

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**AUTISM COUNCIL**

**BYLAWS**

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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**AUTISM COUNCIL**

**BYLAWS**

**Article I - Name**

The name of this organization shall be the Autism Council.

**Article II - Mission and Responsibilities**

**Section 1. Mission and Scope**

The Autism Council was established by the Governor to advise the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) on supports and services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. The governor instructed the council to examine the following issues:

- Provider staff training issues
- Provider and parent strategies to recruit and retain line staff
- Provider outreach efforts to recruit parents to work as line staff
- Alternative approaches to the current age restriction policy in the intensive phase

**Section 2. Administration**

The Council shall:

- a. Have access to and consider reports and statistics kept by DHFS relating to matters concerning children with autism or Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- b. Advise DHFS in the preparation of program policy and strategy.

**Article III - Membership**

**Section 1. Appointment**

Members are appointed by the Governor.

## **Section 2. Number of Members**

The Council shall be composed of no more than thirteen (13) members.

## **Section 3. Composition**

The Council shall consist of:

- a. At least a majority of parents with children with autism.
- b. The remaining members of the Council may include the following individuals: providers of services to children with autism; local government officials; persons with knowledge of the issues relating to autism; and public members.
- c. Other members as appointed by the Governor.

## **Section 4. Term of Membership**

Members serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

## **Section 5. Term Vacancies**

In the event that a member resigns before the end of their term, the Council shall direct DHFS to immediately inform the Governor of the need to appoint a new member.

## **Article IV - Council Meetings**

### **Section 1. Regular Meetings**

- a. Regular meetings of the full Council shall be held quarterly.
- b. Regularly scheduled meetings may be canceled by the Support Committee, in writing or by telephone, after contacting or being contacted by a majority of the Council members.
- c. Sufficient notice shall be given to the public, as prescribed by the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law.

### **Section 2. Special Meetings**

- a. Special meetings of the full Council may be called by the Support Committee and DHFS, in writing or by telephone, after contacting or being contacted by a majority of the Council members.

- b. Sufficient notice shall be given to the public, as prescribed by the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law.

### **Section 3. Quorum**

A quorum for a Regular or a Special Council meeting shall be two-thirds (2/3) of the duly appointed Council members. Members must participate as defined in **Section 6** of this Article.

### **Section 4. Agenda Development**

DHFS staff, the Support Committee and the council Facilitator develop the agendas for Council meetings based upon suggestions submitted by DHFS staff and members of the Autism Council. The agenda will be developed according to this timeline:

1. Suggested agenda items must be submitted no later than four (4) weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.
2. DHFS staff and the Support Committee will finalize the agenda no later than two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.
3. DHFS and the Support Committee will distribute to the Council a list of all suggested agenda items that were not included on the final agenda.

### **Section 5. Meeting Facilitation**

A trained Facilitator will be provided to the Autism Council by DHFS for the purpose of assisting the Council in managing their meetings. The Facilitator is an objective individual who is not a member of the Council and has no decision-making authority on the Council. The Facilitator's role will be to:

- Ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of meeting operations per the agenda
- Ensure that all Council members have the opportunity to participate in the meeting
- Offer a summary of the discussion to help clarify outstanding issues
- Call the Vote for an issue on the table.

### **Section 6. Participation and Voting**

- a. Any or all members may participate in a regular or special meeting of the Council or Support Committee through the use of telephone or any other means of communication by which all participating members may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting, including assistive communication devices as needed.
- b. Voting by proxy is not permitted.
- c. Voting by e-mail is not permitted.

- d. All ballots will be open - there will be no secret voting. A vote tally would include the number supporting the measure, the number against, and (optional) brief statements with each “No” vote. The public record will include simply the number of “Yes,” “No,” or “Abstain” votes without including the names of who voted which way.

## **Section 7. Public Comment**

- a. Effective 12/1/05, a thirty-minute period of time will be set aside at the beginning of each Council meeting for Public Comment. If there is no Public Comment, the meeting may commence.
- b. Individuals wishing to speak will be asked to register at least fifteen (15) minutes prior to the meeting. Speakers will be called in the order in which they registered. Speakers must register as either an Individual or a Group.
- c. Each speaker will have up to three (3) minutes for their comments, regardless of whether they are speaking as an Individual or representing a Group.
- d. Individuals wishing to comment who cannot attend the meeting in person may send written comments by e-mail or by US mail to a designated DHFS staff person. Written comments received at least three (3) business days prior to a Council Meeting will be forwarded to all Council Members by e-mail. Written comments received less than three business days prior to the meeting will be distributed at the meeting. Written comments will be included as part of the record.
- e. The Council puts a high priority on keeping this process simple, accessible, and flexible, so the registration process is meant to help streamline the Public Comment period; however, if a potential speaker arrives at a different time, the Council will do its best to allow them three minutes for comment.

## **Article V - Committees**

### **Section 1. Standing Committees**

The Support Committee will consist of three (3) members of the full Autism Council who are elected by a vote of the Autism Council. The Support Committee is responsible for participating in Agenda Development (see **Article IV, Section 4**). A new Support Committee is to be elected annually. The election will be added to the agenda of the meeting that is closest to one year after the meeting in which the current Support Committee was elected, but not less than one year after that meeting. Members of the Support Committee serve for one year beginning immediately after the Council meeting in which the members were elected.

## **Section 2. Other Committees**

Other committees or task-specific work groups may be created on an as-needed basis by resolution of the full Council. Members of the Autism Council will comprise these other committees.

### **Article VI – Reaching agreement**

The Council will use facilitated dialogue and collaboratively strive for collaborative agreement in decision making.

If agreement cannot be achieved following dialogue, a vote will be taken and the split decision vote results will be shared with the Department of Health and Family Services.

### **Article VII - Conflict of Interest**

Members of the Council shall not use their position to obtain anything of value (e.g., money, property, favor, service, payment, loan or promise of future employment) for:

1. The member
2. The member's immediate family
3. An organization in which the member, or someone in the member's immediate family:
  - a. Is a director, officer, trustee, employee or paid consultant; or
  - b. Owns or controls an equity, interest, voting rights, or outstanding indebtedness

If any of the above conditions exists, a Council member shall disclose her/his interest and refrain from voting on the proposal.

Members should evaluate circumstances which give the appearance of a conflict of interest. In such situations, members should disclose the circumstances and refrain from voting.

### **Article VIII - Amendments**

Bylaws may be amended at the regular meeting following the meeting in which they are presented. Proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the full Council prior to the meeting in which they are to be voted on. A two-thirds vote is necessary for adoption.