

Meeting summary for OHCA Assisted living member call (12/31/2024)

Quick recap

The team discussed updates on the Assisted Living Waiver Claims issue, the implementation of Senate Bill 141, and the rules surrounding shared occupancy units under the waiver program. They also addressed new legislation affecting visitation and presence in assisted living facilities, the guidelines for assisted living facilities, and the ongoing review of healthcare return to work guidelines. Lastly, they discussed updates on the medication aid program and the outcomes of the most recent assisted living call with the Ohio Department of Aging.

Next steps

- Assisted living providers to obtain prior authorizations for all Care Source residents by January 7th.
- Providers with unpaid Buckeye critical access claims from July 2024 onwards to email Erin with a spreadsheet of claims.
- Assisted living providers to update room and board rates for 2025 based on new SSI amounts before sending January invoices.
- OHCA to organize a free webinar for members on the Never Alone Act in late February.
- Assisted living providers to document their policy decision on whether to follow healthcare or community COVID-19 guidance.
- Kristin to email Pete for a workaround solution regarding the licensure hold due to Care Portal information update.
- Clinical managers to attend or view on-demand the January 15th webinar on pre-metered insulin training for medication aides.
- OHCA to provide details on House Bill 303 changes to medication aide program in upcoming news bytes.
- Assisted living providers to review and address top citation areas from recent Ohio Department of Aging provider certification surveys.

Summary

Assisted Living Waiver Claims Update

In the meeting, Pete and Gene welcomed everyone to the Assisted Living Member Call for December, wishing everyone a Happy New Year. Erin provided updates on the Assisted Living Waiver Claims issue, stating that a systemic problem with Care Source claims involving billing by line item had been identified and all impacted claims were being reprocessed. She also informed the team that all Care Source residents in

assisted living would require prior authorization starting the next day, and that Buckeye had reported reprocessing all identified claims. Erin requested providers to send her an email if they had unpaid claims from Buckeye for critical access rate. Gene asked about the process for payer changes and the possibility of an extension on the timely filing for prior authorization, to which Erin responded that a valid reason for an extension could be a pay change that was not discovered for over 30 days. Debbie then updated the team on a piece of legislation that passed Congress the week before Christmas.

Senate Bill 141 and Room Board Update

Debbie informed the team about Senate Bill 141, the 21st Century Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act. She highlighted that the bill includes a pilot program for the VA to pay for assisted living, but noted that the program is limited and it's uncertain if anyone in Ohio would be selected. The pilot program will start within two years of the act being signed into law and will involve two veterans integrated service networks, with a maximum of 60 participants. The participants must be either currently receiving nursing home care or eligible for it. The team was advised to reach out if they or their residents are selected for the pilot. Erin then discussed the update for room and board in Ohio for 2025, which is based on the Social Security Administration's SSI amount. She reminded the team to update their systems with the new amounts before sending out resident invoices for January.

Shared Occupancy Units and Waiver

Erin discussed the rules surrounding shared occupancy units under the waiver program, emphasizing that residents must initiate and approve sharing a room. She also addressed a question about billing cancellation fees to residents for non-medical transportation services, stating that providers can do so but should consider the resident's \$50 monthly allowance. Lastly, Pete announced the finalization and passage of the "Never Alone Act" by the Legislature, which affects the members.

New Legislation for Assisted Living

Pete discussed a new legislation that primarily deals with visitation and presence in assisted living facilities. The legislation allows a resident to appoint an advocate, a special status separate from legal guardians, durable power of attorney, or responsible parties. The advocate can be present with the resident at any time they desire. Pete mentioned that the bill was improved during the legislative process but still has some issues. The bill has passed and was signed into law by the Governor, but it won't take effect until around the 19th of March, after a 90-day waiting period.

New Bill and Education Webinar

Pete discussed the upcoming education for members about a new bill affecting various types of facilities. He mentioned that a webinar would be held in late February to explain the bill's terms and enforcement. Pete also noted that the Department of Health would be developing materials to be distributed to providers as part of the admission process.

He addressed questions about the bill, including the possibility of non-residents living with residents, and mentioned an uptick in COVID-19 cases leading to more questions. He shared the COVID-19 guidelines and encouraged members to review them.

Assisted Living Facility Guidelines Discussed

Pete discussed the guidelines for assisted living facilities, emphasizing that the type of services provided and the personnel delivering them determine the level of precautions needed. He suggested that facilities providing more healthcare services should follow healthcare guidelines, while those providing more resident care should follow community guidelines. Pete also mentioned that the distinction between the two is often fuzzy and advised making a judgment knowingly and documenting it in policy. He noted that facilities connected to SNPs tend to follow healthcare guidelines, while standalone assisted living facilities tend to follow community guidelines. Lastly, Pete mentioned that the CDC is reconsidering the healthcare guidance, with changes potentially happening in the coming months.

Healthcare Guidelines and Licensing Issues

Pete discussed the ongoing review of healthcare return to work guidelines, which are expected to be rolled back to align more closely with community guidelines. However, this change is not expected to be effective until at least March. Pete also addressed concerns about the strictness of hospital regulatory systems, noting that hospitals are not following the healthcare guidelines. Kristin raised an issue about a licensing problem due to not updating information in the aging care portal, which could result in late fees. Pete assured her that the health department would not revoke licenses and provided a workaround for the issue.

Medication Aid Program Updates Discussed

Erin discussed updates on the medication aid program. She mentioned that the program expanded its scope of practice in October 2024, and a training resource was developed in collaboration with Absolute Pharmacy. The training, available on January 15th, is aimed at managers who will then train medication aids. Erin also mentioned that draft rules for the program were delayed due to a conflict in legislation, but a new bill (House Bill 303) was sent to the Governor to correct this discrepancy. The Board of Nursing will review the rules once the Governor signs the bill. Erin clarified that the changes in the medication aid program are now in statute and providers can continue using the expanded scope of practice.

Assisted Living Call Outcomes Discussed

Erin discussed the outcomes of the most recent assisted living call with the Ohio Department of Aging. She highlighted that initial worker qualifications, specifically missing Odi specified training and Hcbs settings training, were areas of high citation. She also noted issues with missing competencies, evaluations, license information, and criminal records checks for staff. Furthermore, she mentioned the importance of Hcbs

settings requirements, including signage distinguishing assisted living from sniff areas and co-located facilities. Erin also mentioned that a document detailing the Rcf survey checklist could not be shared due to it being an Odh policy. Lastly, she shared an article in News Bytes about resident funds, emphasizing the need for proper signing, separation, and reporting. No further questions or topics were raised.

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