

DATE: 3.26.2020

Good evening all,

Here we go with today's summary.

Waiver discussion with CMS: Kate Marlay has reported on her ongoing discussions with CMS and the response from them continues to be positive. Currently, OPWDD has been able to get additional guidance that would allow a second 14 day period of full billing for Day Hab., that would take us past 4/14, via the 1115 Waiver authority. They are also working on the 1135 waiver and a longer term strategy for payment for Day Habs as the COVID-19 emergency continues.

Other Habilitation funding needs: John Kemmer on behalf of all of us, made an impassioned plea about the need of OPWDD not to resolve the issues of funding for services individually, but more collectively. Community Hab, Respite, Self Direction with budget authority were all mentioned as needing immediate assistance. Hazard pay for our staff was front and center. Later in the discussion, we brought up the Article 16 clinic services also showing signs of failing unless there is some additional intervention. Roger acknowledged the need but offered no other response beyond that; they heard us.

Recoupment of 7/1/19 rate reductions: we asked for the status on the suspension for agencies owing dollars back. We were informed that due to the system inputs, the earliest that the suspension could begin was after the 4/22 rate cycle, or two more payments. OPWDD had included this revenue take-back as part of their 20/21 budget, complicating the stoppage. After some discussion, Kerri Neifeld from the Governor's office remarked that the State's budget was already heavily constrained with spending on the virus, and they will do all that they can to help providers with the stoppage of the recoupments. She thanked us for the work we are doing and asked that we also consider the dire straits the State was in. They expect the adjustment, allowing for a stoppage of the recoupments, can be worked on by the time of the budget passage this coming Tuesday evening.

PPEs: no news on this front, but we keep it as an agenda item.

More back and forth separately from OPW among the PAs and CCOs as we later talked about the Emergency Housing plans that OPWDD is working on, especially for families at home. We will also seek some clarification should a residence fall below its minimal staffing as this virus hits us harder over the next few weeks. Earlier in the OPW call, we rose our voices about the continuing attempts to conduct CAS assessments by Maximus contractors. These are not normal times for business operations, and we strongly urged OPWDD to stop the assessments.

Finally, I just received a notice that NewsChannel 4 will be airing another story about AABR. It may again appear on the 11PM newscast. The story states that there are 55 people and an additional 29 employees who have tested positive for the virus. The concern, getting staff coverage, something you are already feeling.

Residential Committee meeting tomorrow at 10:40 AM....and don't ask me about that selection of the start time...

May you all stay healthy and safe,

Til tomorrow,

Tom