

OHIO HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION
Home Care and Hospice Board Meeting

November 12, 2024, 1:30pm
Zoom Conference Call

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees included: Pete Van Runkle, Josh Anderson, Heidi McCoy, Mark Knepper, Bill Arfaras, Kim Tilley, Mike McConnell, Andrea Henderson and Gen Stelzer.

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.

Ms. Gen Stelzer asked for comments on the minutes from the last meeting. They were approved.

Mr. Pete Van Runkle discussed the potential implications of a Republican-controlled government on regulatory matters and Medicaid spending. He noted that the Trump administration and Republicans tend to be against regulatory expansion and Medicaid spending. Pete also mentioned the possibility of Medicaid block granting or per capita caps, which could be included in a Reconciliation Bill to bypass the filibuster rule. However, he highlighted the difficulty in scoring major policy changes due to their reliance on assumptions about future behavior and cost inflation.

Mr. Josh Anderson next turned to the Home Health Payment Rule, which was finally released on November 1st. He explained that the final rule was similar to previous years, with the full behavioral adjustment which was included in the proposed rule cut in half in the final rule. The final rule also did not announce any timeframe for recapturing overpayments from previous years, which now amounts to almost \$4.5 billion. Mr. Anderson also mentioned that the rule adjusted wage indexes based on county designations, with only two counties in Ohio changing from rural to urban. Mr. Anderson also discussed the new standard for home health conditions of participation, which requires agencies to have an acceptance to service policy. This policy must be accessible to the public and updated regularly. Lastly, he noted that there were updates to the Home Health Quality Reporting Program and OASIS collection included in the final rule which will be effective January 1, 2025.

Mr. Anderson also discussed the Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) requirements, set to go live in January, which will edit claims for select home health services. He mentioned outreach being done by the Ohio Department of Medicaid and a dashboard available for providers to look up claims in preparation.

Ms. Heidi McCoy discussed the upcoming implementation of the Special Focus Program (SFP) by CMS, which is set to start in January 2025. The program will involve 50 hospice agencies selected from a list of potential candidates, with the selection process to be published in November. Agencies selected will receive a letter from CMS and will be subject to a minimum of a survey every six months. Ms. McCoy also mentioned that the Alliance is trying to suspend or delay the program through a bipartisan bill called the Enhancing Hospice Oversight and Transparency Act. The bill aims to delay the implementation of the SFP until January 1, 2027, to allow additional time for surveys to catch up and to provide hospices with at least 60 days' notice before public identification.

M. McCoy also discussed the ongoing transparency act known as the Hospice Care Act, which was introduced by Representative Blumenauer. However, due to his retirement, the act will need to be reintroduced by another representative after the lame duck session. Ms. McCoy also mentioned that the telehealth program for hospice face-to-face recertifications, set to end on December 31st, might be extended but there's no guarantee.

Mr. Mark Knepper raised concerns about the SFP, questioning its continuation under the new administration. Ms. McCoy and Ms. Erin Hart confirmed that the list of the Bottom 10% and the 50 selected for the program might be published soon, but the implementation timeline is uncertain due to the slow pace of the Ohio Department of Health. The team discussed the issues with the Hospice Care Index (HCI) and its impact on the survey data. They noted that the HCI is difficult to use and predict, which could affect the SFP. Ms. McCoy mentioned that Ohio agencies are doing well in terms of survey responses and citations.

Ms. McCoy also discussed the OHCA convention for 2025, with a proposal to dedicate a specific day to home care and hospice sessions. Heidi also mentioned that they have finalized the winners for the home care and hospice excellence awards. The Board agreed to consider these proposals and provide feedback.

Ms. Hart discussed several issues related to Medicaid managed care in Ohio. She highlighted a new problem with CareSource, where claims from Ohio home care and PASSPORT waiver providers would not be paid if the provider was not registered in PNM. She also mentioned a rate update issue which has led to a backlog of claims. Furthermore, she addressed a ventilator services issue for nursing facilities, which has affected Hospice providers. She mentioned that the managed care plans are not paying or are requesting excessive medical records for these services. She encouraged providers to report any similar issues they are experiencing.

Ms. Hart discussed the selection of four plans for the next generation of My Care Ohio, including Care Source, Buckeye, Molina, and Anthem. She expressed surprise at Buckeye's inclusion, given past issues. She also mentioned that the new model will require changes for insurance processes and that they are working on legislative amendments for provider

protections. She advised against signing the CareSource contract amendment for 2026, as the new model's specifics are not yet finalized.

Ms. Hart also discussed the issues with the hospice certifying physician claims edit, which continues to cause confusion and problems. She explained that the edit was supposed to fire only when a non-MD or non-DO physician was in the attending field, but it was firing inappropriately, including when an NP or PA was in the field. She advised that the best course of action was to appeal the issue and provide examples to the Alliance for further discussion with Medicare. She also mentioned that a fix was programmed to go live in mid-November. Finally, she plugged the OHCA photo contest.

Mr. Van Runkle then took over to discuss a recent conversation he had with Lisa at the Ohio Council for Home Care and Hospice on collaboration of member networks. He also stated that there is no budget update at this time.

Ms. Stelzer then announced the next meeting on January 14th at 11AM. With no further discussion items, the meeting was adjourned.