

Guiding Principles

Missouri Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders

Article I: Name

As provided in Section 633.200, RSMo, the name of this Commission shall be the Missouri Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders (Commission). The Commission shall be housed within the Department of Mental Health.

Article II: Responsibilities

The Commission shall advise and make recommendations to the Governor, General Assembly, and relevant state agencies regarding matters concerning all levels of Autism Spectrum Disorders services, including healthcare, education, and other adult and adolescent services.

The Commission shall make recommendations for developing a comprehensive statewide plan for an integrated system of training, treatment, and services for individuals of all ages with Autism Spectrum Disorders. In preparation of the state plan, the Commission shall specifically perform the following responsibilities and report on them accordingly, in conjunction with state agencies and the Office of Autism Services:

- (1) Study and report on the means for developing a comprehensive, coordinated system of care delivery across the state to address the increased and increasing presence of Autism Spectrum Disorders and ensure that resources are created, well-utilized and appropriately spread across the state;
- (2) Determine the need for the creation of additional centers for diagnostic excellence in designated sectors of the state, which could provide clinical services, including assessment, diagnosis and treatment;
- (3) Plan for effectively evaluating regional service areas and their capacity, including outlining personnel and skills that exist within the service area, other capabilities that exist and resource needs that may be unmet;
- (4) Assess the need for additional behavior intervention capabilities and, as necessary, the means for expanding capabilities in a regional service area;
- (5) Develop recommendations for expanding services in conjunction with hospitals after review of current specialty clinics, hospitals and hospital inpatient care capabilities;
- (6) Conduct an assessment of the need for coordinated, enhanced and targeted special education capabilities within each region of the state;
- (7) Develop a recommendation for enlisting appropriate universities and colleges to ensure support and collaboration in developing certification or degree programs for students specializing in Autism Spectrum Disorders intervention;

Other duties may include but not be limited to:

- (1) Provide recommendations regarding training programs and content of training programs;
- (2) Recommend individuals to participate in a committee of major stakeholders charged with developing screening, diagnostic, assessment and treatment standards for Missouri;
- (3) Participate in recommending a panel of qualified professionals to review existing models of evidence-based education practices for adaptation specific to Missouri;
- (4) Examine barriers to accurate information on prevalence and recommend a process for accurate reporting of demographic data;
- (5) Explore the need for the creation of interagency councils to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated system of care for all individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders;
- (6) Study or explore other developmental delay disorders and genetic conditions known to be associated with Autism, including Fragile X Syndrome, Sotos Syndrome, Angelman Syndrome and Tuberous Sclerosis.

Article III: Membership

As provided in Section 633.200, RSMo, the Commission shall be composed of twenty four members. The members of the Commission, other than the members from the General Assembly and ex-officio members, shall be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.

Of the members first appointed to the Commission by the Governor, half shall serve a term of four years and half shall serve a term of two years, and thereafter, members shall serve a term of four years. Members shall continue to serve until their successor is duly appointed and qualified. Any vacancy on the Commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

Members shall serve on the Commission without compensation but may be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses.

The members of the Commission shall consist of a broad representation of Missouri citizens, both urban and rural, who are concerned with the health and quality of life for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Members appointed in their capacity as State agency officials may designate an appropriate staff member to serve and function as a Commission member on the official's behalf. A designee shall otherwise have the same rights and responsibilities as any other member of the Commission. Each state agency will represent a single vote.

Any member may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chair of the Commission. Resignations will take effect at the time specified in the member's written notice.

Article IV: Officers

As provided in Section 633.200, RSMo, a Chair of the Commission shall be selected by the members of the Commission.

The Chair of the Commission shall be elected for one year at the annual mid-calendar year meeting. The Chair shall hold office until a successor has been duly elected or until the Chair submits a letter of resignation in writing. The Chair shall not serve more than two consecutive terms.

If the Chair cannot preside at the meetings of the Commission, the Chair shall appoint a Chair Pro Tempore.

Article V: Conflict of Interest

No member of the Commission shall cast a vote on any matter which would provide direct financial benefit to that member or otherwise give the appearance of a conflict of interest under state law.

Article VI: Meetings

The Commission shall meet at least four times annually. The Commission may hold meetings by telephone or video conference.

Committees will be reflective of the statutory responsibilities and requirements to fulfill the intent of the statute. Committees shall meet as deemed appropriate by the Commission.

In order for a quorum to be present, fifty percent of the membership of the Commission must be present, and fifty percent of those in attendance must be members appointed as representatives to the Commission. When a quorum is present, a majority of the voting members present shall decide any question. The Commission may take no formal action unless a quorum is present. The Commission may utilize technology such as teleconferencing to facilitate Commission members' attendance at meetings.

Article VII: Committees

The Chair shall appoint such subcommittees, standing or special, as the appointing body sees fit necessary to carry out the work of the Commission. A subcommittee shall elect its own Chairperson from among its members. A Member-Representative of the Department of Mental Health Office of Autism Services shall be ex officio members of every subcommittee, except the nomination committee.

Fifty percent of membership of a committee shall constitute a quorum for any committee meeting. When a quorum is present, a majority of the voting members present shall decide any question. Committee members may be counted in attendance at the committee meetings by appearing either in person or by electronic means.

Article VIII: Staff

The Office of Autism Services will provide technical and administrative support as required by the Commission.

