

Systems of Care Subcommittee
July 25, 2007
Minutes

Members Present: Debbie Flournoy, Kim Hill, Tom Holmes, Beverly Marson, Tuwanna McGee, Carl Nowell, Michelle De Ramus, Jennifer Sellers, Alice Widgeon, Lee Yount

The Systems of Care Subcommittee of the Autism Task Force met on Wednesday, July 25, 2007 at 1:00 PM in Room 123 of the State House.

Lee called meeting to order and shared a copy of the agenda and requested that we start by introducing ourselves. She then asked that the members feel free to request additional agenda items.

Agenda items covered were as follows:

- I. **Charge to the Committee** – Lee reported on her understanding of the charge to the committee which included reviewing current systems of care and identifying gaps and problems with service integration. She also noted that the group was to identify what an ideal system of care should include.

Carl Nowell noted that we were also to review transition services. Everyone agreed and the topic was added.

- II. **Identification of Systems of Care** – The group participated in a lengthy discussion about what systems of care currently exist and developed 5 categories of such systems including: Public Systems of Care; Family and Informal Systems of Care; Private, Non Profit and Community Systems of Care; University Based Systems of Care. These were further defined as follows:

Family and Informal Systems of Care: The group discussed the fact that families are often in the position of having to seek help and support on their own. They may network throughout their community, churches, and schools to identify individuals who volunteer their time or that they can hire directly to offer assistance. This may include in home workers who may be hired by the family directly and those who are not tied to a state, local, or community agency.

Public: Al School for the Deaf and Blind, Departments of Mental Health & Mental Retardation, Rehabilitation Services, Children's Affairs, Medicaid, Public Health and Local Public MRDD-310's

University Based: Members noted that Auburn University, University of Alabama and UAB all have some type of autism related service or training Programs.

Private, Non Profit, and Community Systems of Care: The group noted that we were not able to identify all of the agencies that serve individuals with autism and would seek information.

Alice Widgeon offered to provide SDMHMR's list of providers. We identified the following providers that are known to serve some individuals but may not be exclusively devoted to autism: Ability Plus, ARC Agencies, Dunganvin, Exceptional Foundation, Head Start, Glenwood, Mitchell's Place, and VOA.

Other Systems of Care; The group discussed other systems of care such as Clinicians associated with Private Practice and Health, Judicial, and Emergency Management. Rebecca Dossett, a clinician in Birmingham, was noted as one of the very few professionals who have devoted the majority of their practice to helping individuals with autism spectrum disorder. There however may be others not currently known to the group.

III. Plan of Action:

The discussion relative to the course of action concurred with the following plan:

- Review other states that are progressive and have existing service systems for individuals with autism and their families. Several group members volunteered to review the state plan and to research specific questions. They will report back at the next meeting on the following:
 - Florida – Alice Widgeon
 - Indiana – Jennifer Sellers
 - North Carolina – Beverly Marson
 - Ohio – Carl Nowell
 - Pennsylvania – Tuwanna McGee
- Collect information of what currently exist in Alabama. Alice Widgeon to provide SDMHMR list.
- Seek information on specific questions from both state and community based organizations. Jennifer Sellers agreed to develop questions, and Lee Yount will assist with making contacts.
- Clarify our role with Cam Ward and other committees to be sure that we are appropriately addressing the task assigned to this committee and are not duplicating efforts. Lee Yount to address.

IV. Transition

The group then discussed issues related to transition and what is currently happening in local schools. It was noted that some school systems start with transition at age 14 or 16 while others do very little until near graduation date. A suggestion was made that the group should identify what should be done through the various ages and that this information should be presented to families, school systems and state agencies. We also discussed the lack of collaboration between agencies and the need for a more integrated service delivery system. Finally, the lack of support for individuals who are on the more severe end of the spectrum was discussed. The group further noted the need for more vocational training, job coaches and employment opportunities. The group agreed that we needed to study this issue in more detail at the next meeting.

Potential dates for the next meeting will be emailed to the group. We plan to meet prior to the end of August.