

MINUTES

KANSAS AUTISM TASK FORCE

April 16, 2008

Room 313-S—Statehouse

Members Present

Dr. Bill Craig, Chairperson
Senator Julia Lynn
Representative Melody McCray-Miller
Representative Judy Morrison
Dr. Dee McKee
Jeanie Zortman
Dr. Matt Reese
Dr. Mike Wasmer
Denise Grasso
Dr. Jane Wegner
Dr. Linda Heitzman-Powell
Sarah Bommarito
Nan Perrin
Kerry Haag (standing in for Colleen Riley), *ex officio*
Don Jordan, *ex officio*
Jim Leiker, *ex officio*

Staff Present

Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Renaee Jefferies, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Nobuko Folmsbee, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department

The minutes of the March 5, 2008 meeting were approved with a correction on the date of the April meeting.

Linda Heitzman-Powell provided a summary of the Best Practices Subcommittee's recent meeting and work. She indicated the subcommittee is almost through its review of other states' reviews. A few are left to complete, including New York (many volumes' worth), Pennsylvania (a review), and the Nebraska parent handbook, as well as others. Dr. Heitzman-Powell asked that anyone interested either submit literature the group is not yet aware of, or volunteer to assist in the review. Representative McCray-Miller asked whether the group's review included how to take its work and implement it as policy for the state. Dr. Heitzman-Powell indicated the subcommittee's

focus was to develop evidence-based best practices but not to go into the implementation phase. However, she agreed this was important.

Margaret Zillinger of the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) presented a document summarizing data regarding children on the autism waiver and its waiting list (Attachment 1). Discussion related to the location of the children, as well as the types of services currently available from providers. Gaps in coverage were noted, as well as information that additional provider applications are expected to be submitted.

Chairperson Bill Craig opened discussion on a document relating to proposed advocacy efforts by the Task Force (Attachment 2). After discussion, the Task Force agreed to delete the word "morally" from the last statement in the first section. Details of how to approach the Task Force's advocacy efforts were discussed.

Dr. Matt Reese summarized the recent meeting of the Professional/Paraprofessional Qualifications Subcommittee. He indicated the subcommittee meeting focused on the proposed legislation to provide scholarships for individuals seeking health-related degrees who intend to pursue a career in serving children with autism. The scholarship funding is being pursued, though the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) has indicated recently it must place priority on teachers' scholarships and it may be difficult to fund all the teacher scholarships for which authority already exists in statute. The scholarship funding will be pursued *via* a proviso in the omnibus appropriations bill. Advocacy strategy was discussed.

Dr. Dee McKee summarized the recent meeting of the Accessing Education Resources and Funding Subcommittee. The purpose of the subcommittee meeting was to continue discussions on adult autism services. Dr. McKee referred to a document provided by the Kansas Health Policy Authority describing the Working Healthy Program, a Medicaid program that allows people with disabilities to work while maintaining at least a portion of their Medicaid benefit. The SRS website that deals with the program is located at www.workinghealthy.org. Dr. McKee also discussed a document entitled "Disability Support Maps," produced by the Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns (Attachment 3). Finally, Dr. McKee discussed information that had been provided by an individual from the Master Teacher Program.

Chairperson Bill Craig opened discussion related to what the Task Force had left to do. The following items were discussed:

- Insurance legislation – Dr. Mike Wasmer provided information on the status of this issue. The bill is essentially dead. Other states' efforts were discussed, as well.
- Autism registry/website – Dr. Wasmer summarized his communication with the director of the Kansas Cancer Registry, which is probably going to be the best model for the proposed autism registry. It appears that legislation would have to be introduced to establish the registry, and the Task Force would have to identify a private institution to help staff the registry.
- Regional centers – Dr. Reese discussed his efforts related to the program entitled "Learn the Signs, Act Early." Improvements in screening by physicians (to reduce the incidence of false positives) is probably a reachable goal. Training on what to do once a positive screening occurs is the next challenge. He and Lee Stickle are continuing to pursue this issue.
- Payment for services and scholarships.

- *Potential for continuing the Task Force past November 2008 – A motion was made by Representative Melody McCray-Miller and seconded by Dr. Mike Wasmer to pursue legislation to continue the Task Force for an additional two years. The motion carried.*

The next meeting of the Task Force was set tentatively for May 19. Members were advised to watch their email for a possible alternative meeting date.

The meeting was adjourned.

Prepared by Martha Dorsey

Approved by Task Force on:

June 12, 2008

(Date

