

Meeting summary for OHCA Home Care & Hospice Member Call (07/09/2025)

Quick recap

The meeting covered updates on state budget impacts to home and community-based services, including rate reviews and Medicaid funding changes in Ohio. Discussion focused on challenges with Medicaid claim denials, managed care tax changes, and proposed rate cuts to home health services, along with advocacy efforts to address these issues. The meeting also covered updates on nursing facility regulations, OSHA rule changes, and professional licensing requirements, while highlighting ongoing concerns about hospice care and antipsychotic medication use in nursing facilities.

Next steps

- Hospice providers to consider discussing non-pharmacological interventions and alternative care approaches with nursing facility partners to address concerns about antipsychotic use impacting quality incentive programs.
- Hospice providers to share data on their antipsychotic use rates with nursing facility partners if lower than the national average of 40%.
- Home health and hospice providers to submit comments on the proposed 6.4% rate cut in the Home Health Proposed Rule by September 2nd.
- Home health and hospice providers to review and consider commenting on the proposed changes to the OASIS correction period in the Home Health Proposed Rule.
- Erin to participate in roundtable discussions with the Alliance on the Home Health Proposed Rule and EVV requirements.
- Home health and hospice providers to audit nurse license renewals after the October 31st deadline to ensure compliance.
- Home health and hospice providers to consider participating in the 2025 Home Care and Hospice Salary and Benefits Study by HCS.
- Hospice providers experiencing issues with Medicaid claims due to misaligned benefit periods to report the problem to hospicepolicy@medicaid.ohio.gov.

Summary

State Budget Impact on Services

Erin provided updates on the state budget and its impact on home and community-based services, noting no increases were granted. She explained that while previous rate increases were maintained, efforts to secure a periodic rate review and higher hospice room and board reimbursement were unsuccessful. Erin also discussed the veto of language preventing Medicaid claim denials due to EVV mismatches, highlighting the high denial rates for Medicaid fee-for-service and managed Medicaid beneficiaries. She mentioned the disproportionate effect of these denials on smaller agency providers.

Ohio Medicaid Budget and Policy Changes

Erin discussed the implications of recent budget decisions and legislative changes on Medicaid funding and managed care in Ohio. She highlighted concerns about the elimination of the managed care tax waiver and the increased hospital provider tax, which could lead to reduced state Medicaid revenue and potentially lower provider rates. Erin also addressed the Federal Reconciliation Bill's impact, including more frequent eligibility redeterminations, upcoming work requirements, and new waiver authority for non-institutional home and community-based services. She emphasized ongoing advocacy efforts to address these challenges and ensure continued funding for Medicaid services.

Home Health Rate Cut Discussion

Erin discussed the proposed 6.4% cut to home health rates, equivalent to over a billion dollars in reimbursement, which includes a 4.6% temporary adjustment and a 3.7% permanent adjustment, along with a 2.4% market basket increase. She encouraged members to comment on the proposed rule by September 2nd, highlighting that the Alliance for Care for Home had already submitted a statement. Erin also covered updates on the Department of Labor's companionship exemption rule, which would reinstate policies allowing more flexibility for providers and families regarding live-in caregivers, and mentioned upcoming roundtable discussions with the Alliance on specific rule portions and EVV requirements.

Hospice-Qip Challenges in Nursing Facilities

Erin and Tammy discussed the challenges nursing facilities face with referring patients to hospice due to the Ohio Medicaid Quality Incentive Program (QIP), which incentivizes providers to perform better on specific quality measures. They explained that hospice patients are excluded from some measures but not others, particularly the percentage of long-stay residents on antipsychotic medication, which is a concern for nursing facilities as it negatively impacts their QIP outcomes. Erin suggested that hospices work with nursing facilities to find alternative care plans and share data on antipsychotic use to address these issues. Tammy added that nursing facilities are also subject to strict state regulations on antipsychotic use, emphasizing the need for comprehensive care plans before resorting to medication.

Medicare and Nursing Updates

Erin discussed the release of the July 1 nursing facility ventilator fact sheet and the upcoming nursing facility room and board rates, expected to be available by the end of next week. Heidi provided updates on the Medicare Advantage Reform Act, introduced on May 15, which includes a proposal to integrate the Medicare Hospice benefit into Medicare Advantage, a move the Alliance opposes due to past failures with similar models. Additionally, Heidi mentioned that OSHA issued a proposed amendment on July 1, but the details were not specified in the transcript.

OSHA Rule Changes and Nursing Updates

Heidi discussed proposed amendments to OSHA's medical evaluation requirements for respirators, which would eliminate the need for medical evaluations for N95 masks, and other proposed rule changes including the removal of the COVID-19 emergency standard and clarification of the general duty clause. She reminded

attendees about the Ohio Board of Nursing renewal cycle for RNs and advanced practice RNs, which opened July 1st and runs through October 31st, noting that due to technical difficulties, nurses do not need to upload CE documents during renewal. Erin announced a known issue with Hospice benefit periods in PNM causing payment problems for Medicaid claims, and Heidi concluded by promoting the 2025 Home Care and Hospice Salary and Benefits Study, which provides comprehensive marketplace data and offers a discount for participating agencies.

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