

OPEN MEETING MINUTES

Name of Governmental Body: Governor's Autism Council			Attending: Kim Brussel, Margaret Fairbanks, Bob Johnston, Lindsay McCary, Rebecca Thompson, Rose Cutting, Kaatry Morgan-Davies, Vanessa Carmona, Alejandra Apreza-King, Daysi Jimenez
Date: 11/9/2023	Time Started: 10:00 a.m.	Time Ended: 11:50 a.m.	Absent: Christina Krasovich, Kevin Scholz Public Attendees: Tyler Wilcox DHS Staff: Nicole Miller, Dan Kramarz, Deb Rathermel, Debbie Borquist-Conlon, Katie Dill, Nikki Moore, Pam Lano, Laura Zimmerman
Location: https://dhs.wi.zoomgov.com/j/1600854066			Presiding Officer: Deb Rathermel, Bureau of Children's Services (BCS), Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Minutes

Welcome and Introductions:

- Individual introductions of Council members and Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) staff.

Public Comments:

- Tyler Wilcox shared he is part of the Independent Living Council of Wisconsin (ILCW) and as a person with autism, he came across this council and wanted to see what it was all about.

Operational:

- Announcement of council vacancy. John Janke has resigned from the council. BCS has communicated this vacancy to the Governor's Office. Current members should share the opportunity for council membership with their networks for anyone interested in applying. Application information will be shared via email after the meeting.
- Approval of the August 10, 2023, meeting minutes.
MOTION made by Margaret Fairbanks, seconded by Lindsay McCary, to approve the meeting minutes as drafted. Motion approved unanimously.
- Approval of the proposed meeting dates for 2024.
 - Thursday, February 1
 - Thursday, May 2
 - Thursday, August 8
 - Thursday, November**MOTION** made by Vanessa Carmona-Lewis, seconded by Katy Morgan-Davies, to approve the 2024 Autism Council meeting schedule. Motion approved unanimously.

Updates from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS):

- **Medicaid Public Health Emergency Unwinding – Dan Kramarz, BCS**
 - During the COVID Public Health Emergency (PHE), most people maintained continuous eligibility for Medicaid and renewals were paused. This continuous eligibility provision of the PHE ended May 11, 2023, and the regular renewal process started again in June.
 - Showed data of enrollment trends. DHS is monitoring Medicaid enrollment closely.
[Medicaid Renewal Data | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
 - Toolkit for sharing information with families in your networks.
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/unwindingtoolkit.htm#kidsandfamilies>

- **Overview of historic and current behavioral treatment benefit efforts— Pam Lano, Bureau of Benefits Policy**
 - Brief history of autism treatment in Wisconsin and how it has been funded.
 - Medicaid has been a funding source for almost 30 years.
 - Current benefit covered by ForwardHealth:
 - No age limits.
 - The benefit is not restricted to members with autism.
 - Coverage includes two evidence-based treatments: Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Early Start Denver Model (ESDM)
 - Benefit Coverage includes Comprehensive Treatment, Focused Treatment, Family Treatment Guidance, Group Behavioral Treatment
 - Changes in Provider Capacity- The number of treatment supervisors has tripled since funding transitioned from the CLTS waiver.

Council Member Updates

- Becky – Shared the [As You Are](#) website which is a national provider that does virtual diagnosis.

Discussion on Council Focus Areas:

- Council discussion was held on maintaining current goals for 2024-2025 or developing new goals at the February meeting.
 - Lindsay: There is still a lot of work to do within the current goals, so she would support maintaining the goals.
 - Margaret – How would we like to see the impact measured?
 - Becky – Try to identify some short-term objectives.
 - Nicole – We will address development of shorter term objectives in February’s meeting.
- Council discussion on scope
 - Bob – Asked about the status of changing the scope of the council to address the needs of adults with autism.
 - Nicole – DHS is in the process of drafting a letter for the Governor’s office.
 - Deb – If a change in the scope were to occur, the Department of Health Services may not be the lead.

Wisconsin Wayfinder Launch: Debbie Borquist-Conlon, BCS

- [Wisconsin Wayfinder: Children’s Resource Network](#) is a free service to help connect families to resources for their children with special health care needs. It consists of a user-friendly website and toll-free helpline that lets families easily connect with real people – dedicated children’s resource guides – who will help navigate through services and supports.
- [Connecting with Wisconsin Wayfinder video](#)

Council Member Discussion on Group Services for Social Skills:

- Becky shared that some providers of group-based social skills services have been encountering differences across counties in authorizations through the Children’s Long-Term Support (CLTS) Program. She shared that there has been engagement on clarifying which services are medically necessary to be provided through the ForwardHealth Behavioral Treatment Benefit and which services fall under CLTS home and community-based services.
- Margaret shared that as a provider, she has also encountered differences in CLTS Program operations across counties.
- Lindsay shared that as a provider, her agency has successfully been providing group based social skills services through CLTS in three counties. She suggested that clarification through a ForwardHealth policy update may be effective.
- Dan shared that the Autism Council could write a letter of support on the topic or submit a request to DHS for consideration in policy change.
- Becky shared that this will be a topic of discussion at the upcoming Behavioral Treatment Benefit provider meeting.

MOTION made by Lindsay McCary, seconded by Vanessa Carmona to adjourn the meeting at 11:50 a.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Next meeting on February 2, 2024

Prepared by: Laura Zimmerman on 11/13/2023.

