



Kansas Governor's Commission on Autism

A meeting of the Kansas Governor's Commission on Autism was held on May 2, 2007 with the following members in attendance: Yeyette Houfek, Chairman, David Cunningham, Shirley Erickson, Stephen Stein, Dr. Carol Garrison, Michael Wasmer, Renee Jameson for Dr. Matt Reese, Sarah Bommarito, Jamey Kendall, Connie Coulter, Mimi French and Kimberly Pierson

The minutes of the previous meeting will be amended to reflect the change requested by Mr. Wasmer as noted under agenda item III with regard to the task force and waiver.

Upon a motion by Ms. Erickson and seconded by Ms. Kendall, the minutes were unanimously approved with the amendment as noted above.

Autism Affairs

Mr. Cunningham reported visiting two farms in Des Moines, Iowa and Toledo, Ohio. The Toledo experience was outstanding and the facilities were top notch. The facility is called Bittersweet Farms, it was well managed and their philosophy follows that of the TEACH model in North Carolina. The cost is \$300 per day and the cost is subsidized by the state. It is more than just a sheltered workshop. It is in fact somewhat of a working farm in that they raise sheep and use the wool from the sheep and also use the vines from the grape vines that they weave into wreaths. Mr. Cunningham is researching a few more facilities and is prospecting for land in the state of Kansas. He is optimistic Kansas will have a top notch facility in the future. The facility employees between 20 and 40 staff members and is manned primarily by young adults with autism. Representatives from the Kansas Commission will attempt to visit the farm in North Carolina as well as look for a farm that has an ongoing business.

Ms. Houfek, Ms. Kendall and Ms. Erickson attended the proclamation meeting. Ms. Houfek shared her thoughts with the Committee members about the meeting.

Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Wasmer, Ms. Erickson and Dr Garrison attended the Bi-State Autism Summit at the Kauffman Foundation. Mr. Wasmer stated it was a well-run event in that there were numerous suggestions made, however it is unclear as to how they expect to implement some of the suggestions. Ms. Erickson reported that parents were not included in the meeting as the focus was primarily on care providers. Dr. Garrison thought having just the providers there provided the providers the opportunity to talk openly and share their strategies. Mr. Cunningham said that it is his opinion that much work was put into the planning of the event. Mr. Wasmer stated that due to the logistics of Kansas City bordering both Missouri and Kansas, the Greater Kansas City Autism group would require the support of both state legislations.

Dr. Garrison presented lectures at Johnson County Community College on the topic of autism. She is in the process of completing the requirements for her accreditation.

Mr. Wasmer is working on Senate Bill 138. The Bill has been passed and awaiting Governor Sebelius' approval. He has been invited to attend the Kansas Summit for fathers and has participated in discussions on parenting a child with autism.

Ms. Bommarito reports that Mr. Wasmer has kept her informed of his contact with the state legislator in Winfield. He will arrange a meeting for Ms. Bommarito to meet with this contact.

Ms. Houfek suggested the committee write a letter to the Governor asking that Mr. Wasmer be included as a member of the Task Force.

Dr. Reese has been working on an autism waiver in addition to insurance reimbursement and providing alternative funding such as grants. He's collaborating with Juniper Gardens. He attended the Disability Policy Seminar and gave a speech on autism. A campaign worker with Senator Hillary Clinton's bid for the Presidency was in attendance at the seminar and stated that Senator Clinton has shown interest in legislation regarding the treatment of autism.

Mr. Stein reports that on February 1, Dodge City submitted its Hennesy proposal for federal appropriations to Senators Roberts and Brownback and Congressman Moran. Part of the proposal would be for a regional diagnostic center in Dodge City. On March 24-28, a delegation from Dodge City traveled to Washington D.C. to meet with Pat Roberts, Jerry Moran, Sam Brownback, Nancy Boyda, and Todd Tiahr and the U.S. Department of Education regarding autism, special education and early childhood education. They are pursuing other grants, foundations, and letters of support from western Kansas in regards to the Hennesy Project. On April 12-13, Arrowhead West in Dodge City hosted the 3rd KU Outreach Diagnostic Clinic. Twelve children were seen by the team.

On April 19th 2008 the next All Things are Possible Conference will be held in Dodge City. On April 26th, 2007 ASK sponsored an informal conference with Lee Stickle in Dodge City. Several teachers, parents and administrators were present. On the last weekend in April there was a community wide celebration called Celebrate our Children as well as our fallen Veterans. Jeannie Zortman has submitted her name to be on the autism task force.

Ms. Coulter reports:

- Autism Handbook will be available online this fall in the Wichita area for parents and staff. The Handbook will include comprehensive support, educational information, regarding intervention strategies, positive behavioral supports, and much more.
- Circle of Friends through the ARC is providing opportunities for students with autism to participate in various social activities in their school setting with typical peers.
- Looking into the possibility of Latch key specifically for students with autism in the Wichita Public Schools
- Summer camp is being held for students with autism in the Wichita area
- April 17th the Wichita Public Schools district staff hosted a night for parents of students with autism spectrum disorders. Connecting to the World of Autism: Parent to Parent,

was the first of quarterly workshops that will be held for parents and staff in the upcoming year.

- Dr. Steve Love from University of North Carolina Division TEACCH Asperger will be making a presentation this fall.

Ms. Houfek said that the parent group in Hays received a grant from Midwest Energy for books in the media library. She has also given a presentation on autism at Fort Hays State University. Ms. Houfek has copies of the Governor's proclamation for Autism Awareness Month. She attended the stakeholders meeting for the waiver as well.

Guest Speaker

Debbie O'Neil from The Capper Foundation presented information on Capper's services for children with autism.

She handed out an informational packet outlining the services provided by The Capper Foundation including those services for children with autism ages 2 1/2-6. Outpatient services are available for older children with autism. Those services are generally Occupational Therapy and Speech services.

There is a general consensus among the Commission members that The Capper Foundation has limited experience dealing with Autism Spectrum Disorders. There is a concern that The Capper Foundation; a provider of services is being included in The Task Force.

SRS Waiver Proposal

Kimberly Pierson has started writing the waiver outlining core services to submit to SMF. Service will commence at diagnosis through the age of five years. Children who qualify will be eligible for services for a period of three years.

The seven core areas outlined in the Waiver are

- Respite care
- Parent support and training
- Attendant care
- Specialized day services
- Consultation services
- Family adjustment counseling
- Intensive Individualized Services

The two distinct requirements are an Autism Specialist and Intensive Individual Services. The process is nearing completion with one more stakeholder meeting at the end of May. It will be funded at \$300,000. A request for matching Federal funds has been submitted for a 60% match. All anticipate an overwhelming response once the program is up and running. The estimated number of children to be served initially would be 10 to 15. It is imperative that good data be collected as this will drive future funding.

The state will write a Request for Proposal (RFP) and all providers interested in becoming a point of entry for accessing the program will submit proposals. Their job will then be to assist the family through this process. There will be 6 regional providers.

Recommendations for the Task Force

When the Task Force has been announced recommendations for members will be submitted. The task force will include a Developmental Pediatrician, 5 parents, Psychiatrist, Psychologist, SLP, OT, BCBA Behaviorist, Special Educator, and at University Level.

Next Meeting Dates

Friday, July 13, 2007

Ms. Houfek will submit her letter of resignation as Chair of the Commission to the Governor effective immediately. The commission approved the interim placement of David Cunningham as Chair, and Carol Garrison as Vice-Chair.

Respectfully submitted,

David Cunningham
Acting Chairman

David Cunningham, Acting Chairman
1900 West 63rd
Mission Hills, KS 66208
913-432-3797

