

## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

February 24, 2022

Members present: Deborah Ann Shoemaker, Kathy Cubit, Richard Edley, Joe Glinka, Mark Goldstein, Terri Henning, Minta Livengood, Russ McDaid, Nancy Murray, Derron Shultz, Julie Korick, Nick Watsula.

**This meeting was held via webinar due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Ms. Karen Lowery from the Office of Medical Assistance Programs called the February meeting of the Medical Assistance Advisory Committee (MAAC) to order at 10:00 a.m. Ms. Deborah Shoemaker, Chair, conducted roll call of the MAAC members. Mr. Mike Grier was introduced as the new chair for the Managed Long-Term Support Subcommittee (MLTSS).

A motion to approve the January 2022 meeting minutes was received by Ms. Nancy Murray of the Arc of Greater Pittsburgh. Second motion was received by Ms. Kathy Cubit of the Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of the Elderly (CARIE). January 2022 meeting minutes were approved.

### **OMAP Update**

Ms. Sally Kozak, Deputy Secretary for the Office of Medical Assistance Programs (OMAP), provided the OMAP update.

Ms. Kozak began with an update to the federal renewal of the public health emergency (PHE). The PHE is currently due to expire April 16, 2022. The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (Department) has not received official notification from the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) about whether or not the PHE will be extended. The current Medicaid PHE waiver flexibilities will remain in place including over the counter drugs, testing for COVID-19, and other services.

The Department recognizes that some individuals (approximately 523,000 individuals) will lose coverage at the end of the PHE. The Department is collaborating with the Pennsylvania Insurance Department, Pennie, and the managed care organizations (MCOs) to coordinate communications and referrals for those individuals.

Further discussion was provided regarding over the counter (OTC) medication, vaccines, and mask coverage. As part of the PHE waiver flexibilities, the Department provides coverage for over-the-counter medications being used to treat COVID-19 symptoms such as Tylenol, antihistamines, and cough and cold preparations. Additionally, COVID-19 OTC home tests are being covered and a Medical Assistance (MA) Bulletin was issued with instructions for providers about how to submit claims. Individuals who purchased COVID-19 OTC home tests prior to August 30, 2022, and

have their receipt, can be reimbursed by their pharmacy. Masks are not currently covered by the Medicaid program except for individuals receiving home health services. N95 and surgical masks are covered as part of home health service benefits.

Ms. Kozak continued the OMAP report with an update on the HealthChoices procurement. The Department is targeting April 1, 2022, for its decision on which MCO's will receive operational authorities in which zones and the submission of the HealthChoices agreement to the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Maximus will mail member enrollment packets between April 18, 2022, and April 29, 2022. The Department estimates a voluntary selection rate of approximately 60%. Any individual who has not selected a plan by June 22, 2022, will be auto assigned.

Ms. Gwen Zander, Director of the Bureau of Managed Care Operations, continued the meeting with a report on the Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP).

Ms. Zander reported that at the beginning of February, the Department released a report developed by a workgroup of representatives from OMAP, OLTL, OMHSAS, PA Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Aging which provided ten recommendations. The Department has decided to move forward with the implementation of nine of those recommendations.

1. Increasing County collaborations.
2. Facilitating coordination between MATP and Shared Ride public transportation.
3. Improving coordination between DHS, PA DOT, and the Department of Aging.
4. Evaluating the prospect of statewide standards for administration of MATP.
5. Standardizing MATP processes like applications and needs assessments.
6. Identifying technology needs and pursuing technology goals with the counties.
7. Establishing monthly calls with all the MATP administrators.
7. Considering the development of a hybrid service delivery model.
8. Pursuing counties to take back responsibility of the administration of MATP.
9. Moving forward with the Request for Applications for county contracts.

More detail regarding the nine recommendations can be found on the Department's website. The Department provides updates and written material related to MATP on the website regularly. The Department will continue to evaluate the recommendations and prioritize the work to make the most impact.

Ms. Terri Henning with the Pennsylvania Homecare Association inquired about the provider revalidation concerns and how widespread the issue is. Mr. Dan De Lellis, Director for the Bureau of Fee-for-Service (FFS), confirmed the issue is large in scope. Mr. De Lellis offered a reminder to providers that when they do not revalidate timely, it will result in closed service locations which will create delays for re-enrollment and reimbursement.

## **OLTL Update**

Ms. Jamie Buchenauer, Deputy Secretary for OLTL, provided the OLTL update.

