

OPEN MEETING MINUTES

Name of Governmental Body: Governor's Autism Council			Attending: Vanesa Carmona-Lewis, Rose Cutting, Margaret Fairbanks, Daysi Jimenez, Bob Johnston, Christina Krasovich, Lindsay McCary, Becky Thompson, Suzanne Juzwik, Jennifer Maskel, Natalie Derr, Kate Siekman, Katie Hess
	Time Started: 10:00 A.M	Time Ended: 12:00 P.M	
Date: 5/2/2024			Absent: Katy Morgan-Davies, Alejandra Apreza-King, Kim Bruessel, Kevin Scholz, Lisa Ridenour
			DHS Staff: Nicole Miller, Dan Kramarz, Deb Rathermel, Jessica Holland, David Sorenson, Isabelle Leventhal, Autumn Arnold, Debbie Borquist-Conlon, Nikki Moore
Location: https://dhswi.zoomgov.com/j/1619809055?pwd=ZWdsSHJRVVZITm9PQXE0dHIEK1YyUT09			Presiding Officer: Deb Rathermel, Bureau of Children's Services, Wisconsin Department of Health Services
Minutes			

Welcome and Introductions:

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

Public Comments:

Note: Any public comments have a three-minute maximum per presenter/organization.

- No public members present at this meeting. No public comments.

Operational:

- Approval of the meeting minutes from February 2024.
- Motion to approve: Rose Cutting. Jennifer Maskel seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

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

Bureau of Children's Services:

- Medicaid continuous Enrollment:** Autumn Arnold, Bureau of Eligibility & Enrollment Policy
 - Autumn Arnold provided an update on Medicaid continuous coverage policy for children.
 - Children under age 19 who are enrolled in a qualifying Medicaid program as of January 1, 2024, will have coverage for 12 months from their last application or renewal even if the household's income increases or no longer meets program rules.
 - Exceptions to the continuous coverage policy include: the youth turns 19, the child moves out of the state, the child's citizenship or immigration status is not verified, and the family asks to end their coverage.
 - Autumn Arnold shared a [DHS fact sheet \(P-03555\)](#) on continuous coverage.
- Wisconsin Wayfinder:** Debbie Borquist-Conlon, Bureau of Children's Services
 - Debbie Borquist-Conlon provided an update that Wisconsin Wayfinder launched in October 2023.
 - The Wisconsin Wayfinder [webpages](#) allow users to learn more information about Wisconsin Wayfinder and resources to support children with special health care needs, get the contact information to call Wisconsin Wayfinder (877-WiscWay), and fill out the [contact us form](#) to have a children's resource guide reach out.
 - There is continuous, ongoing marketing of Wisconsin Wayfinder. There will be a media blast in May/June 2024.
 - There have been 476 contact us forms completed in 61 of the 72 counties between October 30, 2024, and February 27, 2024.
 - There have been 311 calls to 877-WiscWay during first four months in 55 of the 72 counties.
 - There have been 353 information and referral contacts in November and December 2023 for 337 unduplicated children.
 - A council member inquired if the three Wisconsin affiliates of the Autism Society were included on the Wisconsin Wayfinder webpages.

- A council member asked about what types of inquiries are made under the financial information and referral topic.

Bureau of Benefits Policy (BBP):

- **Behavioral Treatment Benefits Updates:** Nikki Moore, Bureau of Benefits Policy
 - Nikki Moore provided an update on the Office of Inspector General federal audit. Two-thirds of the initial documentation review is complete. There are several editorial reviews processes that must be completed prior to publication. The report is anticipated to be completed in early summer.

Council Member Updates and Discussion:

- Lindsay McCary shared she was at Autism Society Conference and shared that families raised issues with the lack of services across the state.
- Margaret Fairbanks would like the council to explore how to best empower families to advocate for services.
- Becky Thompson attended a DPI presentation that sought input on improving IEP assessment process and commended the effort.
- Daysi Jimenez attended a training with the Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health and expressed there is a greater need to continue to train clinicians in mental health.
- Rose Cutting shared about work being done in Southwest Wisconsin related to interview and video resume training. Four school districts were trained using CESA grant funding.
- Bob Johnston requested the council expand its scope to older individuals.

The Fellowship Project:

- Natalie Derr, Lead Creative Technologist, and Kate Siekman, Director of Learning and Outcomes, from Islands of Brilliance presented on the [Fellowship Project](#) funded through an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant for Home- and Community-Based Services.
- New program, launched in February 2024, that provides free, weekly workshops for neurodivergent teens and young adults to gather for creative arts-based activities and guided discussions. Currently offered in Eau Claire, La Crosse, Rick Lake, Tomahawk, Viroqua, and Wausau. Each site is run by one artist and one special educator.
- Program outcomes: social acceptance among a group of peers; learn to mitigate stress; increased resiliency; improved sense of self-worth and self-confidence, confidence to access a community of support; exploration of identity.
- This August, Islands of Brilliance is hosting workshops in Manitowish Waters and Rhinelander. Islands of Brilliance is also making connections to expand The Fellowship in the Fox Cities.

Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin:

- Katie Hess, Executive Director, presented on resources and supports for families.
- The Autism Society is the largest and oldest grassroots Autism organization in the United States. The Autism Society of Greater WI is an affiliate of the Autism Society of America.
- ASGW core service areas: advocacy, community building, education, information & referral, and support.
- A council member asked how often the resource directory is updated, and another council member recommended updating the resource directory on a reoccurring basis.

MOTION made by Margaret Fairbanks, seconded by Bob Johnston to adjourn the meeting at 11:49 a.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Prepared by: Jessica Holland on 5/2/2024.