

OHIO HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION
Home Care and Hospice Board Meeting

July 30, 2024, 10:00am
Zoom Conference Call

MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Gen Stelzer opened the meeting and welcomed board members. She reminded members of the antitrust, conflict of interest and confidentiality policies located in the online folder.

Attendees included: Pete Van Runkle, Josh Anderson, Heidi McCoy, Erin Hart, Bryan Casey, Mark Knepper, Andrea Henderson, Kim Tilley, Mike McConnell, Laura Dales, and Gen Stelzer.

Ms. Gen Stelzer asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting. There was a motion given, another second and the motion was approved.

Mr. Josh Anderson discussed the proposed Medicare Payment Rule for Home Health, which included a 4.067% behavioral adjustment for 2025, on top of previous years' cuts. The rule also calculated "overpayments" from 2020 to 2023 to be estimated at \$4.5 billion. Mr. Anderson mentioned that the final rule would be issued around the end of October.

Mr. Anderson also discussed the Medicaid Access rule which chiefly requires 80% of Medicaid reimbursement for home health services to be spent on compensation. That provision is set to go into effect in July 2030 while many other provisions in the rule will become effective sooner. He also mentioned severability as notable in case parts of the rule are struck down. Severability prevents the entire rule from being voided if a part is struck down. Ms. Erin Hart gave notice of a CMS open door forum to discuss the rule this afternoon.

Mr. Anderson also highlighted recent changes in Ohio to electronic visit verification, emphasizing the "turning on" of claims edits beginning October 1st. He stressed the need for providers to address any existing edits on their claims before payments start being denied.

Ms. Heidi McCoy discussed a draft legislation, the Hospice Care Act, proposed by Congressman Blumenauer. The proposed reforms include a new payment model, changes to hospice coverage, and increased audits.

Ms. McCoy also announced the merger of NAHC and NHPCO, which became final on July 1st, and the ongoing process of deciding a name for the new alliance. The search for a new leader, being conducted by the Russell Reynolds Association, is also ongoing. Ms. Hart raised the issue

of how the merger would impact the state affiliation with the organization and stated that this is not yet known.

Ms. Erin Hart next discussed the Hospice Certifying Physician claims edit and the implementation of PNM. She addressed problems with the transition from MITS to PNM, notably payment errors and eligibility issues. Lastly, she covered the MyCare Ohio implementation and expressed concerns about the opt-in and opt-out functions, and the lack of rate protections for providers.

Mr. Pete Van Runkle then shifted the conversation to the upcoming state budget. Mr. Van Runkle described the timeline and highlighted concerns about budget guidance from the Office of Budget and Management that could potentially put the state in a deficit position. He emphasized the need for clarification on this issue and for policy changes to be considered within the budget context. He noted the carryover item to increase hospice room and board reimbursement from 95% to 100% of the skilled nursing facility rate and also suggested a new approach to home and community-based service Medicaid rates, proposing a simplified, cost-based increase method to keep pace with rising costs. He highlighted a significant state revenue problem with personal income taxes significantly below projections, but reassured the team that OHCA would continue to advocate for member needs no matter what the budget scenario.

Mr. Van Runkle then asked the Board for their input on these and other items. Mr. Mark Knepper VITAS raised concerns about the flooding of new/small hospices impacting quality of care. He mentioned that many of these new hospices deny outside services and/or are unable to provide all levels of care. Mr. Bryan Casey agreed with Mr. Knepper and proposed a moratorium on new hospices in Ohio until they demonstrate clinical benchmarks and provide all levels of care. Many others agreed on the difficulty for smaller hospices to start and grow while balancing the need to prevent bad actors. Ms. Hart mentioned federal guardrails and heightened scrutiny reviews to address quality. Mr. Van Runkle suggested scheduling another meeting to discuss solutions. Ms. McCoy proposed bi-monthly board meetings with additional meetings scheduled as needed.

Mr. Anderson plugged upcoming OHCA in person education and encouraged members to invite their staff. Mr. Knepper applauded OHCA education efforts before the meeting was adjourned.