

Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council (AIACC)

Monday, July 8, 2013

Alabama Industrial Development Training Center

The AIACC met on Monday, July 8, 2013 at the Alabama Industrial Development Training center. The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Bama Hager. Also in attendance were Council members: Fred Biasini, Greg Carlson, Jerimie Goike, Myra Jones, Mitchell Lord, Sarah Ryan, Hanes Swingle, Todd Tomerlin, and ex-officio member and State Autism Coordinator, Anna McConnell. The following proxies were in attendance as well: Cindy Robinson on behalf of Thomas Bice, David Savage on behalf of Cary Boswell, Erin Wofford on behalf of Nancy Buckner, Angel Loewen on behalf of Melanie Jones, Christy Atkinson on behalf of John Mascia, Courtney Tarver on behalf of Jim Reddoch, Debbie Lynn on behalf of Kathy Welch, and Dawn Ellis on behalf of Don Williamson.

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Bama Folsom Hager.

Minutes from the April 8th, 2013 meeting were approved and adopted.

Associate Commissioner Courtney Tarver from the Department of Mental Health shared some remarks on behalf of Commissioner Reddoch. Even in this time of sequestration, some good things are happening. The Department is looking at several grants that are available. It would appear that the Federal government is paying attention to what states really need and are trying to assist them in doing things better than the way they are currently being done. CMS currently monies available for programs that will eventually save Federal money for Medicare and Medicaid. Employment and Housing are two areas that the Division is looking to pursue those dollars for. Areas of focus are increased collaboration with other agencies and the continued support of this council to develop services.

Next, Co-Chair Hager recognized Myra Jones from the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities. Ms. Jones explained that the ACDD is a thirty-six member board appointed by the Governor. The Council advocates for individuals with disabilities throughout the state. They conduct public forums, surveys and focus groups to determine what the pressing needs are for those with disabilities. Those findings help them develop a state plan. From that plan, they do sub-grants. They recently released a Request for Innovative Ideas and received thirty-six applications. One of those sub-grants was awarded to the Autism Society of Alabama.

Ms. Jones asked Ms. Hager to speak to that. Ms. Hager stated that the Autism Society has two real areas of safety that they are focused on in programs for the Autism Society. Their goal is to make sure that each Sheriff's department in the state is educated about Project Lifesaver for persons who might wander, or another free program that is similar called *Take Me Home*. *Take Me Home* is a database that was developed by a Police Department in Florida for people who may need special assistance in times of emergency. First Responders would have all the information they need to find an individual quickly who may wander as a symptom of their ASD. In addition to these two programs, *A Child is Missing*, a program that can alert communities to the need to identify a missing person. The program will launch in the next few weeks to make sure all counties are aware of these services and ensure that one of the programs is available in every county in Alabama. Ms. Hager expressed her thanks to the DD Council for being supportive of this initiative.

Co-Chair Hager also shared that Tristan Dunn and Linda Bachus are two Council members who are set to roll off the council in September (pending new appointments by the Governor), but in their absence today, Ms. Hager thanked them for their service and asked that others be sure to extend their appreciation as well.

Announcements on behalf of Commissioner Ward include the fact that the legislation regarding BCBA Licensure and the voluntary reporting of an ASD diagnosis on an individual's driver's license did not pass. Both bills will be introduced during the next legislative session and Commissioner Ward is very hopeful they will pass.

Also, the *DSM 5* has been released. The Autism Society is working with leaders in the state to help arrange training for those who might be interested. In the meantime, they are keeping an eye on the impact on service delivery and eligibility.

Chairman Ward has expressed an interest in increasing funding next year for the AIACC. They are currently considering the best utilization of the additional funds.

State Coordinator, Anna McConnell, reiterated her appreciation for the service of Tristan Dunn and Linda Bachus to the Council as they will be rolling off membership at the end of September.

The additional funding for the Council that Ms. Hager referred to will amount to \$10,000. In addition, application has been made to the Implementation Grant to partner with *Help Me Grow*. They hope to know the status by the next meeting.

The Executive Committee has a meeting once per year. They will meet again in October and Anna will be sending out potential dates for planning purposes.

The Funding & Finance committee has been a standing committee but has not yet had a meeting. She hopes to have something to report from that committee by the next meeting.

Ms. McConnell also introduced their summer office intern, Heather Johnson. Heather will give an update on the projects that she is assisting with.

