

Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council (AIACC)

Monday, April 11, 2016

Alabama Industrial Development Training Center

The AIACC met on Monday, April 11, 2016, at the Alabama Industrial Development Training Center. The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair, Greg Carlson. Also in attendance were Council members: Fred Biasini, Brooke Bowles, Joshua Heard, Doris Hill, Myra Jones, Melanie Jones, Todd Tomerlin and Karen Willis. The following proxies were in attendance as well: Russell Green on behalf of Stephanie Azar, Tina Sanders on behalf of the Department of Education, Vera Hendrix on behalf of John Mascia, Laurie Eldridge-Auffant on behalf of Thomas Miller, Hanes Swingle on behalf of Miriam Peralta, and Yada Horace on behalf of Jim Ridling.

The minutes from the January 11, 2016 meeting were approved and adopted.

Greg Carlson called the meeting to order. There was a brief discussion of Autism Insurance Reform. The status is that the bill has been introduced, but the working committee has not reported back to the Governor. Greg feels the Governor will not push the bill until he has that report. The discussion of New Business began with comments from Greg on behalf of Seantor Ward. In discussing the budget, Greg shared that Jim Carnes, Policy Director for Alabama Arise has indicated that there is an \$85 Million conditional appropriation. This would mean, if the funds to come in, Medicaid would receive the full \$100 Million to continue the RCO process.

On behalf of Anna McConnell, State Coordinator, the Annual Report was distributed. This is the final version which has been submitted to the Legislature as per the stipulations of the bill.

Committee Reports:

The Funding & Finance Committee met March 11th regarding Medicaid issues and the status of the Regional Care Organizations. If the waiver is approved, there will be a \$700 Million influx of funds with \$287 Million available for Special Projects to be spent over a three year period, and evaluated over a five year period. Based on Medicaid being fully funded, the RCOs will be in effect October 1st.

The Federal Employee Health Insurance Plan will begin covering ABA services in all plans, effective 1/1/2017. This is effective for all states. There is still work being done to bring other insurers to this point.

Melanie Jones spoke on behalf of the Public Awareness Committee. They are continuing to work with Regions Bank on the Autism Friendly Campaign. The goal is for all locations in the Southeast to become Autism Friendly environments.

Fred Biasini, in regards to RCOs, stated they are still gathering information with five Universities, who have each been awarded \$6,000 to cover the cost of grad students who will collect data. They hope the project will be complete by October 1.

The word is that Senator Ward was able, along with assistance of other Senators to obtain \$360,000 in the Education budget for the Autism Council. \$3000 of that would be to start three Regional Centers at \$100,000 each. This would start October 1. They will continue to seek funding for all five centers.

Fred also shared the Autism Cares Act, providing dollars for special projects similar to RCOs, has a grant deadline of May 10th, and there has been no time to prepare that. They hope to revisit that opportunity in the future.

In the absence of Sarah Ryan, Doris Hill shared this information from the Bylaws Committee: Recommendations for AIACC vacancies (adult and parent) were submitted to the Governor's office in late March. Also, the question was raised regarding representation on the Committee of adults who need more support.

It was agreed that the following should be done:

- Update the application to remind that all AIACC members can and should designate a proxy, and that they can someone attend meetings and sit with them, if needed
- Make changes to the Bylaws to include this population, to ensure that lifespan and whole spectrum are all represented.

Agency Reports:

Russell Green spoke on behalf of Medicaid and stated they are moving forward as if RCOs will be implemented.

Tina Sanders stated that the interim Director for ALSDE is expected to be announced Thursday.

Joshua Heard shared that he is to be featured in an AUM Campus Newsletter highlighting ASD and his service on the Council.

Myra Jones stated that the ACDD is currently working with the Airport in Huntsville on training – Wings for Autism. They will probably hold that training next April.

Brooke shared that Triumph Services is opening a new location in Montgomery. Projected opening date is early summer.

Melanie Jones pointed out that April is Autism Awareness Month, and that Autism Walks will be held in cities all over the state, every Saturday. More information is available at walkforautismal.com. Also, Autism Conferences will be held in Mobile on May 8th, and in Montgomery on May 13th.

Fred Biasini stated that the Sparks Center is currently working with the Birmingham Barons on an Autism Friendly afternoon at the stadium to be held May 1st. Also, the Simpson Ramsey Lecture will be held in Birmingham, April 21-22. Lee Yount added the Glenwood/UAB Lecture will be April 20th with the topic of Next Generation Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders: From Mitochondria to Music.

Greg Carlson shared that as of 3/29/2016, Sen. Allen plans to file the licensure bill. All needed changes have been made. The Board will be meeting soon to determine rules and regulations. It is anticipated that if the bill is passed this legislative session, applications would begin to be accepted by the end of the year.

The Presentation was from Jim Siders, of the University of Alabama, CrossingPoints Transition Program. The Crossing Points Bridge is a postsecondary summer pipeline program for college-age students with intellectual disabilities at UA. CrossingPoints Bridge program will operate during June and July summer terms. Participating students will reside in a University of Alabama residence hall with supports and take program-specific courses. If eligible, and based upon the

student's expressed interests and as discussed with the Project Coordinator during advising, CrossingPoints Bridge participants can select up to two UA courses. In addition, students can participate in organized recreation activities and supported outings. More information is available at www.crossingpoints.ua.edu.

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

Next meeting: Monday, April 11, 2016.

Recording Secretary

C. S. Weldon

DRAFT