

Meeting summary for ID/DD Member Call (02/05/2025)

Quick recap

Debbie led a discussion on the state's budget, focusing on the Department of Health's budget and the potential challenges due to the lack of additional rate increases. She also discussed the early stages of the executive budget process, the proposed changes to the community integration option, and the concerns raised by associations about the potential impact of small groups under other services. Lastly, she provided an update on the federal landscape, noting the resolution of concerns about the federal government pausing funding and the potential changes in policy that could reduce funding for Medicaid programs.

Next steps

- OHCA members to review the proposed definition of community integration for the new BEST service and provide feedback to Debbie.
- OHCA to continue advocacy efforts for rate increases during the state budget process.
- ICF providers to prioritize getting Ohio ISP plans into the DODD Salesforce system, especially for facilities with upcoming license renewals.
- ICF providers to monitor their Ohio ISP completion percentage and ensure timely transmission of plans from third-party vendors to DODD's system.
- OHCA to continue monitoring federal developments regarding HHS and CMS leadership appointments and potential Medicaid policy changes.

Summary

Medicaid Funding and Budget Updates

Debbie led a meeting discussing the latest updates and the state's budget. Governor Dewine held a press conference on Monday, but there was no mention of Medicaid. The OBM Director, Murnix, later confirmed that Medicaid would continue with some funding increases from the previous biennial budget. A high-level document was released on the OBM's website, and a conversation was held with Director Haug and her team. The Department of Health will host an all-stakeholder budget update on February 11th. Debbie promised to share the details of this update in the news bytes.

Challenges in Executive Budget and Funding

Debbie discussed the challenges faced by the Department due to the lack of additional rate increases in the executive budget. She mentioned that they would be working on advocating for a cost of living adjustment or a small percentage increase for some waiver rates. Debbie also highlighted the issue with the professional workforce development payment, which will be addressed by continuing the add-on at half the

current rate for the next fiscal year. She mentioned a proposal to increase the personal needs allowance from \$50 to \$100 a month, which would increase the amount paid by the State. Debbie also noted that the Department is continuing flat funding for technology, employment first, and multi-system youth initiatives. She expressed concern about the lack of ongoing or incremental rate increases and the potential for a challenging budget.

Executive Budget Process and Proposals

Debbie discussed the early stages of the executive budget process, highlighting the swift actions of the House, including hearings and committee meetings. She mentioned that Director Houck is scheduled to testify in the health committee on February 26th. Debbie also shared updates on the department's proposals for employment services, including the new best service replacing vocational habilitation, group employment supports, and career exploration. She mentioned a meeting with Keith Banner and Stacey Collins from Dodd, where they discussed their response to feedback provided. The meeting revealed both positive and negative news, but no specific details were provided. Debbie encouraged the team to reach out with any questions during the process.

New Community Integration Option Changes

Debbie discussed the proposed changes to the community integration option under the new best service. She noted that the department had agreed to continue offering this option, which was a significant concern as it was being taken away. The department is also adding a second community integration option for individuals already grouped into acuity, with a smaller group ratio. However, this means that the community integration option will not be available under the group employment or career exploration services. Debbie speculated that this decision might be due to funding constraints.

Small Groups and Community Integration

Debbie discussed concerns raised by associations about the potential impact of small groups under other services on competitive, integrated employment. She mentioned that she would have further conversations on this topic and encouraged others to share their opinions. Debbie also mentioned a new definition for community integration that the Department is recommending, which could potentially be more restrictive than intended. She asked for feedback on this definition and mentioned that they would work on proposing revised language. Lastly, she updated the group on the compliance reviews around utilization for the Ohio ISP, stating that the Department of Developmental Disabilities would provide a report on a monthly basis to the Department of Health.

Odh Licensure and Certification Reviews

Debbie discussed the current status of licensure and certification reviews conducted by Odh. She clarified that Odh would be conducting combined licensure and certification

reviews, with only those set to expire in 2025 having a corresponding licensure review. She emphasized the importance of maintaining accurate data, particularly for those with licenses expiring soon. Debbie also mentioned that Odh would be issuing citations immediately, with any content-related issues running through Dodd before being finalized. She encouraged providers to prioritize homes due for licensure sooner and to ensure that plans in the Ohio ISP are transmitted to Salesforce. Debbie also noted that the average completion rate for all ICFs was around 58%, lower than previous data. Lastly, she mentioned that county boards would be reviewed for compliance during their accreditation reviews.

Federal Landscape Update and Concerns

Debbie provided an update on the federal landscape, noting that the concerns about the federal government pausing funding have been resolved, with Medicaid not being affected by the pause. She also discussed the nomination of Robert Kennedy Jr. for the HHS secretary, which has passed through the Senate Health Committee and is now up for a full Senate vote. Debbie mentioned that there has been a lack of communication and updates due to the absence of leadership at federal agencies. She also mentioned that several pending federal rules have been withdrawn, and that there are potential changes in policy that could reduce funding for Medicaid programs. Debbie assured the team that they are monitoring these developments and will continue to advocate for their interests. Pete added that the ICF provider tax will not be increased.

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