

Summary Minutes: Medical Care Advisory Committee

May 7 and 8, 2010

Dillingham, Alaska

May 7, 2010

Members/Medicaid Program officials present: Deborah Kiley, DNP, Chair; John Bringham; Jerry Fuller; Catriona Lowe; Mike Moriarty, DDS; Karen Sidell; Kimberli Poppe-Smart, HCS Director; Tracy Charles-Smith; Renee Stoll, RPh; Bill Streur; Lorilyn Swanson; Mark Walker. MCAC staff present: Nancy Cornwell.

Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation. Representatives of the BBAHC made presentations to the MCAC on their services and programs. BBAHC operates a critical access hospital, clinics in 29 villages, and provides audiology, dental, dietary, laboratory medical, inpatient nursing, elder and palliative care, optometry, outpatient, pharmacy, radiology, and community health services (see description, Attachment 1).

The following BBAHC addressed the committee: Robert Clark, CEO; Lorraine Jewett, Executive VP; John S. Davis, Human Resources Director; Starla Fox, Director of Nursing Services; Mercedes Jewett, LCSW, Social Services Manager; Arnold Loera, MD, Corporate Medical Director; Rose Loera, Community Serviced Director; and, Lucrecia Scotford, COO.

The committee confirmed their next meeting will be in Kotzebue for August 27 and 28, 2010.

Summary Minutes. Draft minutes of the February 26, 2010, meeting, were approved as presented.

National Health Care Reform and its impact on Alaska Medicaid. Jerry Fuller summarized some of the anticipated impacts of national health reform on the Alaska Medicaid program. He noted that Governor Parnell had elected to join a lawsuit challenging the authority of the federal government to require (mandate) individuals have health care coverage.

Health care reform topics were also addressed including: high-risk pools; pharmaceutical rebates; the mandatory Medicaid expansion to 133% Federal Poverty Level; maintenance of effort; Medicaid coverage for foster children up to age 26; health information exchange; no payments for health care acquired conditions; enhanced FMAP for SCHIP; additional funds for Federally Qualified Health Centers; (eventual) closure of Medicare donut hole; additional fraud, waste, and abuse; premium assistance; demonstration projects; and, term care insurance. (See Attachment 2, *Overview of Federal Health Reform Legislation, Deborah Erickson, DHSS, April 27, 2010.*)

Public Comments

Gena Coleman with HOPE Cottages explained they are the only assisted living facility in Dillingham.

Don Ford adopted 3 children with FAS, all are eligible for Medicaid. Don is on the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education and has worked on the KEY Campaign and with the Stone Soup Group. His oldest children need assisted living because of the structure it offers them. His oldest son had a kidney transplant and is now able to hold a job. Don spent 3 years getting his daughter on SSI and the Medicaid waiver. Her disability is solely attributable to FAS and she has not been able to hold a job but makes other contributions to the community. Don explained how his children have saved taxpayers significant amounts. Don is concerned about low reimbursements and the DD waitlist (800 – 900 individuals).

Page O'Connell with BBAHC Counseling Center explained that clients with major mental illnesses need higher levels of care if they are to stay in their community/village. Page asked why these clients do not qualify for waivers when much of what these clients need is support for activities of daily living. Page was encouraged to see if these clients can get Personal Care Services (PCA) (not part of waiver services) and to contact the state Division of Behavioral Health.

Carolyn Smith worked in elder care for 6 years in the region. She argued that there should be a geographical differential for Medicaid payments and (the lack of) economies of scale should also be reflected. Carolyn noted a couple of examples where she was unable to get clients on a waiver program. Kim indicated there are now waivers and PCA services in the region.

Polly Swich, a public health nurse (PHN) with the State of Alaska, explained that she is one of two PHNs in the region. Polly requested information on the Early Periodic, Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) Continuing Care Agreements and explained that she has been in contact with Renee Gayhart in the Medicaid tribal office. Polly was encouraged to get BBAHC to make the request.

Following the public comments, a discussion ensued. The initial concern was an autistic child also with a behavioral health (BH) diagnosis who cannot get services through the BH system because their primary diagnosis is a development disability. Tracy noted this is not the case in Fairbanks and there are some BH services available to autistic children. Mark explained the BH services these clients are getting are not based on their primary diagnosis of autism but on a secondary behavioral health diagnosis. Mark added that there is anxiety on the part of BH providers in that if they provide services based on a secondary diagnosis, they are setting themselves up for an audit exception and some do not want to put their practice at risk. The committee acknowledged this could be an issue they pursue in the future.

May 8, 2010

Joan Junge, NP, private practice in Dillingham. Joan Junge has a holistic health practice in Dillingham. She described many positive aspects of her practice and some of the complications of being a sole private practitioner without hospital privileges. Access to pharmaceuticals for her clients has been a hurdle. Eventually, Joan became a licensed drug room (provider). Other complexities were discussed. (Later in the day, several MCAC members visited Joan's clinic.)

Update: State Budget and Legislation Bill Streur, Deputy Commissioner, commented on the legislative session made a presentation on Medicaid spending entitled "Bending the Curve" and responded to questions. (His description and presentation slides are Attachment #3.)

Public Comments

John and DeeDee Bennis described their difficulty in navigating and getting their mother's Medicaid application for nursing home care approved.

Marian Small voiced concerns on her parents' needs for elder and palliative care and her difficulty in getting accurate information. Her parents did not have enough money for food this winter.

Jordan Lewis, professor at UA, described his research on aging elders. He noted that most elders would prefer to stay in homes even if they get less care.

Other announcements

The committee is in needs an adult consumer member.

Deb asked for volunteers for an education committee. Tracy volunteered to work with Karen, Lorilyn, Deb, and Catriona.

Deb requested that members send her three things they valued from the Dillingham trip.

Jerry Fuller announced his resignation effective June 1, 2010.