

Joe Lombardo
Governor

Richard Whitley, MS
Director



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DIVISION
Helping people. It's who we are and what we do.



Dena Schmidt
Administrator

MEETING MINUTES

of the meeting of the Nevada Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders
May 31, 2023

The Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders held a public meeting on May 31, 2023, 3:30 p.m. at the following locations:

3811 W Charleston Blvd Las Vegas, NV 89102

Teleconference meeting was conducted via Microsoft Teams Meeting

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm by Ms. Chalupnik in excused absence of Chair Kori Ward.

2. Roll Call

Ms. Chalupnik called role informing Commissioners of Kori Ward's excused absence.

Members Present:
Anna Marie Binder
Amy Walch
Corey Nguyen
Amy Coyne
Nicole Muhoberac
Linda Tran

3. Public Comment:

Public Comment was provided by Melissa Almanza who congratulated the newly appointed Commissioners and expressed her excitement to see activities begin again. Melissa Almanza reported that she previously was a member of a subcommittee with the previous Commission and offered her support, provided she had the time. She also mentioned to the Commissioners that other people may be available and interested in supporting the Commissions subcommittee, and that she would be spreading the word that the Commission is active again. Melissa thanked the Commission for their time and efforts.

Public Comment was provided by Vanessa Vuong. Vanessa commented that speech therapy is only offering half hour increments per session, because speech therapists are only paid a flat rate which she feels is too low. Vanessa does not believe that half hour sessions are enough time to work on speech therapy, especially for nonverbal kids or kids who have significant behaviors. Kids who are experiencing frustration from not being able to communicate often have behavior that can take a half hour just to get through before speech therapists are able to get to the speech therapy. Vanessa mentioned that there is only one business, Touro, that is offering speech therapy at one-hour long sessions, but that kids age out of the program at age 12. Vanessa mentioned that it was explained to her [by person unnamed] that [offering speech therapy in half hour increments] has to do with how insurance companies pay. Vanessa stated that "I believe speech therapists are paid a flat rate per session because of flat rate is too low, and that the workaround is to shorten the sessions to half hours." Vanessa would like to see how to get that [speech services rate] changed to an hourly rate, like how BCBA's are paid and also see how it can be incorporated into some sort of co-treatment where the RBT's can also run the speech programs as part of the home sessions. Vanessa continued to explain that anyone who speaks a second language the only way to retain the language is to constantly use it. These children [children with autism diagnosis] do not even have a first language. Why would we not give them an opportunity to practice so that they can learn and retain basic communication? She asserted that the insurance companies are willing to pay for speech therapy, please, let's make the therapy more useful and more effective. Vanessa thanked the Commission for their time.

Public comment was provided by Julie Ostrovsky. Julie congratulated the Commission members and mentioned that she had the honor of serving for a number of years. Julie continued by telling the Commissioners that "you all are rockstars and I'm very excited to hear what you do next and participate in any way I might be able to help."

[Ms. Frischmann reminded people to turn off their cameras to save bandwidth.]

4. For Information: Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Chalupnik reviewed housekeeping and general etiquette rules for virtual engagement and introduced the Commissioners. Ms. Chalupnik again mentioned that Kori Ward is out and asked the Commissioners to introduce themselves, their seat on the Commission, region of Nevada, and any other information they would like their fellow Commissioners and the public to know.

Mr. Cory Nguyen introduced himself and stated: I live in Las Vegas, Southern Nevada, He has been a behavior analyst for a couple years and that he made a decision to "throw my name in the hat and see if I could do some good, with the Commission of autism spectrum disorders and hopefully that takes place and I'm happy to be here."

Ms. Anna Marie Binder introduced herself and stated: "I'm just a mom, but the pandemic brought out this Mama bear. I am a mother to six children, three of which are either autistic or intellectually/developmentally disabled." She went on to say, "I, myself have autism as

well, so you'll see that come through a lot as I interact, and I am also blessed to be the vice chair of our Special Education Advisory Committee for the Nevada Department of Education.” This will be my second year as the Vice chair, and I am also blessed to sit on the Nevada Governor's Council for Developmental Disabilities as well as our Behavioral Health Policy Advisory Committee. She continued; I wear a lot of hats, I try to do as much as I can, but I really, really just love my role as a mom.

Ms. Amy Coyne introduced herself and stated: “I am a coordinator with the Clark County School District (CCSD) with the Links Team, so work most of my time with students with autism within the Clark County School District.” She mentioned that she has been there [CCSD] for 26 years.

Ms. Nicole Muhoberac introduced herself and stated: “I am the parent with a child under five years old, so I am blessed with a beautiful 3-year-old. I also work for DCFS Mobile Crisis Unit. I also am licensed in multisystemic therapy and working through the state and working with at risk youth to try to keep them in the home and keep them in the school district.” She continued to say that she works with family systems at her job.

Ms. Linda Tran introduced herself and stated: “I am currently a representative of school districts for Washoe County, I have worked for Washoe County for the past seven years.” She continued to discuss that her current position is a Special Ed Facilitator working in the classroom for the Comprehensive Life Skills and Strategies Program here at Washoe County Prior to moving to Washoe County, Reno, Nevada, she lived in California, where she holds both the Mild Moderate and Moderate Severe credentials, and she worked in California for about 10 years

[Ms. Chalupnik apologized for missing Commissioner Amy Walch, unfortunately the microphone was muted for part of the introduction]

Ms. Amy Walch introduced herself and stated: “I have three children, 19-year-old son on the autism spectrum and two twin 17-year-olds, boys/girl twins. That son is also on the autism spectrum, so I have a lot of experience at home and look forward to this Commission.”

