

*NC Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Health Benefits (NC Medicaid)*

MEDICAL CARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE MEETING
September 21, 2018

NC Medicaid Kirby Building, 1985 Umstead Drive, Conference Room 132, Raleigh, NC 27699
TELECONFERENCE: 919-715-0769

The Medical Care Advisory Committee (MCAC) met via teleconference on Friday, September 21, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

ATTENDEES

MCAC Members in Person: Gary Massey, MCAC Chairman

MCAC Members via Telephone: Marilyn Pearson, MCAC Vice-Chairman, Kim Schwartz, David Tayloe, Benjamin Smith, Trent Cockerman, Stephen Small, Chris DeRienzo, Casey Cooper, Billy West, Jr., Linda Burhans, Thomas Johnson, III, Ted Goins, David Sumpter, Paula Cox Fishman, Benjamin Koren, Jenny Hobbs

MCAC Interested Parties: Ames Simmons, Robert Hardyman, Valerie Arendt,

DHHS Staff: Dave Richard, Melanie Bush, Sandra Terrell, Jay Ludlam, Beth Daniel, Madhu Vulimiri, Patrick Doyle, Virginia Niehaus, Pamela Beatty

CALL TO ORDER

Gary Massey, MCAC Chair

- Gary Massey, MCAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Chairman Massey expressed his appreciation for everyone's participation and understanding that our face-to-face meeting could not be held as originally planned, due to Hurricane Florence. Following the roll call of the members by Pamela Beatty, a quorum was declared.
- Chairman Massey called for a motion to approve the minutes from the MCAC meeting held on August 17, 2018.
- Motion to approve the minutes was made by Paula Cox Fishman and seconded by Kim Schwartz. The August 17, 2018 MCAC meeting minutes were approved by the Committee.

OPENING REMARKS

Dave Richard, Deputy Secretary, NC Medicaid

- Dave thanked everyone for dialing into the meeting and expressed an interest in hearing from the MCAC members on what they are witnessing in the fields.
- Dave highlighted some recovery efforts happening at the Department level and inside of Medicaid to address the needs of the people impacted by the hurricane.
 - The response from our Leadership and the Emergency Operations Center was very impressive. Secretary Cohen pulled together a Command Center composed of DHHS leadership and staff to manage the storm issues as quickly as possible in a very coordinated way. Secretary Cohen's direction with Medicaid and other agencies was to immediately work with your federal partners before the storm hit to explore and take advantage of every possible option available to assist the citizens of North Carolina.
 - NCDHHS Division of Social Services released numerous announcements for people and families receiving Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) to ensure access to food.
 - Temporary housing efforts are being provided through FEMA and state resources.
 - Dave announced that within the 18 counties declared as disaster areas, 20% of the people are Medicaid and Health Choice beneficiaries.

- Dave praised the Medicaid team for the excellent job they have done to coordinate the hurricane recovery efforts. Dave said much credit goes to Sandra Terrell and Melanie Bush for their efforts and work with CMS to make changes. We have received approval on some things and continue to seek approval on others. Associated costs will be managed within our available Medicaid resources, stated Dave.
- Dave asked Sandra Terrell and Melanie Bush to elaborate further on the recovery efforts that have taken place within Medicaid and their work with CMS. Dave encouraged the Committee members to provide comments and suggestions as they walk through the efforts.

HURRICANE RELIEF UPDATE

Melanie Bush, Deputy Director, Clinical and Operations, NC Medicaid

- Prior to the storm, the Division had a call with CMS to walk through options for any flexibilities on Medicaid eligibility and enrollment, benefits and cost sharing, and provider issues. Several stakeholders, including hospital and healthcare associations and others, provided feedback regarding additional flexibilities.
- Melanie highlighted the following requested and approved changes and flexibilities to assist those affected by the hurricane:
 - Self-Attestation for Medicaid eligibility and enrollment, except for citizenship.
 - In recognition of people applying for Medicaid eligibility who have been evacuated out-of-state, and do not have possession of their documents, Medicaid is allowing them to be considered “temporarily absent” for Medicaid enrollment.
 - Redetermination timelines for Medicaid enrollees have been extended.
 - Prior authorization for benefits and cost-sharing are being waived. The waiver has been extended through September 28, 2018 for services statewide.
 - Pre-Admission Screening and Annual Resident Review (PASSAR) is being waived until September 28, 2018 for entrance into nursing homes.
 - The 3-day stay requirement in skilled nursing facilities, the 25-bed limit for critical access hospitals and the 96-hour visit limit for critical access hospitals are being waived.
 - Exempted CHIP beneficiary enrollment fees for applications and redetermination for people enrolled in Medicaid through healthcare for workers with disabilities.
 - Provider enrollment requirements have been temporarily waived to ensure that providers are available. We are doing a light and rapid enrollment process for out-of-state providers to ensure access to care. We have also ceased revalidations for providers located in the affected areas of NC.
 - We have applied for the ease of sanctions regarding the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance for hospitals, allowing them to talk to family members and transport their patients to other facilities.
 - DHHS NC Medicaid received a blanket 1135 waiver from CMS on September 13, 2018. We submitted an additional 1135 waiver for prior authorization on September 13, 2018. It was approved on September 17, 2018.
 - A CHIP SPA was submitted on September 19, 2018. On September 20, 2018, we sent three new additional waiver flexibilities for individuals on the Community Alternative Plans (CAP/C and CAP/DA) and our Innovations Waiver for Individuals with Intellectual and Behavioral Disabilities. We have not received approval from CMS, at this point, and will notify you when we do.
 - We have been communicating through Medicaid Bulletins and NC Tracks portals to providers. Regarding Medicaid eligibility determination issues, we issued an administrative letter for the County DSS and we are communicating with the County DSS Directors through the County DSS listserv. Fact sheets have been sent out individually to stakeholders. Communications staff has developed a Hurricane Medicaid website which is accessible from the NC Medicaid main web page. The Medicaid web page will contain all information discussed today including the fact sheet.
 - Chairman Massey thanked Melanie for her overview.

