



MINUTES
of the meeting of the
Nevada Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders
May 24, 2022

The Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders held a public meeting on May 24, 2022, beginning at 3:45 p.m. at the following locations:

Teleconference meeting was conducted via Microsoft Teams Meeting

1. Call to Order:

The meeting for the Nevada Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders was called to order at by Commissioner Lozano at 3:50pm.

2. Roll Call:

Ms. Russell took role at 3:30 pm. Members present were Commissioners Trisha Lozano, Julie Ostrovsky.

A quorum was not declared

Ms. Russell took a repeat-roll call at 3:57 pm. Members present were Commissioners Trisha Lozano, Julie Ostrovsky, James Howells.

A quorum was declared.

3. Public Comment:

No public comment was provided at this time.

4. For Possible Action: Approval of Meeting Minutes from the Previous Meeting held April 26, 2022

Commissioner Lozano requested the following corrections to the meeting notes draft: on page 2 at bottom of page it currently states: "... motion was made to explore..." Requested addition: "motion was made to explore the presented information that was submitted by the subcommittee members with ATAP by commissioner Ostrovsky, seconded by Commissioner Howells".

Administrative update: Addition to meeting attendance: Commissioner Kryk joined the meeting at 4:00 pm

On motion by Commissioner Ostrovsky, seconded by Commissioner Howell, and approved with a unanimous vote, the meeting minutes of the meeting on April 26, 2022, were approved with the edits discussed.

5. For Information: Rural Regional Center Updates as it Relates to the Number of Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder Served and Information on Providers lost or gained.

Mr. Roswell Allen pointed out that the Regional Centers are only one part of the support systems for individuals with Autism. Private provider companies are playing a significant role in the service provision system.

Mr. Allen stated that many private provider companies are faced with staff turnover during COVID: some staff left due to COVID or moved to other employment with higher pay rates. This development impacts the services and work of the Regional Centers subsequently.

Ms. JoAnn Casalez shared that out of the 850 individuals currently served through the Rural Regional Center, 182 individuals are listed with a primary diagnosis of Autism. She stated that there may be additional individuals who may have a secondary diagnosis of Autism, however, these individuals would not be reflected in the numbers she sees in this report.

Ms. Casalez stated that related to the staffing challenges of provider companies, the current hourly compensation rate may be a factor in the challenge to retain staff. She stated that provider companies receive approx. \$24 per service hour from the Regional Center. Of this money, provider companies would pay direct service provider staff around \$10 to \$12 per hour, the rest of the funds will be used for administrative and overhead costs. She stated that with a current hourly rate of between \$10 - \$12 per hour, some employees may earn more money working at e.g., Walmart, and it would be hard to stay competitive in this situation. Ms. Casalez stated that there are more funds for Autism treatment approved and available until December 2022, however, they are not yet available. Decisions on how to utilize additional funds will be made once funds are available.

Ms. Casalez stated that in this situation, it is more difficult to provide timely services in rural areas like Elko or Ely. Some individuals with Autism may need to wait in these areas, because of the lack of providers. Especially challenging is the availability of day-program activities- providers. The shortage of day-care services is partially due to COVID safety reasons, and partially to staff shortage.

Ms. Casalez shared that the Rural Regional Center e.g., lost a contract with one provider company (American Companion) in the Elko-Winnemucca region. She stated that this provider was the only company to provide intermittent services. Now, this service is not available in the region anymore, at all.

Ms. Casalez stated that programs that does not have wait lists are the Regional Center Respite Program, the self-directed and fiscal intermediary program. These are providing a monthly stipend to families, and families can hire their own staff. Ms. Casalez shared that the rates for these programs will increase by \$50 per month.

6. For Information: Department of Child and Family Services Update as it Relates to the Juvenile Justice Process, How Youth are Assigned to Facilities, Number of Children with Autism, and Services or Programs Available through Juvenile Justice Facilities.

This agenda item was tabled to move to the next agenda item 7, Presentation from Nevada Early Intervention Services

7. For Information: Presentation from Nevada Early Intervention Services on Autism Diagnosis Service Report, and Autism & Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (MCHAT) Data (FY22 July-March)

Ms. Patricia L. Knight presented the EI Autism Diagnosis Report. The presentation was shared with the Commission.

8. For Information: Autism Treatment Assistance Program (ATAP) Updates

Ms. Samantha Jayme provided updates. She stated that her presentation will be available on the ADSD website the next business day.

Ms. Jayme state that ATAP has received the commission's subcommittee proposal related to ATAP services on the 16th of this month. She stated that the response of ATAP will be presented to the commission at the next commission meeting.

