

MINUTES

KANSAS AUTISM TASK FORCE

November 12, 2008

Room 783—Docking State Office Building

Members Present

Dr. Bill Craig, Chairperson
Senator Julia Lynn
Representative Judy Morrison
Dr. Linda Heitzman-Powell
Nan Perrin
Louise Heinz
Dr. Dee McKee
Dr. Jane Wegner (via conference call)
Dr. Kathy Ellerbeck
Dr. Mike Wasmer
Denise Grasso
Yeyette Houfek (via conference call)
Jim Leiker
Tracey Lee
Sarah Bommarito (via conference call)
Lee Stickle, Kansas Department of Education
Carolyn Nelson, Kansas Department of Health and Environment
Jarrod Forbes (via conference call)

Staff Present

Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Nobuko Folmsbee, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Renaë Jefferies, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Ken Wilke, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Jan Lunn, Committee Secretary

Dr. Craig called the meeting to order at 9:36 a.m. The minutes of the July 16, 2008, meeting were reviewed. *It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes as written. The motion passed.* The minutes of the September 17, 2008, meeting were reviewed. *It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes as written. The motion passed.* Dr. Craig indicated this was the last scheduled meeting of the Task Force; therefore, minutes from the meeting today would be sent via e-mail, and considered approved unless members contacted him with corrections.

Best Practices Subcommittee Update

Dr. Linda Heitzman-Powell distributed the final draft of the “Best Practices for Autism Treatment in Kansas” (Attachment 1) to be submitted to the Kansas Legislature in the 2009 Session. Dr. Heitzman-Powell indicated feedback had been received to include the role of Task Force members on the cover page, and that would be incorporated into the copy submitted to the Legislature. Dr. Heitzman-Powell indicated additional attention was dedicated to:

- Reviewing and condensing the initial section on how to define levels of evidence;
- Reviewing the table of contents; and
- Reviewing and revising the literature review section to contain state generated reports, professional association reports, and several evidence-based comprehensive research reviews.

Dr. Heitzman-Powell reported that the National Autism Center’s National Standards Project report is yet unreleased. It was hoped that the National Standards would have been received in time to review and include in the “Best Practices for Autism Treatment in Kansas” handbook. Dr. Heitzman-Powell emphasized that the final recommendation of the Best Practices Subcommittee is to provide periodic updates and supplements to the “Best Practices for Autism Treatment in Kansas” as new research and treatment are developed.

Discussion ensued related to who will develop the parents’ handbook, how to ensure a consistent message based on “Best Practices for Autism Treatment in Kansas” is included in the parents’ handbook, and how to ensure support is created for the handbook’s development. Dr. Craig clarified that part of the recommendation to the Legislature will be to extend the Task Force so that its work on the parents’ handbook can be completed and to ensure updates and supplements are incorporated into Kansas standards as new evidence-based developments occur.

Insurance Bill Review

Ken Wilke, Office of the Revisor of Statutes, was present to update Task Force members on the proposed insurance bill. He distributed the revised bill which included recommended changes made at the last meeting. Changes are indicated by “braces” and “strikeouts” (Attachment 2).

Upon a motion by Senator Lynn to accept the modified bill for presentation to the LEPC on November 20, 2008, and a second by Nan Perrin, the motion unanimously carried.

Review of the Kansas Autism Task Force Final Report

Dr. Craig distributed the “Final Report” (Attachment 3) for review. Considerable discussion was heard relative to the final report with recommendations/revisions noted with “braces” and “strikeouts.” Several recommendations were discussed.

Under “Conclusions and Recommendations”

- Under bullet point 3, revise as follows: Pass legislation which ~~guarantees Kansans with autism access to the same insurance coverage as other Kansans~~ {requires that health insurance policies cover the diagnosis and appropriate treatment of individuals with autism}.
- Under bullet point 5, revise as follows: ~~Implement the recommendations contained in the Report of the Legislative Budget Committee to the 2007 Legislature~~ {Pass legislation} to fully fund the Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities Home and Community Based Services Waiver (HCBS) waiting list and create adequate rates for the Developmental Disability system.
- Under bullet point 6, revise as follows: ~~To complete its task and to be available to support its recommendations, the term of the Task Force should be extended through calendar year 2009.~~ {the objectives set for it by the Legislature, the Kansas Autism Task Force must have its term extended for an additional year. The necessary legislative authorization to accomplish this should be made retroactive to January 2009. (Please see the “Task Force Activities” section, page 4 for the complete rationale for this extension.)}
- Add the following section related to dynamic mapping: {It is incumbent on the three state agencies primarily responsible for services to individuals with autism (Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Department of Education, and Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services) to collaboratively maintain a dynamic mapping website of the availability of services and supports across the state with current contact information. This site should be readily available and usable by parents seeking information and service.}

Under “Task Force Activities”

Add a section to include a request to the 2009 Legislature to extend the term of its activity for an additional year for the following purposes:

- To incorporate the National Standards Manual into the Best Practices in Autism Handbook;
- To provide resource availability during the 2009 Legislature as it deliberates Task Force recommendations; and
- To recommend to the Legislature (at the end of the Task Force’s extension period) a mechanism to provide ongoing advice and oversight for the concerns of Kansans with autism.

Under “Current Barriers” section, amend the following bullet point

- Current funding for the newly created Autism Waiver is limited to fewer than 50 children. ~~Estimates of the affected Kansas children in the target age range exceed 1,200.~~ {The current waiting list contains 200 or fewer additional children}.

Chairperson Craig indicated that Martha Dorsey, Legislative Research Department, will send out the recommended changes by e-mail within two days. *The Report of the Kansas Autism Task Force to the 2009 Kansas Legislature will be revised to include the discussed revisions and would stand approved unless Task Force members indicate by return e-mail to Dr. Craig.* The Report will be forwarded to the Legislative leadership group at its November meeting. All Task Force members agreed with the decision of the Chairperson.

Senator Julia Lynn discussed with Task Force members the Joint Committee on Children's Issues, for which she serves as Chairperson. Senator Lynn offered a forum through this committee to keep the issue of autism in the forefront of discussion.

Dr. Wasmer indicated his group is in the process of identifying advocates to talk with legislators about the recommended legislation. A post card campaign has been developed relative to the insurance legislation and will be mailed in the next several weeks. A video presentation with parents, providers, and physicians has been created calling for parents and others to contact legislators. All of these efforts are focused on advocacy for the legislation, advocacy for education, and efforts to align agencies for support.

Dr. Craig thanked everyone for attending, and he adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Prepared by Jan Lunn
Edited by Martha Dorsey

Approved by Task Force on:

June 8, 2009

(Date)