

OPEN MEETING MINUTES

Name of Governmental Body: Governor's Autism Council			Attending: Council Members: Christina Krasovich; Robert Johnston; Rose Cutting; Rebecca Thompson; Margaret Fairbanks; Lindsay McCary; Daysi Jiménez; Katy Morgan
Date: 2/9/2023	Time Started: 10 a.m.	Time Ended: 11:52 a.m.	Excused: Vanesa Carmona-Lewis, Kevin Scholz, John Jahnke, Alejandra Apreza-King, Public Attendees: None DHS State Staff: Nicole Miller; Dan Kramarz; Debra Borquist-Conlon; Becky Granger, Katie Dill; Nikki Moore, Mary Schmierer; Becky Burns; Julie Thiel; Michelle Lund
Location: https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/j/1619633148			Presiding Officer: Deb Rathermel, Bureau of Children's Services, Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS)

Minutes

Operational

- Approval of the November 10, 2022, meeting minutes.
MOTION made by Christina Krasovich, seconded by Robert Johnston to approve the meeting minutes as drafted. Motion approved unanimously.
- Announcement of vote for a new Executive Planning Committee at next Council meeting in May of 2023:
 - Committee is moving to three-person committee instead of four.
 - Nicole Miller will be sending an email soon to council members requesting that anyone interested submit a brief paragraph about their background. Current members can submit again to serve.
 - Paragraphs of those interested will be shared prior to May meeting.
 - Nicole shared responsibilities of being a committee member.

Updates from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS)

- **Bureau of Children's Services (BCS)**
 - COVID-19 Flexibilities and Unwinding Presented by Becky Granger, BCS
 - During the COVID Public Health Emergency (PHE), people were not disenrolled from Medicaid programs and other temporary flexibilities were allowed by Center for Medicaid Services (CMS).
 - The Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA), which passed in late December 2022, set an end date of the continuous enrollment requirement for Medicaid which started in 3/2020 with COVID 19 PHE.
 - The federal government has announced it plans to end the COVID 19 PHE on 5/11/23.
 - State Medicaid agencies will begin steps to reestablish regular eligibility, enrollment and benefits management processes (this process is referred to "Unwinding" by the federal government).
 - CLTS Program redeterminations will resume in 6/2023; this aligns with Medicaid health care program redeterminations.
 - Disenrollments that were delayed during the PHE will resume in June.
 - All other temporary policies established through the Appendix K will transition back to permanent policy. This transition back to permanent policy must begin within 6 months of the end of the PHE.
 - Important for families to keep their Medicaid and support program contact information up to date with their Income Maintenance worker or Katie Beckett program so they can be reached with time to complete redetermination activities.
 - Becky Shared resources in PowerPoint on how to stay informed about these unwinding activities.

- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grants for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Presented by Dan Kramarz, BCS
 - ARPA initiatives related to home and community-based services (includes list of those awarded grants) <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/arpa/hcbs.htm>
 - DHS awarded the first round of grants consisting of \$17 million to 43 applicants in 2022.
 - Round 2 will open for applications on 2/21/23: technical support sessions for interested applications will be held next week.
 - Focus of grants is for providers that serve the eight home and community-based programs in Wisconsin to find innovative ways to address service delivery and worker shortage.
- Children’s Long-Term Support (CLTS) Program Provider Directory Presented by Dan Kramarz, BCS <https://cltsproviderdirectory.wi.gov/s/>
 - Provider Directory was updated in Fall of 2022 to provide to a more secure platform.
 - CMS requires us to have a forward-facing provider directory for providers and families to use.
 - Dan provided a walkthrough of the directory website.
 - DHS initially qualifies a provider and then the CWA has to complete more detailed activities to fully qualify a provider prior to working with a participant(s).
- **Bureau of Benefits Policy**
 - Behavioral treatment benefit group codes Presented by Nikki Moore
 - Provided a summary of a December 2022 ForwardHealth Update announcing that the Medicaid is expanding coverage for group behavioral treatment services. <https://www.forwardhealth.wi.gov/kw/pdf/2022-54.pdf>
 - Overview of historic and current behavioral treatment benefit efforts Presented by Pam Lano
 - Will be rescheduled for May 2023 Council

Council Member Updates, Discussion, and Emerging Topics

- Rebecca Thompson: Looking for the Governor’s budget proposal to include rate increase for Medicaid behavioral treatment services; this will help retain providers that were going to leave Medicaid because of low reimbursement.
- Katy Morgan: huge problem in education with service provision including funding of special education, paraprofessionals, retainment of educational staff that results in last minute/unpredictable educational environment/school day for children in special education. In turn, this affects their home and family life—dysregulation, less skilled education activities at school and decreased gains in skills, hard for families find respite and intensive therapies outside of school.
- Margaret Fairbanks: adding to Katy’s comments above; more anxiety in children and for parents navigating this post COVID time; more adolescent females in need/qualifying of services; parents are carrying most of these burdens and it’s not sustainable; how do we get all the programs for children and adults to connect and address this systemically.
- Christina Krasovich: encouraged families to become involved with parent support groups to help cope with these challenges.
- Bob Johnston: sent article out about challenges in the Autism community nationally, need and affordability often at odds and how that impacts transition/adult life for our children; huge need for services nationally and population is getting older and still have support needs that are very different from what they needed as young children.

Empowering Families to Navigate the System of Autism Supports and Services

- Presentation from Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) by Becky Burns, Statewide Coordinator for CYSHCN
 - CYSHCN funded by Maternal Health and Child Block Grant within Division of Public Health (DPH)
 - CYSHCN is a network of supports and programs focused on health care system and children with special health care needs.
 - 1 in 5 children have a special health care need so the CYSHCN Regional Center support a wide range of children, families, and providers.
 - Regional centers are staffed by “parent professionals” meaning most staff have lived experiences with a disability, parent/sibling to a person with a disability, degrees in fields that service people with disabilities.

- Most work with families and providers is done via phone, emails, also provide trainings focused on transition to adult services and on comprehensive medical home.
- Parent Professionals build strong relationships with families— “Sherpa” to families, journey driven by family.
- Presentation on the No Wrong Door-Supporting Kids Together Project Presented by Debbie Borquist-Conlon, BCS
 - This is an ARPA-funded project for HCBS.
 - 2022 focused on working with advisory committee and internally within DHS to define the scope for this project.
 - Project will focus on helping with families find supports and resources after initial diagnosis or need for help.
 - DHS is working internally with collaboration between the Division of Medicaid Services, CYSHCN in the Division of Public Health, and the Division of Care and Treatment Services to make connections. DHS is also fostering relationships with the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Public Instruction so all can come together to share in this collective help for families.
 - Key activities of project: branding and marketing, strengthening partnerships, leveraging technology and the collaborative.
 - Council shared knowledge of groups and people that would like to test website when ready as well as share their input.

MOTION made by Robert Johnston, seconded by Christina Krasovich to adjourn the meeting at 11:52AM. Motion passed unanimously.

Next meeting on Thursday 5/18/23 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Prepared by: Mary Schmierer on 2/9/2023.