Ms. Jaime stated that she also would like to provide with additional information on children who are dually served, by Early Intervention and by ATAP, to show the close collaboration between both programs.

Administrative update: Due to connectivity issues of some meeting participants, a repeat rollcall was performed by Ms. Russell at 4:29 pm.

Commissioners present were Trisha Lozano, Julie Ostrovsky, James Howells.

A quorum was declared.

9. For Information: Discuss ATAP Budget and the Commissions Objectives as it Relates to Insurance Assistance Distribution, Policy on Supervision, and Impacts of SB96, – (An Act Relating to Disability Services; Requiring the Department of Health and Human Services to Seek an Increase to Certain Reimbursement Rates Under the Medicaid Program and the Autism Treatment Assistance Program (ATAP) for a Registered Behavior Technician (RBT); and Providing Other Matters Properly Relating Thereto), to the ATAP Budget

This agenda item was tabled to move to the next agenda item 10, Letter to Nevada State Legislators.

10. For Possible Action: Review and Approve Draft Letter to Nevada State Legislators on behalf of the Commission as if Relates to Commission Objectives and Statistics on Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders

On motion by Commissioner Ostrovsky, seconded by Commissioner Howells, and approved with a unanimous vote, the editing of this letter to be delayed for 2 weeks for review and approval at the next commission meeting, was approved.

11. For Possible Action: Review of the Current Community Strategic Report, to Include Discussion of Resources, and Finances in Preparation for Upcoming Strategic Report

This agenda item was tabled to move to the next agenda item 12, Subcommittee updates.

12. For Information: Workforce Development Subcommittee Updates and Funding and Insurance Subcommittee Updates

Funding and Insurance Subcommittee: Commissioner Lozano stated that the subcommittee chair had resigned, and therefore, no report can be provided today.

Workforce Development Subcommittee: no report to be provided today.

This agenda item was tabled to move to the next agenda item 13, Co-Chair replacement for Workforce Development Subcommittee and subsequent recruitment.

13. For Possible Action: Discussion and Approval of Co-Chair Replacement for Workforce Development Subcommittee and Subsequent Recruitment.

Commissioner Lozano stated that there is a previous version of a recruitment letter available, that could be modified for the current purpose. This letter was shared with the meeting participants.

Commissioner Ostrovsky suggested to change the letter by updating her position from “parent” to “commission member”.

On motion by Commissioner Ostrovsky, seconded by Commissioner Howells, and approved with a unanimous vote, accepting the letter as presented with the edits suggested was approved.

Administrative update: Due to connectivity issues of some meeting participants, a repeat rollcall was performed by Ms. Russell at 4:42 pm.

Commissioners present were Trisha Lozano, Julie Ostrovsky, James Howells.

A quorum was declared.

14. For Possible Action: Approve Subcommittee Roles and Responsibilities as it Relates to the Current Community Strategic Plan, Including Approval of Public Entities and/or Members to be Contacted to Participate in Each Subcommittee, in Preparation for the Upcoming Strategic Report

This agenda item was tabled to move to the next agenda item 15, agenda, and dates for future commission meetings.

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

Commissioner Ostrovsky would like to add the agenda items that needed to be tabled during this meeting back to the agenda of next meeting.

Ms. Russell asked if she should reach out to the presenters of the Department of Family Services as well, because they were not able to join today. Commissioner Lozano stated that at this time it may be better to focus on other, time sensitive items on the agenda, and to, therefore, postpone outside-presentations to another meeting in the future.

The commission members suggested June 14, 2022, at 3:45 pm as next meeting date.

On motion of Commissioner Ostrovsky, seconded by Commissioner Howells, and approved with a unanimous vote, the next meeting will be, June 14, 2022, at 3:45 pm, with the agenda items #9 through 13 of today's meeting added back on, was approved.

16. Public Comment: (No action may be taken upon a matter raised under public comment period unless the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an action item. Comments will be limited to three minutes per person. Persons making comment will be asked to begin by stating their name for the record and to spell their last name and provide the secretary with written comments).

Ms. Abbie Chalupnik reminded the commission on the duty of the commission to report to the Governor on or before June 30th and December 31st each year.

BCBA Robert Taylor asks for clarification on an item that was presented during the meeting and asked if the \$24 reimbursement for Autism providers per hour are related to a group home staffing rate.

17. Adjourn

On motion of Commissioner Ostrovsky, seconded by Commissioner Howells, and approved with unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 4:51 pm.