

Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council (AIACC)

Monday, May 7, 2012

Alabama Industrial Development Training Building

The AIACC met on Monday, May 7, 2012 at the Alabama Industrial Development Training building. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Cam Ward. Also in attendance were Co-Chair, Bama Hager, Council members: Hanes Swingle, Kathy Welch, Elmyra Jones, Julie Brown, Jerimie Goike, Linda Bachus, Fred Biasini, Melanie Jones, and ex-officio member and State Autism Coordinator, Anna McConnell. The following proxies were in attendance as well: Teresa Thomas (Medicaid), Steve Lafreniere, on behalf of Zelia Baugh, Erin Wofford on behalf of Nancy Buckner, David Savage on behalf of Cary Boswell, Dawn Ellis on behalf of Don Williamson, and Olivia Nettles on behalf of Sandra King Parker.

Minutes from the previous meeting, January 23, 2012 were presented and approved by the Council.

Chairperson Cam Ward introduced and welcomed Anna McConnell as the new State Autism Coordinator. Anna was previously employed with the Autism Society and brings that experience to the Council.

Ms. McConnell expressed her thanks to Co-Chairs Cam Ward and Bama Hager, Council members, and workgroup leaders for continuing the work of the Council. Council members were provided with forms to update their contact information and confirm/update proxies. In addition, there are two AIACC seats open on the Council for service providers. Suggestions may be sent to Anna. These will be given to the nominating committee for consideration and then sent to the Governor for appointment. Some members' terms have expired; we welcome their continued participation, but if they would like to roll off they can also notify Anna McConnell. Bama noted that some AIACC members do not have a proxy and asked them to consider designating one.

The 2011 Annual Report is almost completed. Its submission will be late since the due date was as the Coordinator position was being filled. An Executive Summary will be provided to the Legislature and Governor; however, a link to the full report will be listed on the AIACC website.

Committee Announcements and Updates:

Some workgroups will be reconvened while others have continued their meetings without interruption.

New Business:

Chairperson Ward, in reference to council membership mentioned it has been proposed that a representative from the Insurance Community be added to the Council. This could aid in the carrying out of the autism insurance reform legislation recently passed. There was a question as to the role of the Department of Insurance. Senator Ward explained that the Department of Insurance deals primarily with home, auto, fraud, etc., as opposed to health insurance issues. Fred Biasini said he would convene the Bylaws Committee to include a representative from the private insurance community in the Council membership and the list of criteria for that position.

Insurance Reform Update: The state legislature passed a bill that was not ideal or exactly what the Council hoped for, but it was understood this was going to be a long process and it might take several attempts to accomplish the goals set forth. Bama will be discussing more details of the bill.

The Autism Society is compiling stories of dealing with insurance companies (i.e. What do you bill for? What problems do you have with claims?). Anyone who would like to submit information may contact Bama Folsom Hager. They also want to work with individuals and families to learn more about the process and problems.

Easter Seals runs into problems with therapy not being covered for ASD, or that these individuals are under covered. Copays are counted against the 30 visits.

It is also noted that coverage is needed for diagnosis through treatment as part of the BCBS subcontracts. Fred Biasini referred Bama to Sparks Clinics' billing department to discuss issues and needs.

Bama Hager expressed appreciation to Mac McCutcheon (sponsor) and Steve Windom (lobbyist) for their support and help in regards to the insurance legislation. The autism insurance reform bill provides for 35 OT and 35 SLP visits in addition to the 30 combined SLP/PT/OT visits already provided. This equals a total of 100 covered therapy sessions. Other ERISA companies are expected to also move to 100 combined sessions. We are urging families to contact their

employers to request ABA coverage. The ABA package must be purchased by the employer and will cover up to \$36,000 per year for children under age 9.

Announcements:

Melanie Jones: April was Autism Awareness Month. The ASA hosted 15 walks and 2 runs around the state. Huntsville had 1800 participants. ASA also participated in the "Light It Up Blue" campaign, partnering with Autism Speaks.

Sarah O'Kelley: UAB Civitan Sparks Clinics is offering/participating in 2 research studies. The first looks at Brain Imaging of Language Functions. Participants must have high-functioning ASD between 8-12 years old. Contact: UAB Cognition Brain and Autism Laboratory, 205-996-9368, psych-abrl@mail.ad.uab.edu. The second study focuses on Anxiety and ASD. Participants must be between 8-14 years old and have an ASD diagnosis. Contact: Sarah O'Kelley, Ph.D., 205-975-5781, sokelley@uab.edu.

Presentations from the Alabama Autism Surveillance Project (AASP) and the Adult Services Workgroup were given.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Next meeting TBA.

Recording Secretary

C. S. Weldon

5/7/2012