities for ASD Evaluation and ABA services to increase the standardize of evaluations, eligibility of ASD treatment services including ABA, credentialing, allowable codes, rate schedule/payments, determine eligibility of ABA services, and have direct contracts with evaluation and ABA agencies. Collen Allen made a **MOTION** to support this recommendation. Dana Lasenby **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION** carried.

ASD Evaluation and Re-evaluation Policy. Michigan Medicaid is the only provider in the state which mandates an annual evaluation for continuation of ABA services. This does not follow the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Act. The Council discussed a modification of the policy to be determined by the evaluator who provided the initial diagnostic evaluation, family requested, and/or recommended by the managed care entity. The ASD Evaluation Workgroup recommend the draft policy modification to the Medicaid Provider Manual:

“18.3: If a child qualifies for a diagnosis of ASD and meets medical necessity criteria for BHT services, the evaluator will determine, and document clearly in the clinical report, the recommended time frame for re-evaluation needed to update the child’s clinical status and service needs. The evaluator who completes the comprehensive diagnostic evaluation can recommend re-evaluations between six months to three years following the initial evaluation. The frequency of re-evaluation should be determined based on the child’s age and developmental level, the evaluator’s degree of certainty in the diagnosis, the presence of comorbid disorders or complex medical conditions, and the severity level of the child’s ASD symptoms and adaptive behavior deficits. Justification for the selected re-evaluation period should be provided and discussed with families. If a caregiver or a treating provider requests a re-evaluation prior to the recommended time frame that was documented in the most recent evaluation, it may be completed sooner than was originally advised when clinically indicated.

The focus of re-evaluations should be on the assessment of current clinical status and service needs. Re-evaluations components should include the following:

- An interview with the caregiver(s) regarding current social, emotional, behavioral, and adaptive concerns and needs; gains made and response to ABA and other interventions; goals for on-going ABA; and associated comorbid conditions.
- Direct observational assessment of the child in interaction with the caregiver(s) and the examiner. Evaluators may choose to use standardized tools, such as the ADOS-2. Informal observational methods may be utilized when substantial clinical justification is provided and documented in the clinical report.
- Review of ABA treatment progress and consultation and input from the treating BCBA/BHT team.
- Completion of formal adaptive behavior assessment, such as the Vineland-3 or similar measures, or the Developmental Disabilities Children's Global Assessment Scale (DD-CGAS).
- Review of clinically relevant medical and school records.

Other tools may also be helpful, as needed, as part of the re-evaluation process, such as updated cognitive and adaptive status, behavioral rating scales, and direct assessment of skill areas noted to be of concern by the caregiver(s) or treating providers. Consultation with other treatment and educational providers should also be included when clinically relevant. The re-evaluation test battery and data gathering should be applied flexibly to address updated medical necessity and treatment recommendations. The evaluator completing the re-evaluation will recommend the time frame for the next re-evaluation of clinical status and service needs.

18. 6. BHT services are authorized on the basis of the initial ASD evaluation and thereafter every six months based on the behavioral assessment and plan submission.”

Krista Clancy made a **MOTION** to support this recommendation. Dr. George Mellos **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION** carried.

Family Supports and Service During COVID-19

Lisa Grost shared Family Supports and Services is a priority of the Autism Council and MDHHS and led a discussion regarding family resources. Stacie Rulison shared the comprehensive list of national, state and regional developed by Grand Valley University START: <https://www.gvsu.edu/autismcenter/information-and-resources-in-response-to-covid-19-348.htm>. Colleen Allen reported Autism Alliance of Michigan did a survey of families and is providing resources through their newsletter and social media.

Member Updates

Jenny Piatt reported Michigan Rehabilitation Services had to suspend some services due to COVID-19. They are sending out regular guidance to inform staff, agencies and families. Job fairs and business visits are being held virtually until restrictions related to COVID-19 are lifted. She also reported:

- Vocational rehabilitation counselors continue to support our customers in this telework environment. They are sending out regular guidance to inform staff, agencies and families. Services to client customers continue to be authorized when providers are able to offer quality services under the guidelines of the governor's executive order. Some services have been delayed/rescheduled based on the customized nature of the required service delivery, such as psychological evaluations and work-based experiences. Some providers are beginning to restructure their service delivery model to adapt to the current Covid19 environment.

- Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity is working towards state-sponsored virtual job fairs regionally for both job seekers and business. State VR is part of this initiative along with MRS/BSBP talent pools/job seekers.
- The Cisco Exceptional Learning Academy continues to move forward in Livonia. Students continue to participate in the cybersecurity training through online coursework, the 10 students are slated to graduate in August upon completion of their internship. All students are customers of MRS and five major business are also sponsoring through donations and paid internships.
- MRS is the designated lead agency for a state assistive technology grant. Jenny Piatt shared there are several resources for Michiganders related to assistive technology and response to Covid19.

Rebecca McIntyre reported Michigan Department of Education is providing much oversight and guidance to the ISDs and districts in Michigan during COVID-19. Specifically, for special education Individual Education Programs meetings can be held virtually and districts are encouraged to have IEP teams develop contingency learning plans in accordance with a student's IEP and the districts continuity of learning plan. MDE is discouraging districts from completing amendments, as doing so is changing a student's FAPE, which is not the intent. Students with disabilities have an entitlement to FAPE and therefore, districts should not change or reduce FAPE for the purposes of meeting the needs of a temporary situation or administrative convenience. The development of contingency learning plans allows students to keep the full offer of FAPE they are entitled to while working within the parameters of the districts continuity of learning plan for all students, which must be developed as part of Governor Whitmer's Executive Order 2020-35. Guidance referenced: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MDE-OSE_GuidanceIDEA-MARSE_Covid-19_685879_7.pdf

Brian DeBano, Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, reported the Bureau of Professional Licensing has continued to issue licenses and respond to customers while working remotely. Over 3,000 licenses have been issued and 19,000 emails sent from bplhelp@michigan.gov. Michigan has licensed 85 Assistant Behavior Analysts and 1,103 Behavior Analysts.

Lisa Grost adjourned the meeting at 11:05 a.m. The next Autism Council meeting will be on **June 26, 2020**.

ACTION ITEMS

WHO	Will do WHAT	By WHEN
Josh Diehl, Mike Dow and Erin Duncan	Draft guidelines for ABA agencies during COVID-19 to recommend to Council. Lisa Grost and Krista Clancy will facilitate the review with Council and BHDDA.	4/28/20 – Draft to Council
Farah Hanley and Lisa Grost	Discuss the ASD Legislative recommendations from Council with Al Jansen, BHDDA.	5/01/20