

Expansion of Medicaid Managed Care: Consumer and Family Perspectives

Senate Finance HHR

December 5, 2011

National Alliance on Mental Illness of Virginia

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Our Vision

- Meaningfully involve persons receiving mental health services, and their family members;
- Respect choice of services, providers, and treatment
- Ensure necessary legal and ethical protections and services;
- Establish grievance, mediation, and appeals procedures in a timely manner;
- Support empowerment by providing education about and access to self-help groups;
- Ensure confidentiality and privacy.

Benefits

- Provide the most effective services for adults and children with mental health disorders.
- Expand choices.
- Use resources as wisely and effectively as possible.

Concerns

- Will people in need get the services that they need, when they need them?
- What about ongoing problems in Virginia's system?
 - Waiting lists for community-based mental health services
 - Over-reliance on state mental hospitals
 - Criminal justice system / mental illness
 - Need for safe, stable housing
- What will happen to anticipated managed care savings?

Comments to DMAS' Draft Request for Proposals

- Involvement of persons receiving services and family members
- Reinvestment of savings
- Outcome measures and reporting
- Optional services

Devil is in the details

- Are the services a person needs covered by the benefit package?
- How long will it take to get an appointment with a provider? Will the person have a choice of provider?
- “Medical necessity”: what does it mean? Is it adequate?
- For hospital care, what is the maximum and average length of stay? What happens if the clinician and the managed care company disagree on the hospital discharge date?
- For outpatient care, what is the maximum and average number of visits a year?
- Will the plan pay for medications? Is there a limit on the number or total cost of medications each year? Will certain medications be restricted?
- How does a person appeal decisions and file a grievance if they are not satisfied with the services being provided, or if they are denied a service?

Other States' Experiences with Managed Care

- Saves money.
- Improves access to services primarily for those whose mental health conditions can be treated in outpatient settings.
- May restrict access to high intensity services, such as inpatient services, needed by those with the most serious mental illnesses.
- Coordinating physical and mental health care is important, but the “how to” is unclear.

Other States' Experiences with Managed Care, Continued

- May worsen some existing problems, particularly cost-shifting across systems.
- May solve some long-standing problems (i.e. over-reliance on state mental hospitals).
- May create or expose new problems.

Overall: What to Watch For

- How people with the most serious mental illnesses fare.
- Are costs shifted to other systems? Localities, corrections, etc.
- Are services being expanded? Are new services being created?
- Is the appeals/grievance process easy to understand and navigate?

Thank you!

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