

Connecticut Autism Spectrum Disorder Pilot Project



Update to the Legislature January 2007

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The first update to the legislature was completed in July 2006. This report is an implementation update on the two year Autism Spectrum Disorder pilot program established pursuant to Public Act 06-188. You may notice some changes since the original July 2006 update. As this program is a pilot, changes have been made, and will be made as necessary, to meet the needs of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Previous information provided on the pilot is still available on the DMR website at <http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/AutismPilot/index.htm>.

Implementation Update

Program Area

The original area for program services included the towns of Milford, Orange, West Haven, New Haven, East Haven, Branford, North Branford, Guilford, Madison, North Haven, Hamden, Cheshire, Woodbridge, Bethany and Wallingford. The following towns were added to the area for program services: Ansonia, Derby, Shelton, Seymour, Oxford, and Beacon Falls.

Eligibility & Applications

Twenty-nine individuals have inquired about the program. Nineteen individuals have sent in completed applications. A team of three clinical psychologists reviewed those applications. Fifteen individuals have been made eligible: fourteen for program services and one for the control group. Another ten applications will be reviewed at the end of January.

Staffing

A service coordinator was hired in July 2006 and is currently working with all fourteen of the participants. An administrative assistant was hired in September 2006.

Provider agencies

A request for vendor applications was issued through the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) website through a "fee for service" arrangement. Seven provider agencies have been approved to date.

Control Group

The area for selection of the control group was changed from the Greater New Haven area to the Greater Hartford area. The original random selection process was found to be a deterrent to individuals applying for the program. Therefore, the pilot is now accepting volunteers for the control group from the Greater Hartford area. If services are expanded, these individuals will be the next group to receive services.

Implementation Time

The implementation of the pilot has been slower than originally anticipated. It appears that the features of autism affect some of the participants' ability to access services. The process for individual service planning, including choosing personal outcomes to work on, selecting how many hours of service and choosing provider agencies, has taken several individuals much longer than originally anticipated. It was discovered that the entry into a service delivery system, especially for individuals who have not had services in quite a while, is something that must be handled carefully and slowly. Several individuals have indicated a preference to "ease into services" rather than start all services at once.

Individual Plans and Budgets

Six individual service plans have been developed. There have been five individual budgets developed and approved to purchase the services outlined in the plans. We are anticipating another five budgets to be completed within the month of January. Some of the participants are still in the process of choosing a provider agency. The annual service amounts for the five approved budgets are: \$2130.00, \$5550.00, \$10,220.00, \$14,070.00, and \$18,150.00. We anticipate that these budgets will increase for some of the participants as they "ease into services" and decrease for some as they make progress on their personal outcomes. The cost of service coordination, social skills groups and any services from the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) are not factored in to these totals. Two of the individuals receive services from BRS. Services from BRS are time limited and it is anticipated that in the future the pilot will absorb some of the costs currently paid for by BRS.

Training

The evaluations of the three trainings sessions conducted were overwhelmingly positive. One training session was for law enforcement personnel and took place at the Police Training Academy. Another was designed for families and focused on working with law enforcement. The third was designed for private agency staff to provide services to participants in the program. It is anticipated that additional training will be offered throughout the year.

Program Evaluation

A Scale of Independent Behavior Assessment has been completed for twelve participants. A Level of Need assessment has been conducted for thirteen participants. Interviews for fourteen participants have been conducted by the University of Connecticut as part of the study to gather baseline information. There will be follow-up interviews during the two-year period to note any changes.

Steering Committee

The steering committee has been active and continues to meet on a bi-monthly schedule.