

**Iowa Autism Council Meeting  
Final Minutes March 11, 2015  
Meeting minutes taken by Beth Buehler-Sapp**

**Present:** Theresa Croonquist, Rachel Heiss, James Curry, Steve Johnson, Laura Larkin, Jeffrey Jennings, Angela Logsdon, Steve Mueller, Tara Underwood-Levin, Angela Boston, Andrew Waldschmitt, Wendy Trotter, and Beth Buehler-Sapp.

**Guests:** Erika Hertel, Peggy Swails, and LeAnn Hotchkiss from Child Health Specialty Clinics @UIHC RAP Program

**On Zoom:** Lin Wessels, Jan Turbes, Alyson Beytien

**Absent:** Frank Kohler, Becky Harker, Matthew O'Brien, Mary Jackson, and Sean Casey.

James Curry called the meeting to order and council members and guests went around the room and introduced themselves. Members reviewed minutes from the 11-12-14 meeting. Corrections were given to the secretary and a vote was taken. James Curry made a motion to finalize the minutes and Steve Johnson seconded the motion, minutes approved.

James reviewed the goals the council set for this year:

- Expand Transition services and supports for young adults exiting the education system and moving into post secondary education and/or the workforce.
- Invest in community treatment and residential options for individuals with autism including those who exhibit challenging behaviors.
- The Council recommends that the age limit for treatment funded by the Autism Support Program be amended to age 21. Currently, the fund only authorizes ABA services up to age 9
- Continue funding for ASP for the next fiscal year and beyond, as well as allowing individuals up to age 21 to receive funding for covered services.

Steve Johnson gave an update on the ASP program. There was originally 2 million dollars in funding provided in the first year, with an additional 3 million dollars added the second year. So far 12 individuals have been approved and are receiving services through this program at approximately \$224,000. Out of 30 applications, 18 have been denied for the following reasons: 7 over income limit, 7 had Medicaid coverage, 1 over age limit, 3 had commercial insurance coverage for ABA services.

The council discussed possible barriers to families applying for or accessing the fund. Areas identified to explore further were age limit and income criteria. Currently, to qualify for the program funding, an individual needs to be between the ages of three and nine at the time of application; and the family income cannot be greater than 400% of the poverty level. Many council members discussed how research supports the benefit of ABA services for older individuals, and that individuals over the age of nine could benefit from this service as well. Discussions also were had regarding the income guidelines and that many families who are making over that 400% poverty level still experience financial hardship trying to pay for needed services for their child with ASD. It was shared that many families may not even be applying because their child is over the age limit or they do not meet the income criteria.

Another possible barrier identified is the shortage of providers in some areas in Iowa. The council discussed the issue with low reimbursement rates which may contribute to the shortage of providers in Iowa. James asks Angela Boston if the Iowa Insurance Division can give guidance to insurance companies regarding the setting of rates with

regards to payment or reimbursement issues. Angela's answer was, "The Iowa Insurance Division has traditionally not infringed on a company's proprietary rights".

Angela Logsdon thinks the income level for eligibility should be addressed since 25% of applicants were denied services based on being over income. There is a co-pay for services received based on income level. A client served would pay 10% of the cost of total service provided. Of the 12 applicants receiving services 2 are doing so under a hardship provision.

Steve Mueller made the following recommendations for the Autism Support Program to share with legislators:

1. Expand the age range for eligible participants from the current 3 to age nine, to birth to age 21.
2. Expand the definition of an Autism Service Provider to include the BCaBA performing duties under the supervision of a BCBA as identified by the national certification board (Behavior Analyst Certification Board). Compensate the provider for services rendered by a BCaBA for "oversight", "treatment planning", and "assessment" at a rate between the BCBA and direct service professionals.
3. Consider paying higher reimbursement rates to attract more providers.
4. Modify income guidelines to allow more families to access the ASP service.

Steve Muller made a motion to accept the recommendations, Angela Logsdon seconded, and majority passed the motion.

Representatives from the Iowa Department of Human Services gave a presentation on Medicaid Modernization: Iowa High Quality Health Care Initiative. The presentation can be viewed on DHS website or by following this link:

[https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/IME\\_ModernizationPresentation\\_031815.pdf](https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/IME_ModernizationPresentation_031815.pdf)

James Curry motioned to adjourn the meeting and Andrew Waldschmidt seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

