

Meeting summary for ID/DD Member Call (03/06/2024)

Quick recap

Debbie covered several topics, including the upcoming HCBS waivers changes, the creation of a new service called Healthcare Assessment, and ongoing discussions with the Department of Medicaid about station services. She also mentioned that applications for the HCBS ARPA workforce grant were closed with notification of approvals expected soon. Lastly, she discussed the latest changes to community guidance regarding Covid-19 and the anticipated timeline for the release of new rules from the Department of Labor and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Summary

HCBS Waivers, Tornado Sirens, and Grant Applications

Debbie and Pete initiated the DD Member call, noting the absence of the previous week's meeting. They encouraged attendees to ask questions and assured them they could also send emails with queries. The meeting was interrupted by tornado sirens but decided to proceed. Debbie discussed several topics related to HCBS waivers, including proposed rules set to be effective from July 1st, the creation of a new service called Healthcare Assessment, and ongoing discussions with the Department of Medicaid about the availability of station services for ICF providers from July 1st. She also mentioned that applications for the HCBS ARPA workforce grant were closed, with notification of approvals expected to be sent out soon.

Covid-19 Guidance and ICF Facilities Discussion

Debbie discussed the latest changes to community guidance regarding Covid-19, treating it similarly to other respiratory viruses. The confusion among members about the new guidance led to a discussion about the impact on their services. Debbie emphasized the importance of maintaining infection control policies and programs, with plans to seek clarification from CMS in an upcoming meeting. Pete added that recovered individuals should still take precautions. Tony asked about the classification of ICF facilities as healthcare facilities, which Debbie clarified was not clear and would depend on the services. Debbie also mentioned an anticipated response to a matter concerning the ICF program and encouraged staff to maintain their policies, even with potential new guidance from the CDC. She shared several links to CDC guidance and updated the team on the Medicaid access rule and payment transparency in relation to skilled nursing facilities. Debbie also mentioned a proposed rule aimed at prohibiting disability discrimination in healthcare.

Rule-Making, Hospitalization Reporting, Waiting List Rule Review

Debbie discussed the anticipated timeline for the release of new rules from the Department of Labor and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), with a focus on the Department of Labor's proposed changes to its overtime exemption rule, expected to be released in April or May. Josh expressed concerns about the pace of the rule-making process and the scope of the mui rule. Gina, Tom, and Debbie discussed issues with the current system of hospitalization reporting, suggesting that it might lead to unnecessary hospitalizations and that the system should be revised to focus more on chronic conditions. Josh then transitioned the discussion to a work group focused on the waiting list rule, which is due for a 5-year review. The group acknowledged that the current tool does not work well for children and needs adjustments.

Peer Group Implementation and Reimbursement Concerns

Josh discussed the implementation of a new peer group for lcf reimbursement to cater to individuals with intense behavioral needs. This group would replace the current add-on intensive behavioral add-on, which provides an additional \$300 per day. Josh expressed concerns about the proposed reimbursement rate setting, which follows the same percentages as Peer Group 4, and the potential \$100 add-on for short-term stays. He pointed out the risk of data variability due to a small set of data, and the impact of vacancies on cost calculations. Josh suggested a cost-based system for providers to avoid initial losses and to better understand proper reimbursement under the system.

Medicaid Rules, Feedback, and Medication Guidance

Josh discussed the upcoming meeting where he plans to discuss the rules and hopes to receive more feedback from providers. He also mentioned a department of Medicaid rule package on the Electronic Visit Verification program, which includes replacing an existing rule with four new ones. Josh also announced that feedback on these rules is due by March 12th. Debbie then discussed the department's guidance on the use of injectable medications and the slow progress of the waiver modernization effort.

Billing System, Training, Stakeholder Input, Funding Imbalance, Assessments Modernization

Debbie discussed various topics related to the department's billing system and service modernization. She mentioned that there were no strong recommendations for changes to the billing units, but there were suggestions about training and education. Debbie also noted that the department had convened a small group to discuss the issues with the current Mrc and was taking more stakeholder input. Additionally, the County board sustainability group was focusing on mitigating unanticipated waiver costs, particularly for those with extremely high costs. Debbie also brought up the imbalance of funding among counties and asked if the group was considering using state funds to support initiatives where the majority of counties could support. Lastly, she mentioned that the assessments part of the modernization effort was continuing, with a focus on simplifying the number of assessments.

Ohio Nursing Staff Healthcare Assessments and Billing Code Updates

Debbie discussed the potential for nursing staff in Ohio to conduct healthcare assessments as part of the proposed rule. She also mentioned the development of new billing codes for direct care workers, which are required to provide services if they are parents of minor children, spouses, or other legally responsible individuals. Debbie also highlighted a new request for applications for IC providers to purchase assistive technology. She answered Tony's question regarding the possibility of other people conducting healthcare assessments, not just nursing staff.

Next steps

- Debbie will share the CDC guidance on respiratory viruses for people with disabilities with the team.
- Josh and Pete will continue to attend and provide updates on the stakeholder work groups for the mui rule and the waiting list rule.
- Debbie will submit feedback on the draft rules by March 12th.

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