

OASIS · AT A GLANCE

The Two Conversations About Autism That Never Meet

Employment First is law in 31 states. The Lancet Commission defines a quarter of autistic people as needing round the clock care. Neither framework references the other, and adults with high support needs live in the gap.

PILLAR: WHY | COMPANION TO BLOG POST B161 | 2-PAGE BRIEF

31

STATES, ONE ASSUMPTION

Have passed Employment First legislation.

How a policy gap becomes a service gap

WRITE, DEFINE, DIVERGE

STAGE 1

A policy is written

Employment First declares competitive integrated employment the first and preferred outcome for every working age adult with a disability.

→

STAGE 2

A definition is published

The Lancet Commission names profound autism. Eight or older, needing 24-hour access to an adult caregiver, IQ under 50 or minimal spoken language.

→

STAGE 3

Nobody reconciles them

The service array narrows toward employment. The population that cannot use it keeps aging into adulthood anyway.

Two frameworks, side by side

NEITHER CITES THE OTHER

What each conversation assumes

Employment First policy against the Lancet Commission definition, on the same questions.

QUESTION	EMPLOYMENT FIRST	LANCET COMMISSION
Default assumption	Capability	Support need
Definition of success	A paycheck	A safe day
Primary risk named	Segregation	Abandonment
Legal footing	31 states, written into law	No state statute anywhere
Population measured	Those who reach employment	26.7% meet the criteria
Federal initiative	U.S. Department of Labor, funded	None equivalent

26.7%

Meet the criteria

Of autistic children in CDC data across 15 sites, 2000 to 2016.

16

Executive orders

States with Employment First executive action, alongside 31 with legislation.

0

Prevocational slots

Prevocational services were removed from Michigan's Habilitation Supports Waiver.

THE MEETING WHERE IT CLICKED

“

I asked what happens if she cannot do competitive integrated employment. She looked at her form. There was no box for it.

REPORTED BY A MICHIGAN PARENT.

THE TAKEAWAY

Employment First was right about a lot of people. It was never written for the quarter who need 24-hour support, and no other framework was written for them either.

TURN THE PAGE

How to get the clinical criteria language into your paperwork, and what to ask a CMHSP in writing.

Making the gap visible in your own file

CRITERIA, NOT ADJECTIVES

DOCUMENT

Use the published wording

- ☐ Write "requires 24-hour access to an adult caregiver"
- ☐ Name the age criterion if the person is 8 or older
- ☐ Attach the evaluation that establishes cognition or communication
- ☐ Ask that the clinical record use these criteria
- ☐ Keep a dated copy of everything you submit

ASK

Put the question in writing

- ☐ Email your supports coordinator, do not phone
- ☐ Ask what services exist for an adult who will not reach employment
- ☐ Request the full CMHSP service array document
- ☐ Ask which of those services the person is eligible for today
- ☐ Ask for a written answer with a date on it

RECORD

Get it into the plan

- ☐ Ask that your objection be written into the plan of service
- ☐ Request a second person centered planning meeting if needed
- ☐ Record who attended, with titles
- ☐ Ask for the minutes and check them
- ☐ Compare this plan against last year's, line by line

ESCALATE

When the plan will not change

- ☐ File a grievance through CMHSP customer services
- ☐ Request local dispute resolution and keep the date stamp
- ☐ Ask for any denial to be issued in writing
- ☐ File for a Medicaid fair hearing on a denied service
- ☐ Take three minutes of public comment at a board meeting

BRING ONE PAGE, NOT A BINDER

The support level sheet

01

Criteria

The three Lancet Commission criteria, in the published wording.

02

Function

A typical week, hour by hour, kept for two weeks.

03

Clinical

Who assessed it, when, and where it is documented.

04

Ask

The one service you are requesting, named exactly.

YOUR MOVE

When high support need is being read as an opinion

1

Use the criteria

All three, in the published wording, in writing.

2

Ask the question

What exists for an adult who will not reach employment?

3

Get the array

Request the full service array, not a summary.

4

Record the gap

Have the plan of service state your objection.

5

Escalate formally

Grievance, then fair hearing, then public comment.

You are not arguing against employment. You are asking the system to say what it does for the people employment was never going to reach.

SOURCES

Association of People Supporting Employment First. State Employment First policy map: 31 states with legislation, 16 with executive orders, 32 with state agency policy.

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Lord C, et al. The Lancet Commission on the future of care and clinical research in autism. *The Lancet*. 2021. Profound autism criteria.

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy. Employment First initiative.

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Habilitation Supports Waiver, MI.0167. Prevocational services removed, six month transition.

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