

Nursing Home Advisory Committee Meeting

October 24, 2019

Department of Social Services

55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT

Minutes

Members in attendance: : Co-Chair, Barbara Cass (*via phone*), Department of Public Health (DPH); Co-Chair, Kathy Shaughnessy, Department of Social Services (DSS); Matthew Barrett, Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities (CAHCF); Anne Foley, Office of Policy and Management (OPM); Mag Morelli, LeadingAge Connecticut; Mairead Painter, Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, Department of Rehabilitation Services (LTCOP)

Member(s) absent: David Wasch, Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA)

Legislators present: Representative Jonathan Steinberg; Representative Toni E. Walker; and Amanda Bellagamba on behalf of Senator Formica

Others present: Betsy Bujwid, DSS Susan Eccleston, OPM; Hilary Felton-Reid, Robinson & Cole; Nicole Godburn, DSS; Kim Hriceniak, DPH; David Lawlor, United Methodist Homes; Maureen McCarthy, Celtic Consulting; Kate McEvoy, DSS; Melissa Morton, OPM; Mike Mosier, Athena Health Care Systems; Ken Przybysz, Przybysz + Associates Government Affairs; Vincent Ruocco, PKF O'Connor Davies; George Thomas, Blum Shapiro; Chris Wright, ICare; Richard Wysocki, DSS

Meeting called to order at 9:16 A.M.

Introductions

- Members introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes from July 10, 2019 Meeting

- Motion to approve the July 10, 2019 meeting minutes was made by Matthew Barrett and seconded by Anne Foley. Minutes were adopted on a voice vote.

Nursing Facility Payment Modernization Project – Myers and Stauffer Presentation

Representatives from Myers and Stauffer, Kris Knerr and Karen Coulombe, presented on the Nursing Home Payment Modernization project. Highlights of the presentation and ensuing discussion are below:

- DSS will be transitioning Medicaid nursing facility reimbursement to a case-mix payment system.
- A dedicated [web page](#) for the initiative has been established on the DSS web site.
- Connecticut General Statutes Section § 17b-340d provides authority for DSS to transition from a cost-based to acuity-based Medicaid reimbursement methodology.
- Case-mix methodology allows DSS to determine what it costs to take care of each resident served by a nursing facility for a particular period of time rather than relying on a point-in-time snapshot. This allows for more accurate cost and need calculations.
- Case-mix will be evaluated and adjusted once per quarter so that rates can be adjusted as the mix of residents at facilities change.

- The transition to the new methodology will be phased-in over a period of time to minimize impact to providers.
- There was a discussion as to how the new methodology will take into account behavioral health issues, which may not be adequately captured in the RUG scores. Kris Knerr, Myers and Stauffer, explained that add-ons may be needed for special populations such as TBI, ventilator care, behavioral health, and Huntington's. Such add-ons would account for additional equipment costs associated with ventilators, etc. Kate McEvoy noted that the State is taking steps to examine the behavioral health continuum including care options in the community through the availability of new grant funds. She continued that DSS is currently implementing a new supportive housing benefit for which a State Plan Amendment will soon be submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.
- Kate McEvoy provided the policy context for the transition to a new reimbursement methodology by clarifying that while DSS recognizes that there will always be a need for nursing facility care, the State focus is on the increased provision of home and community-based services, with nursing facility care reserved for those who cannot be supported in the community. The case-mix methodology will allow nursing facilities to have more confidence that they will receive a higher compensation for accepting higher acuity residents.
- Kris Knerr informed members that Myers and Stauffer will regularly post case-mix index reports. Initially, nursing facilities will receive e-mails when the reports are ready. Eventually, reports will be posted on a regular schedule that will eliminate the need for special notification.
- Mairead Painter suggested correlating the case-mix index with staffing levels. The LTC Ombudsmen continue to hear issues around staffing. Kris Knerr clarified that the State is not eliminating cost, rather they are tying cost to acuity, therefore, if a facility does not have adequate staffing the effects will be seen at rebasing.
- Mag Morelli reminded the group that there is no new funding for facilities. The new reimbursement methodology will simply reallocate existing appropriations. Therefore, for some facilities to receive more funding other facilities must receive less.
- Myers and Stauffer worked with nursing facilities to ensure that only certain facility IP addresses can see that the IT portal even exists, in addition to protected portal access. This additional security step was implemented to ensure confidentiality of Protected Health Information (PHI).
- Matthew Barrett expressed his support for greater data sharing among State and private entities.

Receiverships/Closures/Bankruptcies

- Kathy Shaughnessy provided the following report on receiverships/closures/bankruptcies:
 - **Bankruptcy:** Bridgeport Health Care is in bankruptcy and an order to close has been filed in court. A hearing is set for November 20, 2019, but, there are efforts to get it moved up due to the physical plant's poor condition.
 - **Receiverships:** There are no pending receiverships at this time.
 - **Closures:** Lourdes Health Center is closing voluntarily. DSS is waiting for the final Certificate of Need. The closure is currently under review by the Commissioner.

Other Business

- Representative Walker had questions for Myers and Stauffer concerning how many states they operate in, where their offices are located, and how many other states they have worked in to implement case-mix systems.
- Representative Walker noted that she has questions for Kate McEvoy on how case-mix legislation will be implemented. Representative Walker and Kate McEvoy discussed scheduling an informational hearing perhaps in January 2020.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 A.M.

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