

**Regional Autism Assistance Program  
Expert Panel Advisory Committee Meeting  
August 24 2021, 10:30 a.m. - noon  
Via Zoom**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization/Role Representing</b>	<b>Present</b>
Alyson Beytien	Life Connections/Family Member	
Josh Cobbs	Family Advisor	X
James Curry	Family Advisor	X
Connie Fanselow	Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Mental Health and Disability Services Commission	X
Candice Fedeler	Metro West Learning Center	X
Erika Hertel	Iowa Regional Autism Assistance Program/Family Member	X
Michelle Holst	Iowa Department of Public Health- 1st Five	X
Marcus Johnson-Miller (Bridget Konz)	Iowa Department of Public Health	
Aaron Kauer	UI Stead Family Children's Hospital Child & Adolescent Psychiatry	
Andrea Keith	Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services	X
Lisa Kemmerer	Star Autism Support	
Vanessa Kimm	Family Advisor	
Shawn Kolb	ChildServe	X
Todd Kopelman	UI Stead Family Children's Hospital Child & Adolescent Psychiatry	X
Toni Fuller Merfeld	Metro West Learning Center	X
Caroline Moniza	Mercy Family Counseling & EAP	X
Steve Muller	Balance Autism	X
Michelle Nuehring	Grant Wood AEA	
Kelly Pelzel	UI Stead Family Children's Hospital Autism Center	X
Mary Roberts	Family Advisor	X
Leslie Rogers	ChildServe	X
Thomas Scholz	Division of Child & Community Health	X
Kristine Steinmetz	Autism Society of Iowa/Family Member	X
Rachell Swanson-Holm	Learn the Signs. Act Early., Regional Autism Assistance Program	X
Wendy Trotter	Iowa Department of Education	
Maria Valdovinos	Drake University	X
Brad Zelinger	Stride Autism Centers	X

**Welcome and Introductions**

Facilitator: Erika Hertel

- Roll call was taken, and introductions were made.
- Three new members have officially joined: Lisa Kemmerer, Brad Zelinger, Todd Kopelman

**Member Updates:**

### **Steve Muller- Balance Autism**

Balance Autism has opened new services and spaces in Waterloo and Iowa City. Steve provided an update on state Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS) rates. A 10% increase in HCBS funding was requested, with 75% of that increase passed on to Direct Support Professional (DSP) wages. The approved funding was 5.25%, however, somewhere before the governor signed it, the increase was reduced to 3.55%. This is very disappointing and could lead to many adult services being cut. Low wages with an average of \$11.98/hour make finding and keeping direct service staff difficult. Woodward staff receive \$18.00/hour and other agencies would like to be able to match that.

### **Josh Cobbs- Autism Speaks and Lee Container Workforce Development**

Josh commented on Steve's update and added that one adult has already been displaced in his area. The system needs to fund people and not services.

### **Connie Fanselow – Autism Support Program (ASP)**

Connie reports two new enrollees this month. The applications are getting back to two per month after a drop in applications during the height of the pandemic. Connie is still advocating for eligibility requirements to give flexibility in use of funds when someone has insurance, but their deductible and copays are high.

### **Kelly Pelzel- Autism Center of CDD**

1. Psychologist Dr. Lea Boldt started as a new Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry yesterday. Will continue autism team evaluations twice monthly with Jenny Brodell (formerly Jenny Divita). Will continue to do adult autism evaluations. Will continue to offer ImPACT.
2. Psychologist Dr. Todd Kopelman is shifting some of his time to CDD Day Treatment program four mornings per week. (Dr. Matthew O'Brien is reducing his Day Treatment time to work on other projects.) Will continue to do autism team evaluations once weekly. Will have limited clinical services beyond that.
3. Psychiatrist change anticipated on Dr. Kopelman's diagnostic team mid-year.
4. Psychologist Dr. Jacqueline Klossing has joined CDD staff. In addition to her evaluation work, she is going to have a therapy caseload.
  - a. CPP <https://www.cebc4cw.org/program/child-parent-psychotherapy/detailed>
  - b. TF-CBT <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/trauma/>
  - c. PCIT <https://www.cebc4cw.org/program/parent-child-interaction-therapy/detailed>
5. Neuropsychologist Dr. Christopher Haak has joined CDD staff. The addition of two new psychologists at CDD should help with the wait times for autism diagnostic team evaluations.
6. Wait times unfortunately remain longer than we would like; telehealth remains a possibility for some clinics (Psychiatry for diagnostics; Psychiatry and Pediatrics for treatment)

Connie Fanselow asked about calls she has received for 19-20-21-year-old persons who have not been tested, but suspects autism. Please refer to Adult Psychiatry for patients ages 18 and up.

Question about diagnostic providers in other parts of the state--Up in NW Iowa is Natalie Sandbulte, PsyD <https://www.elevatetherapy.org/services>

### **Rachell Swanson-Holm - Child Health Specialty Clinics (CHSC)**

This is the final month for the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Early Childhood systems grant that confronts the COVID-19 crisis by using three high reach agencies WIC Nutrition Program - Women, Infants, and Children, Iowa Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R), and 1<sup>st</sup> Five to distribute *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* materials and information in novel ways. The 1<sup>st</sup> Five program distributed 2500 Milestone Moments booklets and 520 children's masks (CDC approved, non-medical cloth masks). The USDA closed the WIC offices from home visits, so one agency mailed out the checklist materials and another one made phone calls to go through the checklist over the phone. English and Spanish banners were put up in the lobbies, 14 x 14 repositionable wall graphics were placed in lobbies, children's books, brochures, tracker app flyers, LTSAE Tip Sheets were also sent to the offices for public display. For the CCR&R, materials were provided for future training of resiliency building resources for 25 caregivers.

The AUCD and CDC recently announced a 2<sup>nd</sup> year of funding, so Rachell is determining whether to continue the same path or if we should we encompass new high reach programs.

**Erika Hertel- Iowa Regional Autism Assistance Program**

Back to school is on everyone's mind right now. Erika is busy planning more trainings: Autism Basics with Kelly Pelzel will again be held twice this year, and three locations have been determined for the Safety Care for Families with Mark Hines: Des Moines in October, Clinton in November, Iowa City in December. Erika is still working on the exact location for these trainings. Creston is holding another Family Leadership training on 9/21/21. It is free to families. We will try to have our next Expert Panel meeting in Iowa City (in person) in October.

**Kris Steinmetz – Autism Society of Iowa**

The Autism Employment conference will be held on 9/10/2021 in a virtual platform again this year. The Fall ASI conference will be held 11/5/2021, unsure if this will be virtual or in person.

**Michelle Holst—DHS**

There is a DPH and DHS Alignment project happening right now. Please see website for more information. <http://hhsalignment.iowa.gov>

**Next Meeting:** October 26, 2021 10:00-2:00. We will try to meet in person for our full day as planned.