

Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs

September 12, 2023
1:00 pm



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Housekeeping

- Members of the public - Please keep your microphones on mute until the public comment portion of the meeting.
- Advisory group members - Please keep microphones muted when not speaking.
- To be called on, please use the raise hand feature.
- Our office is able to provide accommodations with reasonable notice and at an individual's request. For this meeting, our office has not received any requests for accommodation.



Meeting Guidelines

Purpose 1: To create a safe, positive, and inclusive environment for the Advisory Group, participants, staff, and the public.

Purpose 2: Create a safe space for diversity of contributors, thoughts, and ideas.

- Assume positive intent on the part of advisory members, moderators, participants, and staff.
- Listen actively: Allow others to complete their thoughts, listening to listen, and not listening to respond.
- One speaker at a time, prioritizing those who haven't spoken yet.
- Default to "both/and" thinking instead of either/or thinking.



Roll Call

- Advisory Group Members - When your name is called, please say “here” and indicate your association to the group.
- Members of the Public - When name is called, please indicate your interest in the advisory group.



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Opening Remarks

Secretary

Carol Beatty



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Opening Remarks

Deputy Secretary

Lisa Belcastro



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Opening Remarks

Coordinator of State Autism Strategy

Victoria Rodríguez-Roldán



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Laying a Foundation for Success

Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs

Advisory Group Members: Please hold questions until the end of the presentation.

Members of Public: Please hold questions until the open forum



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Discussion Points

- Where we started.
- Where we need to go.
- How we get there.



Where We Started

- Effective July 1, 2023, ASGARN and State Coordinator position were moved from GOCl to MDOD.
- Hired new State Coordinator for Autism Strategy.
- Reviewed the statute at length and have consulted our AAG so we **move forward in a way that ensures compliance, process, and transparency.**
- Coordinated with GOCl to compile as much documentation as possible from previous coordinator.



What We Found

- Under ASGARN's previous home and leadership, **compliance, process, and transparency were severely lacking.**
- Documentation was poorly organized and unsubstantial.
- Multiple membership lists existed and had conflicting or incomplete information.
- Appointing authority of the previous coordinator was practiced without process or transparency.



Why Findings are Problematic

- Out of compliance with statute.
- Poor foundation for new coordinator to build on.
- Large list of individuals associated with ASGARN, but no way of determining full voting members vs. interested parties.
- Lack of policy, process, and procedure has made forward progress challenging and will continue making forward progress challenging if the status quo is maintained.



Where We Need To Go

- Ensure the charge of ASGARN is implemented with fidelity, and that **compliance, process, and transparency guide our forward progress.**
- Comply with all deadlines and reporting requirements.
- Establish policies that promote process and transparency.
- Address the problematic findings discussed previously.



How We Get There

- Implement **new policies and procedures that promote compliance, process, and transparency.**
 - Comply with all deadlines and reporting requirements established in statute.
 - Complete strategic plan by July 1, 2024.
 - Maintain and display publicly detailed notes and minutes of ASGARN meetings on MDOD website.
 - Maintain an updated and clear membership list that is displayed publicly on MDOD website.
 - Utilize Robert's Rules of Order to facilitate ASGARN meetings.
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- Reorganize and Recalibrate.



How We Get There

Reorganize and Recalibrate

- Work adopted under previous coordinator will go back to the respective subcommittees for further discussion and collaboration.
- Membership will be brought back to statutory baseline.
 - Statutory Baseline = Governor Appointed, Ex-Officio, MGA Appointed
- Due to poor documentation, individuals appointed by the previous coordinator will be removed as full-voting members.
 - Can still engage with group by attending meetings, through public comment, or by being re-appointed by coordinator.
- Membership committee will be formed to review applications and advise the coordinator on additional appointments.



ASGARN Membership Under MDOD

Governor Appointed:

Emily Arker
Shannon West
Devan Southerland
Rodger Thibaudeau
Adam Shafer Jones
Nicole LaBlanc
Lisa Wiederlight
Peggy Pugh

Ex-Officio Members:

*State Autism Coordinator (Victoria Rodriguez-Roldan)
Dept. of Disabilities (Lisa Belcastro)
Dept. of Human Ser. (Courtney Thomas-Winterberg)
MSDE (Carmen Brown)
Dept. of Health (Janet Furman)
MD Speech-Lang-Hearing Assoc. (Fatima Salem)
MD DD Council (Rachel London)
ARC Maryland (Raymond Marshall)
Pathfinders for Autism (Rebecca Rienzi)
Itineris (Ami Taubenfeld)

MGA Appointed:

Del. Michele Guyton



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Vacant Positions

Gov Appointed: Business Community, Pediatrician, Physical Therapist
Ex-Officio: MD Occupational Therapy Association
MGA Appointed: 1 House of Delegates Appointee, 1 Senate Appointee

*Indicates Chair of ASGARN

Not Listed on Previous Slide?

- You can still engage with ASGARN and provide feedback during the open forum portion of meeting.
- If you're a member of the business community, physical therapist, or pediatrician, you can apply to be appointed by Governor Moore to one of these vacant positions. Ask us for an application.
- If you're interested in being appointed to ASGARN by the State Autism Coordinator, fill out the application on the MDOD website.



- Please note: There are different applications for a Governor Appointment and State Autism Coordinator Appointment.
- The coordinator will be working with the subcommittee chairs to help determine their composition.

Discussion

Advisory Group Members: To be called on, please utilize the raise hand feature.

Members of Public: Please hold questions until the open forum portion of meeting.



Next Steps

- Working groups should start meeting as soon as possible in the next 60 days, everyone's schedules permitting. I will be sending back to the chairs some of my input on the work I've received so far, and will work with and be there for you to help draft the best work possible.
- Within the next 60 days, we will be forming a membership committee for applications for memberships to ASGARN appointed by my position, and start reviewing applications. We hope to make the call for applications as widely known as possible across the entire autism community in the state - I want to prioritize ensuring a diversity of views and lived experience.
- As we move through the goal of having the strategic plan ready for submission on July 1st, 2024, ASGARN will play a crucial role as an advisory body of stakeholders to provide suggestions and feedback for the process, and give it transparency.
- The next quarterly meetings of ASGARN for the fiscal year will be at 1 PM December 12th, 2023 March 12th, 2024 and May 21st, 2024.



Statewide Outreach Discussion

One of my priorities for the next few months is outreach across the state, in the form of both formal listening sessions, meetings with stakeholders, community members, self-advocates, families, state and local government officials, service providers, etc. I am hoping to meet with as many different perspectives as possible and across the whole state, not just its well-known parts.

I want to hear your suggestions, thoughts, both today and more informally as we move forward, of ideas, people to meet with, activities that can be done and how to help, and where.



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Open Forum

Advisory Group Members & Members of Public: To be called on, please utilize the raise hand function.



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Closing Remarks by Chair



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Motion to Adjourn



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