

Meeting summary OHCA assisted living member call 7-23-2025

Quick recap

The meeting covered several key updates regarding organizational changes and budget developments, including Pete's resignation and Diane's interim appointment, along with discussions about state budget implications and Medicaid funding. Updates were provided on workplace safety regulations and OSHA standards, including proposed changes to respirator requirements and reporting procedures. The conversation ended with discussions about various program changes and requirements, including quality awards, critical access hospital requirements, and the upcoming MyCare implementation across Ohio.

Next steps

- Providers to submit Critical Access Rate Report attestation to ODA
- Providers to ensure 50%+ occupancy average for full year to maintain Critical Access rate designation
- ODA to publish finalized Board of Nursing CSI rules for medication aid training
- Providers to reach out to obtain MyCare Ohio contracts before plans finalize networks
- ODA to prepare and distribute education resources for MyCare Ohio waiver services implementation
- ODA to monitor and report on PNA increase decisions from Department of Medicaid
- ODA to continue monitoring CMS guidance on new waiver opportunities for lower level of care
- Providers to review and comment on proposed OSHA respiratory protection standard changes
- Providers to apply for BWC Safety Intervention Grant program while funding is available
- Providers to submit Quality Award applications by July 15th deadline for current cycle

Summary

Executive Director Resignation and Budget Updates

Pete announced his resignation as executive director and Diane's interim appointment, while noting he will remain with the Association for a year. He provided updates on the state budget, which was completed on time but included no increases in assisted living waiver rates, though they managed to avoid cuts. Pete explained that the Administration has access to a Health and Human Services Reserve Fund of \$1.27 billion to address potential Medicaid funding shortfalls, and discussed the status of the personal needs allowance, which remains at \$50 for assisted living residents after the Governor's line-item veto.

Budget Negotiations and Provider Taxes

Pete discussed the ongoing budget negotiations, highlighting that the Department of Aging still supports including AL in PNA increases, though the final decision rests with Medicaid. He also covered the passage of the "One Big Beautiful Bill," noting that provider taxes will be reduced over time, with the hospital tax increase specifically affecting Ohio's budget. Pete mentioned that Ohio's provider tax rates are frozen, pending CMS approval, and discussed the potential impact of reduced retroactive Medicaid eligibility and new waiver opportunities for states.

CMS Waivers and Satisfaction Surveys

Pete discussed two main topics: CMS guidance on waivers and satisfaction surveys. He mentioned that states can start applying for waivers by the end of the year, though this is still down the road. Pete also noted a change in state budget bill language regarding residential care facilities, allowing facilities with two or fewer assisted individuals to operate before licensing. Regarding satisfaction surveys, Pete reported that notifications have been sent to some providers, with surveys scheduled to begin in August on a rolling basis. He encouraged providers to review the surveys and linked resources on the Department of Aging's website.

OSHA Regulatory Changes Under Trump

Diane discussed recent developments in workplace safety regulations under the Trump administration, focusing on proposed changes to OSHA standards. She explained that OSHA is considering eliminating the medical evaluation requirement for certain types of respirators, including N95 masks, based on data showing no adverse outcomes from their use. Diane also mentioned that OSHA has withdrawn the COVID-19 reporting log requirement and is working to codify these changes into permanent rules, reflecting a shift towards treating COVID-19 more like the flu.

OSHA Rule Changes and Citations

Diane discussed OSHA's proposed rule on the general duty clause, which aims to limit its scope and prevent overreach in enforcing standards not explicitly on the books. She highlighted concerns about workplace violence citations in healthcare settings and the potential for OSHA to cite facilities under the general duty clause. Diane also mentioned that OSHA has announced reductions in penalty citations for small employers and those who take immediate action to address hazards. She encouraged members to contact OSHA consultants for help if faced with citations and emphasized the importance of mitigating hazards quickly to potentially reduce penalties.

Safety Grants and Quality Recognition

Diane announced that the Ohio BWC has reopened their safety intervention grant program, offering a 3:1 matching grant up to \$40,000 for eligible safety equipment. She encouraged members to apply quickly, noting that funding was exhausted by November last year. Erin discussed the ACA quality

award program, which is in its 30th year and offers bronze, silver, and gold levels of recognition. She reminded members that the application cycle began July 15th and encouraged participation at any level. Finally, Erin clarified that the deadline for submitting the critical access rate report was extended to July 16th, and providers should submit their reports if they haven't already, despite the original June 20th deadline.

Critical Access Hospital Requirements Update

Erin discussed critical access hospital requirements, emphasizing that providers must maintain at least 50% occupancy on average for the year to qualify for billing and must reapply annually to retain the designation. She also addressed the implementation of changes from Senate Bill 144, noting that while some rules are still pending, the Board of Nursing has approved updated requirements for medication aid training and expanded functionality. Erin mentioned that finalized rules will be published on their website once available, and she encouraged providers to review the updated requirements for medication aids in RCF settings.

MyCare Medicaid Expansion and Rates

Erin discussed the upcoming changes to MyCare implementation, which will expand to 29 counties on January 1st with four plans and roll out to additional regions across Ohio through August. She highlighted concerns about assisted living waiver Medicaid rates and the need to extend these protections to home health agencies, as current plans only pay 65% of Medicaid rates for home health services. Erin also addressed authorization turnaround times, noting that managed care plans require excessive delays for expedited authorizations, which is problematic given the 48-hour requirement for post-acute discharges. She advised providers to reach out for contracts with MyCare plans as soon as possible, as plans are actively building their networks for the year.

AI can make mistakes. Review for accuracy.