

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES
AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Medicaid Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

LOCATION

Governor's Council Conference Room
3601 C Street
Anchorage, Alaska
Teleconference

Meeting Date
June 18, 2012
10:00 a.m.

Attendees:

Ric Nelson, Chair
Kelly Donnelly
Kathy Fitzgerald
Eric Gebhart
Heidi Haas

Guests:

Sean Bliss
Dean Paul

Staff:

Carrie Predeger
Josie Boggs

Prepared by:
Jeannette Rice, Peninsula Reporting

Call to Order – 10:01 a.m.
Roll Call

READING OF THE COUNCIL MISSION

Kelly Donnelly read the Council’s mission statement: Creating change that improves the lives of people with disabilities.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Kathy Fitzgerald **MOVED** to approve the agenda. The motion **PASSED**.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Heidi Haas **MOVED** to approve the minutes from the February 28th meeting. The motion **PASSED**.

CORRESPONDENCE

None to report.

INTRODUCTIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, OR GOOD NEWS

None to report.

OLD BUSINESS

Findings from federal regulations, state regulations, and state statute

Carrie Predeger and Ric Nelson led a discussion of the regulations they researched pertaining to Medicaid. Carrie noted that state regulations are easier to change than state statutes, and federal regulations are the most difficult to change. The committee identified and discussed problem areas at the February 28th meeting; at today’s meeting the committee developed possible solutions that might help the Medicaid system save money in each area. The ideas the committee came up with will be developed into a letter of recommendations to Commissioner Streur.

NEW BUSINESS

Discuss solutions for each area for potential cost savings

Supplies

- Educate providers and the community that quantities of supplies prescribed such as diapers can be changed within a certain range.
- Suggest a cash and counseling system like other states use, including a debit card similar to a food stamp card that can only be used for approved purchases.

Equipment and Home Modifications

- Home improvement services for Medicaid recipients could be contracted out using a process similar to the state procurement process, in which local contractors would bid to do work to certain specifications for a set price, and the state could hire the services of one of the lower bidders instead of paying a premium price.
- Contractors could also be retained to do inspections for Medicaid recipients who are able to do their own improvements to ensure that the work is done correctly.
- Propose a cash and counseling process with incentives for Medicaid recipients to purchase items that they need at reasonable prices instead of the maximum allowed by letting them apply the savings to something else.

Medical waste with old and unused equipment

- A Medicaid process should be put into place so that old and unused medical equipment such as wheelchairs can be recycled or reused by somebody else.
- A website could be created, like a Craigslist for unused equipment (committee members will investigate whether such a list might already exist).
- A lending warehouse could be established in conjunction with STAR or another agency that is a likely point of entry for people into the Medicaid system so that people who are waiting for benefits or for equipment that has been ordered could borrow items that they need. Any agency taking on this role would require some additional funding for staff to check equipment in and out and to clean and refurbish items.

Specialized medical equipment

- Educate the public about cost-saving medical applications for iPads, etc., so that doctors would prescribe such technology to help patients and Medicaid could pay for it.
- Change regulations to allow people to order repairs instead of a whole new item; for example, new cushions instead of a new wheelchair.

Travel Cost

- Travel for Medicaid appointments should be coordinated so a person could schedule several appointments for the same trip.
- Cost of airfare could be lower by removing the requirement that tickets be purchased within the same calendar month as the appointment.
- Investigate how Medicaid travel tickets are booked; see if the process could be more like the state travel booking process to require that ticket prices be limited to no more than the advance purchase flex rate. Tickets should also be able to be changed at the usual fee if appointments are canceled. Medicaid tickets should not be charged a premium price.

Assessments

- Recommend assessment tools other than the ICAP (the DD Committee is already working on this issue).
- In cases where there is no significant change in functioning or needs over several years, assessments could be scheduled for every three to five years, at the discretion of the care coordinator.
- Our commissioner and division director could advocate with other states for exclusions to the federal requirement of an annual level of care assessment.

Emergency Room Visits

After some discussion, the committee decided not to make a recommendation about the issue of people going to the emergency room for non-emergencies, but to keep it on the table for continued discussion and research. The suggestion of establishing a co-pay to discourage casual use of the emergency room developed into a discussion of how some insurance companies refuse to cover visits to the ER that are

deemed non-emergencies. Information could be provided at ER intake about what constitutes a true emergency and about other treatment options like urgent care clinics. However, recognizing that care providers are required to seek medical attention for their clients to avoid liability, and that some patients use the ER because they don't have a regular doctor who accepts Medicaid, the committee chose not to address this issue in the letter to the commissioner.

Paperwork

- Could the paperwork process be streamlined to reduce the amount of person-hours spent on paperwork?

Further assistance from DLC

During the drafting process and before sending the letter out to the commissioner, the committee will meet with Disability Law Center to review their recommendations and look for any issues or problems that need to be addressed.

Kathy Fitzgerald pointed out that the letter should include some actual cost information to demonstrate that these recommendations are worth pursuing. Heidi Haas said she could help get some numbers from FRA, and Carrie Predeger will contact Affiliated Computer Services to gather data.

TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Carrie Predeger will send out a Doodle to plan a meeting in August.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 12:11 p.m.