- Dave Richard added that CMS has been extraordinarily helpful in assisting NC Medicaid with its efforts. The Division also received great cooperation from Texas and Louisiana.
- Sandra Terrell added, to waive a prior authorization statewide sounds simple; but it takes a very integrated and collaborative approach. Sandy expressed appreciation to our vendors, providers, associations, the Divisional DHHS partners, and the NC Medicaid staff. There have been many behind the scenes efforts. Many of them will not be seen or talked about, stated Sandy.
- Chairman Massey opened the meeting for comments and insight from the Committee members.
- Thomas Johnson asked for clarification about the summary of temporary waivers and special conditions available on the Medicaid web site. Melanie Bush responded that the web site will house all information shared today; however, it is being updated at the moment.
- Chairman Massey added that the NC Health System Association is issuing many of these publications through their newsletters and emails as well. This is another source at the hospital level.
- David Tayloe shared that his area (New Bern, NC) was severely affected by the storm. He expressed concern about patients or families' access to care and medications, if their Medicaid expired right before or since the storm. If they have not had an opportunity to reapply, what will happen to the patient's care and ability to obtain medications, asked David?
- Melanie Bush replied that it is a matter of timing. We were suspending redeterminations temporarily for individuals who were eligible as of Friday, September 14, 2018. If their Medicaid had already expired prior to that date, we will need them to re-enroll. They can use self-attestation if they do not have their documentation available. We have encouraged DSS to use any electronic verification available in their systems. However, they cannot attest to their citizenship and immigration status. That is federal law. We have extended eligibility to prevent individuals' Medicaid from expiring in heavily hit areas. We have a portal online through the EPASS system for individuals to apply. They can also do telephonic enrollment. Melanie also provided the telephone number for the NC Medicaid Contact Center: 800-662-7030.
- David Tayloe further inquired about provider hardship payments. Melanie suggested that providers experiencing hardships contact Joel Mercer. Dave Richard added that certain requirements will be waived for hardship payments considering the circumstances.
- Marilyn Person, MCAC Vice Chairman, thanked staff for disseminating the information to our public health partners. Vice Chairman Pearson suggested that we think about sending this information to our non-traditional partners so that they can share it with our beneficiaries; especially the information pertaining to food and nutrition, etc. Dave agreed that it was a good idea.
- Thomas Johnson stated that the waivers have been very helpful to the Emergency Departments in Lumberton, NC. We were in high census when the hurricane hit and maintained a high census, preventing us from taking additional patients. We slept workers at the hospital for four nights. Some were not able to go home because of the flooding. There has been an incredible amount of coordination between the hospitals, EMS, local providers, law enforcement, the County, City, State, and federal level. Very appreciative, said Thomas. We all learned a lot two years ago from Hurricane Matthew and were better prepared this time. However, we still cannot stop the waters from flooding but we can help the individuals who are affected by them.
- Chairman Massey thanked all for sharing their insights. He further stated that it is very hard on a lot of folks right now. Thoughts and prayers are going out for the people affected.
- Dave Richard added that DHHS and Medicaid is impressed with how the associations pulled together and for the collaboration amongst the hospitals.

MEDICAID TRANSFORMATION UPDATE:

Jay Ludlam, Assistant Secretary for Medicaid Transformation, DHB

- Because of the storm, the responses for the health plans were delayed a week. Originally the potential health plans would respond to the Request for Proposals (RFP) by October 12, 2018. The new date is October 19, 2018. The date for the Provider and Credentialing vendor responses to the RFP has been changed from September 21, 2018 to September 26, 2018.

- The NC Medicaid Transformation team continues to move forward on implementation. We met with the Enrollment Broker, Maximus, two weeks ago to review the implementation plan.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Valeria Arendt commended Dave Richard and team for the constant communication to the National Association of Social Workers about what the Agency has been doing to coordinate these efforts. Valeria said she is in awe of the coordination and the work that is being done.

CLOSING REMARKS

- Chairman Massey reminded the MCAC members that the next teleconference MCAC call is scheduled for October 18, 2018 at 10:30am – 12:00 noon.
- Chairman Massey thanked everyone for their participation. He reminded all non-MCAC members on the call to email Pamela Beatty so that their attendance can be recorded. Chairman Massey, again, extended thoughts and prayers to all in communities that have been really devastated by the hurricane.

MEETING ADJOURNED