**OHIO HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION**

**HOME CARE AND HOSPICE COMMITTEE**

**July 27, 2021, 1:00 p.m.**

**Conference Call**

 **MINUTES**

Erin Begin opened up the call welcoming the attendees to the meeting. She indicated that the anti-trust and confidentiality policies were located in the online folder supplied to the group, as well as the minutes to the previous meeting. Attendees are recorded in a chart at the end of this document.

Ms. Begin then introduced the next topic on the agenda, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars and the OHCA home care and hospice COVID-19 impacts survey issued in the previous weeks. Mr. Pete Van Runkle described how the ARPA dollars were divided between the State and Local dollars and the home and community based services (HCBS) funds. While the HCBS funds had a 10% Federal Match that was designated in part to go to providers, the state and local dollars were up for anyone to receive. Ohio has already allocated $2 Billion of the total $2.7 Billion received in this fund. OHCA submitted a proposal to award lump-sum payments to our membership types, including a $47 million payment to hospices which equated to 20% of 2019 revenues. Hospice is not included in the definition of HCBS for that allocation. Ohio recently submitted their plan, which does at least mention providing direct provider payments as a part of their HCBS payment plan. There are no details available at this time, and stakeholders such as OHCA will be included in conversations on the distributions and allocations from the total amount given to Ohio. Ms. Begin also mentioned that OHCA was attempting to align our data with the Ohio Council for Home Care and Hospice in order to present a consistent message and data to the administration. She then discussed the OHCA Member survey results, showing a $1-$2 (10%-20%) in starting wages for home health aides, and a decrease of over 30% on gross margins for both home health and hospice. Materials supporting the OHCA survey results, OHCA ARPA allocation proposal as well as the Ohio plan for HCBS were available in the committee meeting folder.

Ms. Begin then moved to the OSHA Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) for COVID-19, stating that the regulation implementation date was July 21. OHCA held a webinar with OSHA regional field office representatives on July 22, which unfortunately did not include many clarifications for home and community based providers. OSHA did repeatedly state that they were looking for providers to make a “good faith effort” and would continue to learn from survey experiences and provide updated guidance and resources as time went on. Ms. Begin then asked committee members to share where they were on policy development. Laura Barbetta from StayWell Home Health/Ohio Valley Manor Home Health shared that they were comparing the requirements from ODH, CMS, CDC and OSHA and applying the strictest requirements for each issue/area. Gen Stelzer from Heritage Home Care shared that they updated their current process with the new OSHA recommendations, and were applying the OSHA ETS to both employees in the field as well as their administrative offices. Ms Begin then asked how agencies were handling the screening process in the home. Laura Barbetta shared that their EMR had a template for screening built in to each visits, and had a policy to screen prior to entering the home and if someone was there that was not screened, to not enter the home. Gen Stelzer shared that if anyone else is there upon arrival, they screen on paper and upload the screening questionnaire after the visit. If someone arrives during the visit, the employee would stop the visit to screen the person prior to continuing. Lisa Bracy from Legacy Hospice asked if the Corporate Office was excluded if they are not seeing patients and there are other offices in the building. Ms Begin responded that she would check with OSHA. Another committee member asked if the office had some nurses who occasionally did home visits but also worked in the office. Ms Begin stressed that the guidance excluded workplaces where patient care did not occur and staff who worked there did not perform patient care. She also advised she would send out the OSHA employer workflow to determine if your business were covered. She also will follow up with OSHA on these specific clarifications. Ms. Begin asked if committee members needed anything additional in development of their policies or required any additional clarifications.

Ms Begin then discussed the Ohio Survey Resumption process. During the last committee meeting, Catie Bryan shared her recent experience with ODH surveys after the resumption post-COVID restrictions. During her description she noted that her agencies were within their survey window. OHCA followed up with Ohio Department of Health (ODH) who had previously reported a large backlog on whether they were caught up, or if they were still backlogged how they were prioritizing surveys. ODH responded that they were prioritizing Tier 1 surveys in NLTC, which included home health and hospice. They also noted they were training surveyors on hospice, specifically, to prepare for the upcoming changes in survey enforcement action. Additionally, other factors such as the distance from surveyor, type of surveyor available, multiple surveys due, complaints, and others impacted prioritization. Ms Begin advised that agencies should therefore prepare for survey within their windows or later, as there was not a consistent guidance or system to follow at this point.

Ms Begin then discussed the upcoming OHCA nursing conference in October 2021 for home health and hospice. She described the agenda and requested feedback on additional items. Stephanie Johnston from Transcend Strategy Group discussed having a session to help lift up the Nurses. Ms Kathy Chapman agreed, and stated we would be opening the second day with that type of session. Ms. Begin asked committee members to send suggestions for additional topics to her directly.

Ms Begin then discussed the future scheduling and format of home care and hospice committee meetings. Following the previous meeting, Ms Begin received a suggestion from committee meetings to segregate the meetings into topics and invite the specific staff members who would be interested in those topics. She proposed a rotation of meetings from Clinical/Regulatory to Financial every other month, with financial topics on the next meeting on August 31. Committee members agree that this was a great idea. Ms Begin promised to send a follow up email after the meeting with the suggested topics for the financial and clinical meetings, and a schedule. She also requested that members send claim issues examples prior to the financial meeting for our discussion.4

Ms. Begin asked for any additional business. Mr. Bill Levering asked if OHCA would be making a statement supporting the vaccination mandate. Mr. Van Runkle described the recent news from the American Hospital Association supporting vaccination mandates, and explained that the American Health Care Association, which represents nursing homes, was also considering making the same statement. This would be discussed during an upcoming OHCA Board Meeting. Ms Begin stated that AHCA did not represent home health and hospice, and would discuss if this statement would be applicable to all provider types that OHCA represents. Mr. Van Runkle also mentioned that the Centers for Disease Control intended to make an announcement later in the day mandating masks indoors for unvaccinated and vaccinated persons in areas of moderate to high spread due to the surge in COVID cases linked to the Delta Variant. He also indicated it was unclear how this would impact healthcare providers, as we already must wear masks.

Ms Begin asked again if there was any other business. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned.

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| **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Company/Facility** | **7/28/21** |
| Erin | Begin | OHCA Staff | X |
| Laura | Barbetta | Staywell Home Health | X |
| Kelly | Bobeczko | HW&Co | X |
| Lisa | Bracy | Legacy Hospice | X |
| Catie | Bryan | BellaCare Hospice | X |
| Jennifer | Carlin | Continuum Hospice | X |
| Deborah | Collum | Richter Healthcare Consultants | X |
| Britteny | Creel | Plante Moran | X |
| Stephanie  | Johnston | Transcend Strategy Group | X |
| Brenna | Koback | EncompassCare | X |
| William | Levering | TLC Home Health Care | X |
| Jeff | Mazer | McKesson | X |
| Lori | Revis | Hospice of Southwest Ohio | X |
| Yolanda | Riley | Richter Healthcare Consultants | X |
| Mary | Ruppert | Heartland Home Health and Hospice | X |
| Genevieve | Stelzer | Heritage Home Care | X |
| Gail | Stokes | Ohio's Hospice | X |
| Kim | Tilley | Staywell Home Health | X |
| Pete | VanRunkle | OHCA Staff | X |
| David | Walsh | Hospice of Southwest Ohio | X |
| Kathy | Chapman | OHCA Staff | X |