

Governor's Task Force on Autism
August 13, 2004
Draft Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Linda Carmody, Kathy Draves, Rose Helms, Kevin Klatt, Diane Konkel, Deb Mandarino, Heather Marena, Paula Petit, Cynthia Thomas

Facilitator: Karen Timberlake

Staff: Donna Wong, Diane Welsh, Beth Wroblewski

Key Issues: Exceptions policy, post-intensive services.

Exceptions Policy: The task force identified goals and made recommendations.

Goals

- As close to recommended prescribed hours as possible
- Minimize impact on providers
- Effective treatment
- Essential exceptions only
- Minimize paperwork

Recommendations

- Same number of total hours as receive under the 3-year plan would be available, but allow families to use over a four-year period.
- No entitlement to total hours if not used during four-year period.
- No exceptions policy.
- Clock does not start until child receives 20 hours per week.
- Provider and family sign-off on plan.
- Annual review of treatment plan.

In addition, the task force discussed the policy of waiver eligibility after age 8 and recommended the following:

- DHFS to develop alternative approaches.
- Include providers, parents and DPI on work group.

Post-Intensive Services: The task force previously identified the following issues.

- Some families want more treatment – how much will exceptions policy help?
- Some families can't get treatment providers to take children in post-intensive phase due to lower level of authorized hours.
- Travel eats up much of allotted hours.
- No MA code for treatment in post-intensive phase, therefore no accurate way of tracking what service families are actually choosing
- Cliff effect of change from intensive to post-intensive – disruptive for children, families.

- Children may have enhanced treatment needs at later developmental stages.
- Post-intensive daily reimbursement rate is too low to attract providers.
- Are children moving automatically to post-intensive? Is that appropriate?
- Are families getting good information about full range of options available in post-intensive phase and through other MA services (such as family support)?
- Important to address services covered.
- Some families won't have access to services if treatment only policy adopted.

The task force brainstormed the following potential solutions:

- Allow behaviorally based treatment only.
- Continue on-going program as is.
- HFS form committee to address on-going issues.
- Allow providers to do group work - direct instruction to stretch on-going dollars.
- Allocate dollars according to function.
- Mandate that insurance companies cover treatment.
- A floor number of hours, such as ten, not including travel time.
- Change allowable billing - increase senior therapist rate.
- Utilize different funding streams such as insurance, grants etc...
- High need/low need model. More resources go to high need children.
- Family directed model using consultants.
- Raise daily reimbursement rate for families in behaviorally based services - allocate \$3,000 annually to families that choose non-behaviorally based services.
- Remove autism from children's waiver. Submit application for autism waiver.

Preparation for Next Meeting: The following tasks were assigned.

DHFS was asked to provide the following information:

- Katie Beckett program – denials and level of care analysis.
- Family support –summary of policies and specific issues brought up at task force.
- Explanation of rate structure and consistency between counties.
- More detailed breakdown of services chosen in post-intensive phase.

DOA was asked to provide the following information:

- Cost estimate for state run system.
- Information on license plates.
- Information on insurance coverage in different states.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Governor's Task Force on Autism will be held Wednesday, August 25 from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. in room 201 SE, State Capitol.

Agenda Items for the Next Meeting:

- Finish post-intensive services
- Parental fee sharing
- Funding options
- Service and staffing issues