

## **Autism Spectrum Disorders Guidance Workgroup**

January 23, 2008

Conference Call

### Members Participating:

Pat Grosz, Co Chair

Joanne Angel

Dr. Charlie Bauer

Dr. Terri Daly

Renee Jenkins

Kelly Purvis

Glenda Thomas

Marsha Cantrell for Cynthia Fuller

Lori Shamroth-Carver, Co Chair

Dr. Kathleen Armstrong

Dr. Jeff Brosco

Arnetta Givens

Joy McAfee

Ellie Schrot

Dr. Juliann Woods

Pat Grosz called the meeting to order and gave a roll call of participants. The group was informed that member Randee Gabriel had emailed notice that she had a schedule conflict, but would try to participate with a portion of the call.

Pat continued by stating the group's charge, referring to the Autism Spectrum Disorders Guidance Workgroup document distributed in December 2007 by Janice Kane. She indicated that the product would be a guidance document that could be given to Early Steps State Office from which policy could be drafted on how to serve children with autism. The initial timeframe for this process to be completed was April 2008, but there is room for flexibility in the submission date if needed.

Teri Daly inquired about the document developed by the previous Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Workgroup and why it did not accomplish this charge. Lori acknowledged that several of the current group members committed themselves to developing the prior ASD Workgroup Recommendations and that there may be frustrations related to the lack of action taken by the Early Steps State Office on those recommendations. There was discussion about recent changes in the field and that this is a new opportunity to provide assistance to the State Office regarding this matter while using the recommendations previously submitted as a resource in decision making.

It was emphasized that the workgroup members should be familiar with how the Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP) process works and requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The state's Primary Service Provider model was highlighted as how services are to be provided in Florida.

An overview of the IFSP process was given by Lori who indicated that service recommendations are made by a team consisting of the family and other individual providers that are based on functional outcomes identified by the team and incorporate strategies to be imbedded within the family's everyday routines and activities.

Arnetta Givens indicated that federal guidelines identified by IDEA primarily state:

- The IFSP is the authorizing document for service delivery
- That services must be provided within the child's natural environment
- And provided in a timely manner

Renee Jenkins continued that federal guidelines also require that each child shall have a service coordinator assigned. The service coordinator is to assist in the coordination of needed services utilizing all community resources, not just Part C dollars. A request was made to have the IDEA link distributed to workgroup members.

Arnetta relayed that after today's conference call an email will be distributed with links to resource documents, including the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) website, sample documents from other states, and the ASD Workgroup Recommendations submitted in 2006. Other resources requested were:

- The link to the AAP recommendation
- Early Identification for Children with Autism article by Dr. Juliann Woods
- Autism Speaks Website, particularly the paper on Arguments in Support of Private Insurance Coverage of Autism-Related Services (October 24, 2007)
- The CARD/ASD Workgroup's response to the Early Steps State Office Response
- The National Institute for Mental Health website
- Norfolk Jewish Hospital website in New Jersey
- The link to Federal Guidelines to IDEA (Part C)
- The link to Early Steps Interim Policies once posted

Joy McAfee and Glenda Thomas of the Pensacola area discussed the current collaboration in their area related to dealing with children with autism. The collaboration began with a local workgroup of community programs to develop an autism clinic to identify and diagnose children. The goal is to have a uniform clinic across CMS and Early Steps to assist in the implementation of appropriate service delivery. Children that are either CMS or Medicaid recipients are seen at the CMS clinic, and all other children are seen in an Early Steps specialty clinic. The CMS clinic is held monthly and both entities are billing Medicaid, other third party payers or using contract dollars to fund the clinics. CMS is using the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule as its evaluation tool.

There was discussion regarding establishing a meeting schedule. It was decided to have a face to face meeting in Orlando on Wednesday, February 13, 2008, from 9:00 to 4:30 in or near the airport. Arnetta agreed to get back with the group regarding scheduling for this meeting. In addition, a conference call was scheduled for Thursday, February 21, 2008 from 2:00-4:00.

Call was adjourned.