

EXHIBIT B

MINUTES

ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON AUTISM

MAY 16, 2019

The Arkansas Legislative Task Force on Autism met Thursday, May 16, 2019, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 171, State Capitol, in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Task Force members present: Senator Keith Ingram Co-Chair; Ms. Karan Burnette, Ms. Angelyn Franks (*sitting in for Ms. Melissa Stone*), Ms. Diane Holitik, Dr. Randal Hundley, Dr. Steve Kahler, Ms. Janet Mann, Dr. Angela Scott, Mr. Matt Sewell, Ms. Shelia Smith, Ms. Melissa Stone, Ms. Dianna Varady, and Ms. Nancy Wells.

Also present: Representative Reginald Murdock.

Senator Ingram called the meeting to order.

Adoption of Minutes from November 8, 2018 [Exhibit C]

Ms. Burnette made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 8, 2018, meeting. Ms. Varady seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Adoption of Task Force Rules and Procedures [Exhibit D]

Ms. Varady made a motion to adopt the task force rules and procedures. Ms. Burnette seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Consideration of a Motion to Authorize Chairs to Approve Special Expenses Incurred by the Task Force [Exhibit E]

Ms. Varady made a motion to authorize the Co-Chairs to approve special expenses incurred by the task force. Dr. Scott seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Impact of the Provider-Led Arkansas Shared Saving Entity (PASSE) Process on Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) [Exhibit F]

Task force members listed concerns families in need of services are experiencing with PASSE care coordinators:

- Families are reporting about the difficulties in trying to contact their Care Coordinator
- Care Coordinators are not informed about Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) or Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and how the process works
- Care coordinators feel unprepared and not receiving adequate training
- Care Coordinators are receiving large number of client caseloads
- Public schools are frustrated with the OPTUM assessments and experiencing long delays when billing for Medicaid reimbursement payments

Ms. Melissa Stone, Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, Department of Human Services (DDS/DHS), introduced Ms. Janet Mann, Director, Division of Medical Services (DMS/DHS). Ms. Stone explained that DDS and DMS staff are providing weekly training sessions for the PASSE's to make certain they are aware of DD services that are available and how that process works. The department is setting up daily phone calls with specialty providers and residential care facilities as well as phone calls with the Day Treatment Centers and therapists every week. They are working with providers to correct issues with waiver billing, therapy codes, and modifiers. DHS is working on compiling parent complaints into an overall report and has developed a work plan that is reviewed daily. Ms. Stone feels that individuals could see the progress being made if the work plan was available online.

Changes by DHS/DDS on Specific Autism Programs [Exhibit G]

Ms. Karan Burnette, Associate Director Arkansas Autism Partnership (AAP) Director, Partners for Inclusive Communities, gave an update on the AAP waiver. She said the waiver has been submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) with revisions to expand the number from 150 to 180 autism waiver slots and increase the number of unduplicated children.

Ms. Angelyn Franks, Speech-Language Pathologist, DDS Autism Programs Coordinator, presented a handout called "EPSDT Autism Program" that explains the direct intervention and treatment plan process for a child to have an autism diagnosis and receive ABA services. Ms. Franks said under the program, a BCBA or a BCBA-D will provide a detailed evaluation of the child and develop an individualized treatment plan. A Behavioral Paraprofessional will implement the ABA therapy under the supervision of the BCBA. An ASD diagnosis requires three parts: physician's assessment and official diagnosis, speech-language pathologist's assessment, and psychologist's assessment. In addition to the three tier diagnosis, autism-specific testing is recommended.

Capacity for Early Diagnosis of Children with ASD [Exhibit H]

Dr. Angie Scott, Developmental Pediatrician, UAMS Department of Pediatrics, James L. Dennis Developmental Center (DDC), introduced Mr. Timothy Thomas, Clinic Administrative Director at DDC. Dr. Scott explained that approximately 400 children are currently on DDC waiting list to be triaged and appointed to receive developmental and therapy services which takes approximately four months. She said not all children on the wait list are autistic. Dr. Scott said DDC clinicians are making approximately 32 visits a year to the DDC outreach clinics across the state to conduct behavior evaluations to children needing services. She said triage evaluations are being performed at the DDC outreach clinics and the Community Based Autism Liaison and Treatment (CoBALT) sites.

Ms. Burnette said many families who live in rural areas are not able to travel to DDC for their child to receive a diagnosis on autism. She said families are upset when they go to a CoBALT site expecting to receive an autism diagnosis only to be told they have to take their child to DDC in order to get the psychology assessment they need for the diagnosis. She said another concern is that psychologists in private practice have been unable to bill Medicaid for the assessment due to coding issues.

Discussion of Legislation from 92nd General Assembly Regarding ASD [Exhibit I]

Ms. Jessica Beel, Attorney, Bureau of Legislative Research, presented a PowerPoint on legislation regarding ASD that passed during the 92nd General Assembly 2019, Legislative Session.

The meeting adjourned at 11:38 a.m.