MINUTES
of the
Autism Council

DATE: May 21, 2007

LOCATION: Madison, Wisconsin

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nissan Bar-Lev, Terri Enters, Vivian Hazell, Rose Helms, Erik Lund (for Glen Sallows), Milana Millan, Paula Petit, Michael Williams

ABSENT: Joan Ketterman, Paul Reuteman, Glen Sallows, Pam Stoika

FACILITATOR: Kris Freundlich

STAFF PRESENT: Sandy Blakeney, Beth Wroblewski

The meeting came to order at 10:15 AM.

PUBLIC COMMENT
There was no Public Comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
The Council reviewed the draft of the February 19, 2007 Meeting Minutes.

Motion (Vivian Hazell): That the Autism Council approve the February 19, 2007 minutes.
Seconded: Michael Williams
The motion was Approved by unanimous voice vote.

TRANSITION CHECKLIST

Paula Petit gave a summary of the subgroup's activities and reviewed the latest draft of the Transition Checklist.

Discussion:

- Reiterated that the intent is for transition planning to be a collaborative process that includes the family, providers, support and service coordinator. It is important for families to understand and be part of the process, and it is important to include providers in the planning.
- Council members were very interested in the issue of collaboration and coordination with the school system. This part of the discussion reached beyond the topic of the Transition

Checklist. It was decided that Nissan Bar-Lev would draft a letter to WI Department of Public Instruction (DPI) regarding the importance of collaboration with DPI around children transitioning out of intensive in-home treatment services. Nissan will work with Beth Wroblewski as well as with Stephanie Petska at DPI to craft a letter.

- Counties are required under the CLTS Waivers to address transition with families, providing families with resources and assistance around transitions. Completing this Transition Checklist or attending a specific transition meeting is **not** a requirement for families. Council members want to be sure that the information they develop clearly encourages families to participate in this planning process.

WELCOME KEVIN HAYDEN AND KAREN TIMBERLAKE

DHFS Secretary Kevin Hayden and Executive Assistant Karen Timberlake were introduced to the Council and provided the Council with information regarding their background and interest in issues related to individuals with autism.

- Secretary Hayden was appointed January 1, 2007. Prior to being DHFS Secretary, he was the Administrator of the Division of Health Care Financing (responsible for Medicaid). He has also worked as a health care administrator in the private sector. Secretary Hayden expressed his and Governor Doyle's commitment to children with autism. He also discussed the importance of the Autism Council and stressed that DHFS benefits from the Council's work and guidance. In addition, Sec. Hayden discussed the importance of Early Intervention, and continued education of the public on these issues.
- Karen Timberlake had been the chair of the Governor's Task Force on Autism. She expressed her pleasure at seeing some of the Task Force's recommendations being implemented, and she looks forward to continuing to support the efforts of the Autism Council.
- Council members expressed their appreciation that Sec. Hayden and Ms. Timberlake took the time to come to the meeting. Members also discussed their concerns about the upcoming budget changes, the high costs (but also high value) of services, and the proposed mandate of insurance coverage of autism services in Wisconsin.

AUTISM 101

Viv Hazell reviewed a draft Autism 101 document.

Discussion:

- The goal is to assure consistency of the training for line staff who provide intensive in-home treatment services to families. The Council has wanted to create a single curriculum that would assure that all line staff have at least the same core of information, despite which provider they work for. DHFS requirement is that line staff have 15 hours of training prior to contact with children, and 15 hours of training after. The responsibility for all training has been left to the individual provider agencies. There could be cost-efficiency in providing core information to all potential line staff.

- Currently, if a line staff has already worked for one provider, and then goes to another provider, the new provider agency is not assured of exactly what training that staff person has had. Consistent core training could alleviate that problem.
- This does not mean line staff will have to be licensed – this is not currently required by DHFS. Required licensure could dissuade some people from becoming line staff. The Autism Task Force recommended that incentives be developed to encourage individuals to become licensed.
- There is no budget for this. The only way training related costs could be funded through the waiver would be if training hours were embedded in the hourly rate of each individual child's service plan. Only the second 15 hours could potentially be handled this way. There may also be a possibility of writing for a grant to pay for this initiative.
- When finalized, how would this training be delivered? Possibly a series of training modules available online. This would require collaboration with another entity (e.g., a component of the UW System) for hosting on the web.

