

Approved: Februaruy 22, 2011
Date

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 8, 2011

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kiegerl at 9:07 a.m. on February 8, 2011, in Room 142S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee Staff Present:

Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Jay Hall, Intern, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Renaee Jefferies, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
June Christensen, Committee Assistant

Others attending: See attached list.

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Linda Heitzman-Powell, BCBA, University of Kansas
Dr. Mike Wasner, President, Kansas Coalition for Autism Legislation
Dr. Bill Craig, President and CEO of Lakemary Center

Chairperson Kiegerl announced that today's information on autism will be continued on Thursday. A bill was drafted yesterday that would eliminate the autism waiver for 264 children for \$2,200,000, but the problem will be finding the funding.

Chairperson Kiegerl introduced Ms. Linda Heitzman-Powell for testimony. Ms. Powell gave a slide presentation and information regarding her activities with both the University of Kansas and her intervention services to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (Attachment 1). She emphasized the benefits of early childhood intervention and presented several examples of children's progress being much more effective than those who received treatment at a later age. Most children benefit when treatment begins at the age of a few months to a few years, as they will age-out of the system by age six.

Dr. Mike Wasmer, President of the Kansas Coalition for Autism Legislation, gave a presentation on health insurance for ASD in Kansas, comparing it with legislation passed in Missouri (Attachment 2). He noted that 2010 HB2160 that the Kansas Legislature passed last year was helpful but not adequate. He presented data regarding the cost and said it was not cost-prohibitive if a bill similar to Missouri's were to be enacted.

He also informed the committee that his daughter had autism, which was not diagnosed until she was over two years old, and treatment was not started for four months. After intervention, she became very proficient in reading skills, more so than her classmates, and is now in the sixth grade with no help at this time.

Dr. Bill Craig, President and CEO of Lakemary, said that he has a 32-year-old son with autism who did not benefit from training because of his age. He presented data showing the increase in autism diagnosis over the last several years, formerly 1 in 500 and now 1 in 110 (Attachment 3).

It is predicted this may increase to 1 in 50 in the future. He urged expanded funding to decrease the number of children on the waiting lists and said areas, such as the western part of the state, have fewer resources. He compared autism with that of a child who had a cancerous tumor left untreated and said every day without intervention is a lost day that cannot be made up.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Room 142S, Statehouse, at 9 a.m., February 8, 2011

Committee members asked several questions that were answered by the three conferees.

Representative Melody McCray-Miller distributed copies of the *Kansas Governor's Commission on Autism* (Attachment 4).

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, February 15, 2011, at 9 a.m., Room 142S, and will include hearings on bills that will continue at the February 17 meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.