Ms. Buchenauer began the report with an update on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Home and Community Based 10% enhanced Federal Medical Assistant Percentage (FMAP) spending plan. The enhanced payment rates for Personal Assistant services in the Community HealthChoices and OBRA waiver programs were effective January 1, 2022. Applications for one-time payments to strengthen the workforce in adult day services were processed and the Department began issuing those payments on Wednesday February 23, 2022. Providers who did not return their attestations can continue to download the application and return it to the Department to be processed.

Ms. Buchenauer provided an update on future opportunities related to quality improvements for home and community-based providers. The Department is targeting an availability date of March 2022. Funds can be used to address social determinants of health, to purchase remote support technology, for the development of and payment for enhanced training, or for the purchase and implementation of new software technology for electronic health records, quality, or risk management functions.

Ms. Buchenauer continued with an update on the Financial Management Services (FMS) transition. Tempest, the vendor selected by the Community HealthChoices (CHC) MCOs to administer FMS to participants, recognized the need for a delay. Currently, 52% of common law employers and 46% of direct care workers have returned their information to Tempest. Additional work is being done to acquire the information needed to complete the transition. Participants and their direct care workers are required to complete a training related to the new system. The previously announced transition date of April 1, 2022 has been pushed to July 1, 2022.

As a reminder, FMS transition stakeholder meetings continue to be held. The next meeting is scheduled for March 4, 2022. Meeting announcements are posted to the LISTSERV. OLTL will be establishing an email box dedicated to this topic. In the interim, individuals, providers, and other stakeholders can forward their questions directly to OLTL.

Participants who direct their own services and remain in the FFS delivery system or OBRA waiver and ACT 150 program participants, will remain with Public Partnerships LLC.

Next, Ms. Buchenauer highlighted the new Adult Protective Services Media Toolkit. The toolkit and the ability to request additional resources is available on the OLTL website. Information will be available on Facebook and Twitter.

Adult Protective Services (APS) is promoting the availability of services. The media toolkit provides individuals information on who to contact if they believe someone is at risk or being neglected or abused. Regulations related to APS have been drafted and are in the final stages of review.

### **OMHSAS Update**

Ms. Kristen Houser, Deputy Secretary for the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS), provided the OMHSAS update.

Ms. Houser began with a brief update on the distribution status of the Home and Community Based Services funds. Additional data related to Intensive Behavioral Health Services, which was not previously available, is under review. The goal is to provide the most generous support to the largest number of providers. Frequently Asked Questions are available on the OMHSAS website and was distributed through the LISTSERV.

Ms. Houser continued the OMHSAS report with details regarding the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020. This Act established an easy to remember three-digit number, 988 and enabled states to create a sustainable funding stream to support call centers and specific crisis services. The Act allows for states to establish a telecommunications surcharge like the 911 uniform surcharge. Phone service providers are required to ensure compliance by July 16, 2022.

The 988 number will be able to route calls by July 16, 2022, however the number will not be publicized until 2023. Pennsylvania currently has 13 call centers that respond to the national suicide lifeline. The call centers cover the whole state and there are back-ups in place. It is anticipated that the implementation of 988 will reduce the workload that is currently falling on 911 call centers.

State legislation is being drafted to establish the fee to support the mental health crisis intervention program. The draft legislation is aligned with federal legislation and outlines the mental health crisis services for Pennsylvania. The proposed fee is \$0.99. This fee would be added to the telecommunication bills of Pennsylvanians. The fee can only be used to support call center operations and administration, mobile crisis response teams, and respite or stabilization centers. The Department is seeking a sponsor for the proposed legislation. The goal is for the entire state to have access to crisis services as outlined in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration toolkit.

Vibrant has been contracted by CMS to oversee this initiative. Vibrant and CMS have provided Pennsylvania with a planning grant to support the coordination of this initiative. Funds from the Community Mental Health Services block grant have already been directed towards counties to support the planning and expansion of their crisis services. A Request for Proposals was issued for counties to apply for current funding

available through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act and ARPA. This is a multiyear endeavor.

An assessment of existing crisis service reimbursement rates is being conducted, and coordination with other state agencies, to determine a best practice approach. Stakeholder outreach has begun. The goal is to build a broad coalition of organizations. The Department is seeking strategic partners for their support.

## **ODP Update**

Ms. Kristen Ahrens, Deputy Secretary for the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) provided the ODP update.

Ms. Ahrens began with an update on the ARPA spending plan. Applications for the supplemental payments for recruitment and retention of workers and other COVID-19 related expenses have been processed. Approximately 600 out of 1000 providers received payments totaling \$155 million. Also, the final fee schedule for HCBS will be published in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. All HCBS rates have been increased. Appendix K, which will provide supplemental payments for providers to support staff credentialling, was approved by CMS.

