



**Autism Services Initiative for Adults
Autism Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes**

**October 30, 2015
10:00 a.m.**

Decatur Recreation Center, 211 Sycamore Street, Decatur, Georgia 30030

Facilitator:	April Umstead (Co-Chair)
Minutes Secretary:	Katherine Roeder
Advisory Committee Attendees:	Deborah Conway, Rena Harris, Kim Lucker-Greene, Julie Prescott, Michelle Robison, Michelle Schwartz
Absent:	Scott Bales, Jennifer Briggs, Tim Cartledge, Ray Johnson Stacey Lane, Eren Kyle Niederhoffer, Greta O'Dell, Laura Owen, Stacey Ramirez, Pauline Shaw, Rita Young
DBHDD Staff:	Darlene Meador
Emory Staff:	Joseph Cubells, Silke von Esenwein, Katherine Roeder, Danielle Belva, Nassira Bougrab

Agenda

Call to Order

- Many attendees were absent from the meeting, and the start was delayed to 10:20 a.m. to wait for latecomers.
- The Advisory Board is composed of 17 members, and on this meeting day, 11 of them were absent.

Approval/Discussion of Minutes of August Meeting

- Darlene Meador reminded the group that the prior meeting minutes, which conformed to accepted DBHDD structure, are now posted on the DBHDD website, as suggested at the last meeting.

*Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
Frank W. Berry, Commissioner*

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- Co-chair April Umstead asked for discussion of the minutes. Given no discussion, she then asked for approval.
- Joseph Cubells moved that the minutes be approved.
- Silke von Esenwein seconded the motion.

Topic: Communications Update

Darlene Meador provided the group with an update on communications topics and suggestions that were discussed at the last meeting and acted upon in the interim.

- As mentioned in the introduction, the minutes for the Advisory Group meetings will now be posted on a new location dedicated to the Autism Initiative which can be found at <http://dbhdd.georgia.gov/autism-services-initiative-adults>. The minutes from the two prior meetings are already up on the website.
- The new website space gives the group a place to post items of general interest about the project, thereby aiding the communications function.
- The group discussed topics which might appear in the FAQ, and its function as a list of talking points for the Advisory Group members.
- Suggestions from the group on FAQ topics included:
 - Defining and describing a gap analysis for the general public;
 - Listing expected outcomes of the project;
 - Addressing provider concerns;
 - Determining what evidence-based supports are currently available to providers/families/individuals;
 - What kind of provider training might be available down the line from the program; and
 - Whether we can have different types of information presented which would be useful to different types public stakeholders.
- Meador noted that DBHDD would produce one set of FAQs as it does with all projects of this nature because they are used to inform the public. Mike Link of Community Relations will be consulted on this project. However, other FAQs might be developed by the group for different purposes, and reviewed by DBHDD Communications before being posted on the website or used for communication about the initiative.
- It was suggested that the FAQ section could be used to emphasize the unique and special focus of this project on adults with autism.

- Meador reminded the group that the Autism Initiative is unique in that it focuses on those with adults with a diagnosis of ASD who are receiving services, and there is no other evaluation being made of these services besides this one at this time.
- The Purpose and Mission Statement which was suggested at the last meeting has been completed by the Ad Hoc Committee. It reads as follows:

“The mission of the Autism Services Initiative for Adults is to improve service delivery in order to provide person-centered, evidence-based supports for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who receive or are eligible to receive Intellectual/Developmental Disability (IDD) services provided by the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD.)”

Meador informed the group that this statement had been reviewed and approved by DBHDD Communications. Joe Cubells made a motion to approve the Mission Statement as presented, and he was seconded by Michelle Schwartz. The motion was adopted.

Topic: Focus Group Update

Silke von Esenwein provided an update on the progress made with the focus group interviews since the last meeting, when feedback and prioritized questions were contributed by the group:

- Interviews have been started with families, providers, and state administrators.
- Up next will be families from the patient population at Emory Autism Center where well over 100 patients receive waiver services. They will be chosen for geographical, type-of-caretaker, and waiver/planning list service status variations. The results of these interviews will inform the composition of the focus groups.
- There are several kinds of focus group questions depending on the information gathered at the individual interviews. Families, providers, and administrators are asked a similar set of questions that is tailored to their respective roles in providing services or supports to adults with autism that are being served by DBHDD. The interview questions and emphasis points evolve and change over the course of the project in an organic process.
- Current completion date estimate: February 28, 2016.

Presentation – Outcomes Measures

In connection with the start of the Data Analysis portion of the initiative, von Esenwein shared her knowledge of Outcomes Measures with the Group.

- The team will first gather data to describe the population of adults with autism in Georgia that are eligible to receive services from DBHDD. This will include adults currently receiving services and adults that are eligible, but on the planning list.
- The description of the population will include demographic information, services approved, services obtained, caregiver characteristics, comorbidities, medications, levels of support needed, and use of emergency services.

The choice of measures is a key component of the value of the final recommendations for improvements. A general overview of common measures pertaining to access, services, and service quality was presented.

Group Input – Outcomes Measures

Von Esenwein elicited input from the group about what outcome measures should be included, with an emphasis on outcome measures that would inform training programs for providers.

The group made a number of suggestions for outcomes measures, including:

- Examination of criminal justice involvement of clients.
- Training for mid-level providers to “translate” Individual Service Plans into concrete instructions for direct care providers. It was emphasized that the training would have to be a sustainable effort to change the operations of the provider organization to counteract the possible effects of staff turn-over.
- Meaningful incentives for staff training.
- Identification and incorporation of positive outcome measures that can be used to incentivize dedicated and effective providers.
- Number and quality of community outings, safety and cleanliness of the care environment, and the tracking of client functional measures.

Next Steps

The next meeting will be December 11, 2015. The main topics will be outcomes measures (to revisit with full group participation) and data.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.