Next Steps:

- The subgroup will continue developing materials, seeking partners with whom to collaborate, and consider various funding strategies.
- Viv agreed to develop a draft summary of the project which she will send to the Council. Following that, the subgroup will begin to draft a purpose statement.

REVISED BILLING FORM

Beth provided an overview of the revised billing form that all providers will be required to submit to counties for each child receiving intensive in-home treatment (SPC 512) services:

- This form will help increase accountability. The Department of Justice recommended that we have a better system of tracking hours of service in order to better respond to complaints from families.
- The billing form will be legal documentation of what has happened in terms of provision of SPC 512 services to a child. It will be considered "best practice" to have a family see and sign off on the form, although not a requirement, since this could lead to delays in processing the form. Also, most providers already have a logbook in the family's home where staff track time spent and families sign off.
- All providers will be required to use this electronic form – all county waiver agencies will be required to accept it.
- The form will help families, providers, county staff, and state staff to gain more understanding our how and where service hours are being delivered.
- Greater clarity will help in the processing of requests for extensions.

- Children's Services staff will hold a Wisline teleconference for CLTS waiver agencies and contracted providers around the state on June 6, 2007. One topic will be an overview of the new billing form and the process for using it.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES

- Beth updated the Council on recent developments regarding MA eligibility for children who are eligible and waiting for waiver slots. There has been confusion in the past over this topic. Children found to meet all eligibility criteria for a state-funded waiver slot for intensive services have always been able to access MA benefits due to that eligibility, but this was offered only as an "option" for families. DHFS has found that many families opted against it, thinking that it was not something that would be beneficial for their child. Later, families have learned that it would have been and have wished they had had the coverage earlier. In order to prevent this confusion, DHFS will begin to automatically extend MA eligibility to children after they have been placed on the state waiting list for intensive services.

  County waiver agencies will be notified when MA benefits have been started for a child on the waiting list, and the counties will notify the parents. DHFS has developed informational materials that counties can distribute to families describing the types of services that might be covered by MA for their child while they are waiting for the intensive services. The MA eligibility may be retroactive (up to a point) for families who did not realize earlier that they would benefit from this, but whether or not earlier costs could be recouped will depend upon whether those costs meet MA requirements.

  Families will be required to meet all established criteria in order to be eligible for MA. Although the source of MA will be the Katie Beckett Program, families will have no relationship with the Katie Beckett Program and as soon as a slot is available for the child, the Katie Beckett MA will end and be replaced by waiver MA through the county. The county will always have responsibility for annual verification of the child's eligibility for MA and for the CLTS waivers.

- DHFS will have data available for the Council at the next meeting regarding waiver slot costs and usage which may help instruct us in terms of how many slots can be released each fiscal year.

- Terri Enters asked if there would be any increase in the base rate for providers. At this time, DHFS audit is still showing that providers are making profits. The issue of gas prices is new and may need to be looked at. There is no new funding in the budget, but the department may look at new service models to help address rising costs.

- Nissan reported that the Dept. of Instuction (DPI) contract for mediation with Marquette University will end as of 6/30/07. DPI has a new contract with Jane Burns for special education mediation, and DPI hired Nina Myrding, a nationally recognized mediation expert, to provide her expertise.

- Rose Helms asked about the status of the ombudsperson position which was recommended by the Autism Task Force. Beth reminded the council that DHFS, in

concert with the Governor's Office, had made the decision to use a mediation process in order to meet the intent of the recommended ombudsperson. While an ombudsperson can contact all parties and attempt to negotiate a good result, the process of mediation tends to result in a stronger outcome. The CLTS mediation system began as a pilot in order to prevent overwhelming the pool of mediators around the state. Families who have a complaint will be referred to their regional Children's Services Specialist who will determine if it is an issue that can go to mediation and, if so, will refer the family to a mediator.

Rose suggested that mediation may not help families who feel "intimidated" talking with the state staff or county or provider staff. The fact that no complaints have been filed may not mean there are no complaints. Beth clarified that we are unable to respond to anonymous complaints in any circumstance, so a family would need to be willing to be identified. The system as it has been designed right now was developed with input from members of the Autism Council.

- The council currently has two vacancies – DHFS staff will follow up with the Governor's Office regarding status of applications.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM

Remaining 2007 Meeting Schedule
August 20, 2007
November 19, 2007

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by
Sandy Blakeney
August 20, 2007