MINUTES
of the
Autism Council

DATE: November 20, 2006

LOCATION: Madison, Wisconsin

MEMBERS PRESENT: Heather Boyd, Terri Enters, Vivian Hazell, Rose Helms, Joan Ketterman, Paula Petit, Paul Reuteman, Glen Sallows, Pam Stoika

ABSENT: Nissan Bar-Lev, Milana Millan, Michael Williams

FACILITATOR: Kris Freundlich

STAFF PRESENT: Sandy Blakeney, Beth Wroblewski

The meeting came to order at 10:00 AM.

There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes: The Council reviewed the draft of the August 21, 2006 Meeting Minutes. A few minor edits were requested.

Motion (Terri Enters): That the Autism Council approve the August 21, 2006 minutes with the corrections made.

Seconded: Joan Ketterman

The motion was Approved by unanimous voice vote.

QUEST FOR FLEXIBILITY

Discussion of Individualized Service Plan Development and Outcomes-Based Decision Making

- The Waivers are designed to be very flexible, driven by the needs of the individual child as identified by the team of individuals (family, provider, service coordinator) who know the child best.
- The federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requires that services be individualized. CMS does not allow services to be provided as a defined "program" consisting of a finite list of services that are provided to all children.
- The only exception to this CMS requirement of individualized services is the program of intensive in-home therapy; Wisconsin needed to vigorously defend retention of this

program in the latest waiver renewal; but the team still needs to be looking at the individual child's needs and prioritizing services.

- A child's Individualized Service Plan (ISP) must be reviewed regularly and updated based upon the desired outcomes and the priorities defined for the child. It is important for the child's team to be looking at ***why*** a service is being provided more than looking at whether a service is being provided ***x*** times per week. Need to measure the outcome vs. the frequency.
- The process is expected to take time. If a transition is upcoming, the team needs to be meeting well ahead of that transition date in order to have a plan in place well before the transition. This would prevent the concern that a family might "flounder" for several months following transition, looking for services for their child.
- DHFS has developed an online training resource for Support and Service Coordinators, county and state staff, as well as interested parties including the Council members, parent leaders, etc., to learn more about outcomes-based service plan development.
- Another important aspect is for the team to look at both waiver-funded services as well as the family's network of supports. The Service Coordinator can assist a family at looking at the whole picture of resources available.

Discussion of Resources for Decision-Making

- Council members discussed whether there would be value in trying to develop a comprehensive listing of services allowed under the CLTS Waivers, in order to prevent families needing to spend a great deal of time "discovering" what services might be available.
- The Support and Service Coordinator is responsible for working with the family and providers regularly to prioritize needs and goals, and to identify what services would be available to meet those needs and goals. A family is not required or expected to be responsible for "discovering" what services maybe available for their child under the CLTS Waivers.
- A finite list of services is contrary to the requirements of CMS. The Council might instead consider developing a resource to help familiarize families with the types of services that could be provided by the waivers by presenting examples or stories that would demonstrate the *decision-making process*.
- An issue with trying to create a list or "menu" of service items from which parents could choose is that this could serve to create artificial limits on the opportunities that might be created by a child's team as they pull together their experience, their knowledge of the child, and the resources available in their particular region or area.

Discussion of the DHFS Website

- The website design is standardized to be consistent with all DHFS web pages. There can be some flexibility within the standard design to allow the Children's Section to provide information to families, providers, county staff, and other interested parties regarding the CLTS Waivers as well as the other services for children administered by our staff.

- Maintenance of the web has been somewhat limited by staff availability, but the Children's Section has a goal of increasing the resources available online in 2007.
- Council members offered many valuable ideas and suggestions for how the website might be improved to better meet the needs of stakeholders, including:
    - Steps required to attain services under the CLTS waivers
    - FAQ regarding autism diagnosis and treatment, intensive therapy, transition to ongoing services
    - Trainings available around the State
    - Links to other online resources (DPI, CESA, ASW, WI FACETS, etc.)
    - Other related resources: Birth to 3, Medicaid

EXCEPTIONS POLICY

The Exceptions Workgroup submitted a proposal by which an extension of intensive in-home therapy beyond the three-year end date might be approved when the transition to ongoing could potentially negatively impact significant critical gains just beginning to happen for the child. The Council reviewed the proposal and suggested some minor revisions.

Motion (Paula Petit): That the Autism Council approve the revised proposed policy.
Seconded: Rose Helms
The motion was Approved by unanimous voice vote.

The proposal will proceed to the Children's Long-Term Support team for development as a finalized policy and distribution to county CLTS agencies.

2007-2009 DHFS BUDGET PROPOSALS

Beth Wroblewski reviewed the budget process for the Council and the current status of issues of importance to the Council:

Per instructions from DOA, there is no "new money" requested in the DHFS budget

- Continuing current autism services under the waiver is included under the Medicaid Base Re-estimate
- The Medicaid Base Re-estimate has accounted for the discrepancy in budget for intensive and ongoing services vs. the actual cost of intensive and ongoing services. That is, intensive service were budgeted at $101/day, actual cost was $118/day. Ongoing services were budgeted at $30.60/day, actual cost was $36.17 per day. These increases are included in the Medicaid Base Re-estimate.

- The current 2005-2007 biennial budget included a commitment to 250 new slots for intensive in-home therapy each fiscal year. The MA Base Re-estimate by DHFS for 2007-2009 does not include an additional 250 slots per fiscal year commitment.
- There is a growing wait-list for intensive in-home therapy slots. In the past, the Department has attempted to address wait lists in the MA Base Re-estimate, but this option is no longer allowed.
- The MA Base Re-estimate allows us to keep our promise to people already awarded slots.
- DHFS will discuss children's long-term support needs and wait-lists with the Governor. After the Governor presents his budget in February, the legislative process will begin.
- Secretary Nelson is aware of and concerned with children who have autism. The first step was to focus on the MA Base Re-estimate. The next step will be to work to get funding in to budget for new children on wait-lists.
- One possible outcome of the Governor's biennial budget would be the commitment of additional new slots for each fiscal year.
- Secretary Nelson noted in her DHFS Budget cover letter that Wisconsin is committed to eliminating wait-lists. The Family Care program is already eliminating wait-lists for adults in participating counties.
- Additional money for Family Care is not taken from other existing programs. Family Care will not take funding from children's services. It may lead to changes in county staff roles, but it will not remove funding.

Motion (Heather Boyd): That the Autism Council develop a letter of support to the DHFS Secretary and to the Governor.

Seconded: Vivian Hazel

The motion was Approved by unanimous voice vote.

Staff will work with the Council to draft and send the letter prior to the next Council meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:15 PM

2007 Meeting Schedule
February 19, 2007
May 21, 2007
August 20, 2007
November 19, 2007

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by
Sandy Blakeney
February 19, 2007