The Bylaws/Membership Committee update was given by Kim Hill. Applications have been received to fill the positions of Linda Bachus and Tristan Dunn. They are still seeking an applicant for the insurance industry representative position. They hope to have those positions filled by October 7th.

Fred Biasini gave an update from the Standards of Practice Committee. Further integration of the draft from the Professional Preparation and Training Workgroup is currently on hold as it is going to require review while considering other reports since there will be overlap.

The Diagnostic Clinics Workgroup is in the process of finalizing their report and it is almost complete.

The 6-21 Workgroup is now moving forward with their report and a small group is working on trimming down and reformatting the report. They are making a comparison to other states.

The 0-5 Workgroup should be completed soon, and the Transition and Adult Report is currently pending.

Angel Loewen spoke on behalf of Melanie Jones for the Special Projects Committee. The Community Services and Support workgroup, (Autism Friendly Committee) is currently focusing on three main objectives. Those are to develop the Autism Friendly Directory, to develop training and testing materials that will be a part of the directory, and when all that is in place, to work on

taking the campaign public. They are still in the planning phase and are continuing to meet via conference call.

Heather Johnson is working on her Master's in Public Health at UAB. She feels fortunate to have the opportunity to intern with the Department of Mental Health and the Autism Council. Heather states that Anna has been working with the Act Early Ambassador Program with a goal of educating healthcare professionals, early educators and parents. In addition, Sarah O'Kelly has been working with the early screening workgroup with that same goal. Heather's collaboration is an extension of the hard work already done between those two groups. There has been a great deal of progress made at this time on two projects in particular. The first is a tool-kit that contains information about the importance of early screening, screening tools, Alabama specific referral materials for children with developmental delays, information from the American Academy of Pediatrics' toolkit and the CDC's Learn the Signs Act Early curriculum. This will be distributed to health care providers. It is also modifiable for educators and parents. The second project, Train the Trainer, is curriculum with the purpose to have a network of individuals who feel confident in giving presentations on appropriate milestones and referral to Early Intervention programs when appropriate. The first presentation will be at the Autism Society Networking Group Leadership Meeting, July 26th.

Bill Pearson of the Bluff Park United Methodist Community Ministries Foundation shared information on the Bluff Park Promise Home, which is a partnership with Glenwood. Bluff park promise home is a six bedroom, six bathroom residential facility for six individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. This project was made possible by Bluff Park UMC and other local churches and organizations and will be managed by Glenwood.

Greg Carlson stated that the Disability Leadership Coalition, which serves people with all disabilities, has recommended to Medicaid that consumers and family members be included on the boards of the five regional networks that have been established.

Associate Commissioner Tarver spoke to the issue of Long Term Care services not being included in Medicaid coverage but stated that current services for persons with Developmental Disabilities will be maintained.

Mr. Carlson iterated that families need to contact their legislators, the Medicaid Agency, and the Regional centers with concerns about services and coverage.

Amy Mitchell, on behalf of Sarah O'Kelley, shared some history of the Alabama Autism Providers Network. The Network started as the result of a recommendation of the Autism Task Force in July of 2008, which recognized the need for better intrastate communication among providers of services for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. A small group of individuals came together and came up with a list of people they were aware of that were providing direct services to individuals with Autism. In October of 2008 18 people met and held the first unofficial meeting to discuss needs. Lee Yount was selected as Chair and Jerre Brimer as Vice Chair. By March of 2009 they were able to draft the following mission statement. "To promote collaboration among service providers in Alabama and to promote best practice, standards and regulations to ensure that quality services are made available to individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families and caregivers".

Brooke Stephens added that initially when the group met it was very unclear what the committee/networking group was going to do. It later became apparent there was a need to share what different providers were doing, and also to remind each other of the great needs that exist, as opposed to being focused on the specifics.

The group is open to new members. There is an application process which includes a visit to the site, as they want to be a group of providers who are providing best quality services which are evidence based. Information on the application process is available on the web at www.alabamaautismproviders.com.

The networking aspect has been extraordinarily helpful. And they continue to meet quarterly in Montgomery.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Next meeting: October 7, 2013

Recording Secretary

C. S. Weldon

07/08/2013

Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council (AIACC)
(DATE of Next Meeting)
Alabama Institute for Training and Development

Minutes submitted and approved October 7, 2013

Chairman, Senator Cam Ward