

MINUTES
ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON AUTISM
Tuesday, May 24, 2022
1:30 PM
Room B, MAC
Little Rock, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senator Keith Ingram, Co-Chair; Representative Keith Brooks

Non-legislative members present: Ms. Karan Burnette, Dr. Randal Hundley, Ms. Elizabeth Pitman, Ms. Alyssa Thomlinson, and Melissa Weatherton

Other members present: Senator Kim Hammer, Representative Denise Ennett, and Representative Johnny Rye

Senator Keith Ingram called the meeting to order.

Consideration to Approve the August 25, 2020, Meeting Minutes (EXHIBIT C)

Representative Keith Brooks made a motion to approve the minutes, with a second by Ms. Karan Burnette, and the motion carried.

Empower Healthcare Solutions, LLC

Ms. Elizabeth Pitman, Director, Division of Medical Services for Medicaid, Department of Human Services (DHS), provided an update and report on Empower Healthcare Solutions, LLC Provider-led Arkansas Shared Savings Entity (PASSE).

Discussion on the Arkansas Autism Partnership (AAP) Medicaid Waiver

Ms. Melissa Weatherton, Director, Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS), DHS, and Ms. Karan Burnette, Associate Director, Arkansas Autism Partnership (AAP), Director CCC-SLP Speech-Language Pathologist, Partners for Inclusive Communities, discussed changes made to streamline and make consistent the waiver process. She discussed the benefits of the efforts to educate the community on the types of autism waivers available and the resulting increase of waivers being sought.

Community and Employment Supports 1915© Waiver Waitlist

Ms. Melissa Weatherton, Director, DDS, DHS, advised the committee of the number of adults and children served by this waiver, the approximate amount spent annually, and the Governor's intent to request an increase to the Medicaid budget over the next three years to provide additional waiver slots and two new services. The committee also discussed options for certifying individuals as caregivers to meet the program's employment needs.

Discussion on Crisis Stabilization and Behavioral Intervention

Ms. Elizabeth Pitman, Director, Division of Medical Services for Medicaid, DHS, discussed the increased need for services in the developmental disability population and the stakeholder's efforts to bridge services for those persons dually diagnosed. She shared the early implementation of a program to establish acute crisis units in rural hospitals that do not have a psychiatric unit. Ms. Melissa Weatherton, Director, DDS, DHS, shared the efforts to add an applied behavior analysis model to the current care plan.

Discussion on the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA) Medicaid Waiver

Ms. Elizabeth Pitman, Director, Division of Medical Services for Medicaid, DHS, discussed the renewal of the TEFRA Medicaid Waiver which allows children, who meet the institutional level of care but prefer to be served at home, to be made Medicaid eligible and enrolled in a PASSE. She went on to discuss changes regarding the yearly redetermination assessment required by TEFRA.

Other Business

Tiffany Mrla, Ph.D., President of SageWay Behavioral Health in northwest and northeast Arkansas briefly discussed her questions and agreed to email her questions to committee members to allow for an opportunity for more robust answers.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

DRAFT