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LME-MCO Joint Communication Bulletin # J392

DATE: April 8, 2021

TO: Local Management Entities-Managed Care Organizations (LME-MCOs) and
Other Stakeholders

FROM: Kody H. Kinsley
Dave Richard

SUBJECT: Extension of the Deadline for Meeting Substantial Compliance with the
Settlement Agreement Has been Extended Due to COVID-19

The Transitions to Community Living Initiative (TCLI) offers a key to community for eligible adults living with serious mental illnesses, giving them the opportunity to choose where they live, work and receive services.

There have been notable successes achieved over the past year, though we acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the State's efforts to meet some of the requirements of the Settlement Agreement with the U. S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Most notably, the transition of people out of adult care homes to homes in the community has been challenging during the pandemic.

Accordingly, the State's work to meet all requirements will continue, as NCDHHS and U. S. DOJ have jointly agreed to extend portions of the 2012 settlement agreement from the amended date for substantial compliance of June 30, 2021, to June 30, 2023.

During this difficult year, many worked extremely hard to ensure people who wanted to move out of institutions were able to do so and ensure that others, already in the community, could remain there safely. TCLI's most notable accomplishments in 2020-2021 include:

- Increasing the number of people living in supported housing by 551.
- Receiving \$7 million from the U. S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for a key TCLI partner, the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency. The five years of grant funding will provide rental

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assistance for approximately 188 rental apartments for TCLI participants who are either transitioning from institutions or at risk of institutionalization.

- Implementing an innovative tool that supports informed decision making, ensuring people can make a meaningful decision as to whether a move to community would better their life.
- Initiating a comprehensive quality assurance plan that will integrate TCLI's work into the state's transformation of its Medicaid-funded programs, positively impacting the broader *Olmstead* population.
- Enhancing the understanding of and access to affordable housing for people with disabilities through extensive, statewide training on topics such as fair housing and permanent supportive housing.
- Accelerating job acquisition and job retention along with a strengthened capacity to deliver employment supports to those with disabilities. This includes innovative approaches with the Individual Placement Support (IPS) model of supported employment in partnership with local management entities-managed care organizations (LME-MCOs) and provider networks.
- Implementing significant database modifications to better identify people in Adult Care Homes and connect them to TCLI's services.

The latest iteration of the agreement offers North Carolinians with serious mental illness the opportunity to receive housing, along with services and supports, in the community of their choice. The agreement flows from a U. S. Supreme Court decision, *Olmstead v. L.C.* The court's decision gives people with disabilities in congregate programs the right to receive services and supports in the community. The State's settlement with U.S. DOJ set in motion the work of NCDHHS' TCLI, charged with implementing the *Olmstead*-based requirements of the agreement.

Thousands of people in recovery from mental illness are experiencing the everyday dignity of community life. NCDHHS will continue to advance this transformational, system-wide change, and in so doing, will open the door to community for all.

Thank you for your continued partnership.

If you have any questions, please contact Sam Hedrick at 919-527-7525 or Sam.Hedrick@dhhs.nc.gov .

Previous bulletins can be accessed at: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/mhddsas/joint-communication-bulletins>

cc: Marti Knisley, Technical Assistance Collaborative
Victor Armstrong, DMH/DD/SAS
Jay Ludlam, NC Medicaid
Karen Burkes, DSOHF
NC Medicaid Leadership Team
DMH/DD/SAS Leadership Team