Ms. Ahrens continued the ODP update by providing an overview of the waiver renewals. The Community Living Waiver renewal has been accelerated to align the due date with the Consolidated and Person Family Directed Support Waivers. On February 12, 2022, the Department published proposed changes in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. The public comment period runs through March 14, 2022. The proposed changes include clarification of services that can and cannot be performed, an increase to the service limit, an increase to the amount of benefit counseling and expanding the allowability of companion service to be used at a place of employment. Additionally, the travel policy has been expanded and a separate service definition has been created for remote support.

In terms of supporting people with complex needs and addressing health and safety issues a few changes were reported. Personal protective equipment was added to the standard waiver as an allowable purchase under the specialized supplies definition. Also added, provider qualifications related to training for conditions commonly known as the Fatal 4 and Fatal 5 and the use of remote monitoring by our support coordinators. Additional credentialling and certification requirements have been added across the board for professionals that provide supports under the waivers.

## **Subcommittee Reports**

### **Consumer Subcommittee**

Mr. Laval Miller-Wilson, council for the Consumer Subcommittee, provided the report. The Committee is seeking more insight on the approximately 520,000

Pennsylvanians who will be ineligible when the PHE ends, particularly individuals in waiver categories. Experiences were shared of consumers who were unable to obtain coverage for the OTC COVID-19 tests. The committee is seeking more information on the budget implications of adding surgical grade masks to the MA Program Fee Schedule. The committee is very interested in maximizing the choice rate in the HealthChoices MCO transitions. An update was provided on programmatic changes to the physical HealthChoices calendar year 2022 agreement. OLTL provided an overview of the 2022 priorities. The committee is seeking appeals data that captures the entire appeals process. Consumer experiences will be shared related to the new home accessibility durable medical equipment policies. An update was provided on the FFS Specialty Pharmacy Program. The next meeting will be held Wednesday, March 23, 2022.

#### Fee-for-Service Delivery System Subcommittee (FFSDSS)

Ms. Deborah Shoemaker, chair for the FFSDSS, provided the update for the FFSDSS. The subcommittee discussed provider revalidation and enrollment, prior authorizations and other items related to the PHE. Discussions were provided related to the 180-day exception and Department policy updates. The next meeting will be held Wednesday, May 11, 2022.

#### Long-Term Services and Supports Subcommittee (LTSSS)

Ms. Kathy Cubit, chair for the LTSSS provided the report. The independent enrollment broker data continues to be reviewed. Functional eligibility determination appeals continue to be reviewed. Currently, there are 690 appeals. Dr. Alan Glickman, a researcher at Penn, released new findings that helped advance discussion on racial disparities. The next meeting will be held Tuesday, April 12, 2022.

#### Managed Care Delivery System Subcommittee (MCDSS)

Mr. Joe Glinka, chair of the Managed Care Delivery Systems Subcommittee, provided the MCDSS report. The committee had discussions on the closure of Brandywine including ways to intervene and address the issues. An update was provided by the Bureau of Managed Care Operations related to gun violence. COVID-19 related, MATP, and expansion population topics were discussed. The next meeting will be held Thursday, March 10, 2022.

#### Managed Long-Term Services and Supports Subcommittee (MLTSSS)

Mr. Mike Grier, chair of the MLTSSS provided the report. OLTL priorities were provided. A presentation was provided by Dr. Howard Degenholtz of the University of Pittsburgh related to participant and provider experiences with CHC. The 2021 HCBS Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems survey results were provided. Updates were provided related to areas of improvement for CHC MCOs. The next meeting will be held, Tuesday, March 1, 2022.

## **MA Bulletins**

Ms. Eve Lickers, Director of the Bureau of Policy Analysis and Planning, provided MA Bulletins issued since the last meeting. MA Bulletin 24-21-55 related to At-Home Over the Counter COVID-19 Tests was issued February 1, 2022, with an effective date of August 30, 2021. MA Bulletin 01-22-08 related to Preferred Specialty Pharmacy Drug Program Provider – Pharmacy Services was issued February 9, 2022, with an effective date of July 1, 2022. MA Bulletin 01-22-02 related to Community-Based Care Management Services Provided by Centers of Excellence for Opioid Use Disorder was issued February 14, 2022, with an effective date of January 1, 2022. MA Bulletin 01-21-59 related to SARS-CoV-2 Monoclonal Antibody Product Updates was issued February 24, 2022, with an effective date of May 6, 2021. All communications can be found on the “What’s New at OMAP” webpage.

## **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn was made by Minta Livengood and the second motion was received by Julie Korick. The next meeting of the MAAC will take place on Thursday, March 24, 2022.