

**Interagency Committee on Autism**

Meeting Minutes

November 19, 2024

11:00 – 12:30

This meeting will be conducted virtually and in-person

Virtual meeting link: <https://udel.zoom.us/j/97657860612>

In-person location: Center for Disabilities Studies, Room 101,  
461 Wyoming Road, Newark, DE 19716

**ICA Representatives Present:**

Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (DPBHS): Meredith Tavani

Parent Representative: Crystal Thawley

Nemours Swank Autism Center: Brian Freedman

Autism Delaware: Brian Hall

Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS): Mary Carol Beard

Division of Public Health: Isabel Rivera-Green

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR): Brenda Rodriguez

Delaware Autism Workgroup: Mary Whitfield

**ICA Representatives Absent:**

UD Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS)

Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH)

Parent Information Center of Delaware

Ability Network

Part C/Birth to Three System

**DNEA Staff:**

Alisha Fletcher: DNEA Director

Sarah Mallory: ICA Administrative Chair

Katie Booz: Program Coordinator

**Additional Attendees:**

Samantha Wootten – DPH Birth to 3

Taylor Young – Autism Delaware

Ivanka Carbajal – Autism Delaware

Dafne Carnright – Autism Delaware

Heidi Mizell – Autism Delaware

Felicia Boone

Katina Demetriou

Betty Gail Timm

- I. Motion to Approve Agenda
  - a. Motion: Brian Freedman
  - b. Second: Brian Hall
  - c. Motion carried.

## DRAFT Meeting Minutes November 2024

- II. Motion to Approve Minutes
  - a. Motion: Crystal Thawley
  - b. Second: Brian Freedman
  - c. Motion carried.
- III. Blueprint for Collective Action Discussion
  - a. Katie Booz shared a google document with ICA members only to review the Blueprint for Collective Action.
  - b. ICA members were asked to review Improvement Area 1 and to add comments on the document for what has been achieved, partially achieved, or not achieved.
  - c. Discussion:
    - i. Brian Freedman noted that it is hard to achieve broader things (achieved vs partially achieved). He elaborated that something is more achieved if it is available to everyone.
    - ii. Crystal Thawley shared that as a parent it's difficult to complete this task since she is not involved on this side of things usually.
    - iii. Brian Hall shared that it would be interesting to hear how the Blueprint impacts families and if the improvement areas are achieving what they were created for.
      - 1. Sarah Mallory responded that as the DNEA organizes all of the information, they can add a section to add scope of impact.
  - d. Next steps
    - i. After this meeting, ICA members are asked to continue reviewing and adding comments.
    - ii. Feedback is just the first step. We will be addressing the comments in future ICA meetings, as well as continuing to work on going through the Blueprint.
- IV. Public Comment
  - a. Dafne Carnright commented in the chat: I agree with Brian. All parents and professionals understanding is also hard to achieve because new individuals are coming into the autism community all the time, new families, new staff, etc.
- V. DNEA Funding Update
  - a. The DNEA is funded annually through the Governor's budget by the Health Fund Advisory Committee (HFAC). The DNEA has been receiving funding since its inception.
    - i. This year, HFAC were particularly rigorous in their approval process, leading to some projects not being funded.
    - ii. The DNEA will be 80% funded for FY26.
      - 1. The DNEA is regrouping and discussing how to make up that 20%. The Center for Disabilities Studies is good at getting external funding and the DNEA is confident that they will make up the 20%.
    - iii. JFC hearings are up next. The DNEA will keep the ICA posted on how they go.
  - b. Brian Freedman shared in the chat "congrats – these funds have always been

## DRAFT Meeting Minutes November 2024

earmarked to start and it's always been a struggle to get funding so the fact the DNEA got the funding is great and shows the state's confidence in the work being done by the DNEA."

- c. Brian Hall asked if the DNEA has received any support letters from law enforcement.
  - i. Sarah Mallory responded that yes, the DNEA had multiple letters of support including law enforcement and Brian Freedman.
- d. Autism Delaware Update
  - i. Autism Delaware does not have an associative executive director; it is just Brian Hall right now.
  - ii. Parent/Grandparent coffee hours are continuing.
  - iii. Holiday parties in each county are coming up.

### VI. ICA Member Announcements & Updates

- a. Brian Freedman: Nemours Swank Autism Center
  - i. They are very excited to add 2 developmental pediatricians to the group at Nemours. One is starting in February, and the other one is starting in September.
  - ii. Plan to hire another psychologist who will start next fall.
  - iii. The outpatient psychiatry department is open to the community, even if you are not a Nemours patient.
- b. Isabel Rivera-Green: Division of Public Health
  - i. Vendor Parent Information Center through Family SHADE is looking to recruit family leadership network members.

### VII. Public Comment

- a. Next ICA meeting – January 21<sup>st</sup> at 11am
- b. The DNEA will send reminders about the Blueprint document.

### VIII. Motion to Adjourn

- a. Motion: Crystal Thawley
- b. Second: Isabel Rivera-Green
- c. Motion carried.