Ms. Chalupnik finalized the introductions applauding the expertise of the Commission and reminded the public that she is the facilitator of the Commission not a member, and that after roll call and quorum, that the Chair, Ms. Kori Ward and Co-Chair, Mr. Corey Nguyen, would lead the meeting. She continued to introduce Ms. Jennifer Frischmann and herself and their roles as they pertain to Open Meeting Law, agenda publishing, and meeting minutes. She then introduced the next agenda item.

5. For Information: Presentation and Overview of Open Meeting Law, Presented by the Attorney General’s Office

Ms. Chalupnik introduced the presenter, Ms. Homa S. Woodrum, Senior Deputy Attorney General, from the Attorney General's Office in Carson City, Nevada, who provided a presentation and overview of Open Meeting Law.

Ms. Woodrum introduced herself, she shared her screen for members of the public and Commissioners public, and informed the public that the slides were made available on the Commission for Autism Spectrum Disorders webpage.

Ms. Woodrum discussed the following topics: Relevance of OML & Related Penalties, Definitions, Openness & Agenda Language, Public Comment & Remote Technology, Resources, and allowed time for any Questions. Power Point slide can be found on the CASD webpage.

6. For Possible Action: Discuss and Decide on Commission Objectives as it Relates to Autism Spectrum Disorder

Ms. Chalupnik informed the Commissioners that there would be a hard stop time at 5:00 pm and we still had items to review. She explained the impetus of fiscal responsibility and that state employees were not allowed to work past 5:00 pm. She encouraged the Commissioners to think about meeting times as we approach the end of the meeting.

Ms. Frischmann pointed out that there are guiding principles on the Commission website as it relates to Commission objectives and guiding principles and read them off. This is what the previous Commission had decided they wanted to focus on was community support, equal access, empowerment, early intervention, self-determination, applied behavior analysis, workforce, evidence-based practices, system of care, and person-centered framework. She mentioned that the Commission could focus on the aforementioned or think about this and bring it back to the next meeting.

Commissioner Binder pointed out items from the CASD webpage and requested an update from other seasoned members of the Commission on the 5-Year Strategic Report, the Workforce Development and Funding and Insurance Subcommittees including how many times they met, an official status report to the 2008 Task Force report.

Ms. Frischmann and Ms. Chalupnik encouraged the Commissioners to look over the webpage and prior years' agendas, Commissioners were encouraged to not feel pressured into taking action, and that this item could be added to the next agenda.

Commissioner Binder suggested that the Commissioners table this item until the next meeting. Due to the Chair being excused from this meeting, Ms. Chalupnik asked for a motion since she is not a member of the Commission.

On motion by Commissioner Binder, seconded by Commissioner Muhoberac, and approved with a unanimous vote, this item will be table.

7. For Possible Action: Discuss and Approve Agenda Items and Discuss Future Commission Meeting Dates

Ms. Chalupnik and Ms. Frischmann encouraged the Commissioners to talk openly/freely amongst themselves about items from previous agendas, things they are passionate about, and topics for future agenda items.

Ms. Frischmann spoke on behalf of Commissioner Ward, who emailed her and Ms. Chalupnik with items for the agenda.

Ms. Ward would like:

- To begin drafting the letter to the governor, which is due June 30th.
- Hear from Medicaid regarding a budget update and for home community-based services and ABA.
- Discuss when will be the next review of reimbursement rates.
- Receive an overview of the overall legislative update regarding autism and services to adults with disabilities?

Ms. Frischmann continued to remind the Commissioners that as it relates to the letter to the Governor, minimal updates would be provided, but a draft could be started. Medicaid could present to the Commission regarding reimbursement rates. Ms. Frischmann suggested for Commissioners to look at bylaws, as they relate to unexcused absences, to avoid issues related to the previous Commission and overall bylaw updates.

Commissioner Binder agreed verbally with Ms. Frischmann, then suggested subcommittee agenda item for the officers, the Chair and Vice Chair, as part of the bylaws, an executive subcommittee, and a potential agreement to review the bylaws yearly. Ms. Frischmann reminded the Commission that disbandment of the current subcommittees and changes could be considered.

Commissioner Binder discussed 3 additional topics for consideration.

- As it relates to transition to early childhood education programs and the Commissioner mentioned a presentation from an unknown source and plans to email the information as it relates to this topic.
- Legislative Updates
- Public confusion on transition to Early Childhood programs

Commissioner Walsh agreed with the potential agenda item as it relates to transition.

On motion by Commissioner Binder, seconded by Commissioner Walsh, to add a transition presentation to the agenda, and approved with a unanimous vote, this motion passes.

On motion by Commissioner Binder, seconded by Commissioner Coyne, and approved with a unanimous vote, the review and discussion and any proposed additions or changes to our bylaws for the next meeting, motion passes.

On motion by Commissioner Muhoberac, seconded by Commissioner Nguyen, and approved with a unanimous vote, the addition of legislative updates and Medicaid updates for the next meeting, motion passes.

On motion by Commissioner Binder, seconded by Commissioner Walsh, to add a transition presentation to the agenda, and approved with a unanimous vote, motion passes.

On motion by Commissioner Binder and not voted, was to add the Autism Treatment Assistance Program (ATAP) update and Nevada Early Intervention Services updates, motion does not pass.

Next meeting scheduled for:

- June 20, 2023, at 2:00 pm virtually and at 3811 W Charleston Blvd Las Vegas, NV 89102, Suite 209
- July 20, 2023, at 2:00 pm virtually and at 3811 W Charleston Blvd Las Vegas, NV 89102, Suite 209

8. Public Comment:

No public comment

9. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:06 pm.