

FROM: tom McAlvanah
DATE: 4/19/2021
RE: Provider Association Meeting

Budget Review:

Kevin Valenchis reviewed the highlights of the NYS Budget for OPWDD services.

I will not reiterate all of the items that have been previously published.

In addition to the restoration of the cuts, the inclusion of a 1% COLA and the rejection of the proposal to merge IBR under OMH, there were a few items of note. There is the inclusion of new state share dollars totaling \$30M for new program development; funds to support the next phase of minimum wage increases; \$15 M in Supported Housing initiatives; and Residential program management initiatives to utilizing more independent settings. The FLOW initiative was also passed; more to come later in the summary.

The Residential Reserve Replacement. RRR, after initial rejection by the Assembly, has been eliminated, a savings of nearly \$8M fully annualized. The PPA process will start anew, and OPW will consider accessing an old memory for many, the Voluntary Preservation Capital Funds. They will likely share their approach over the next couple of weeks. The RRR funds will sunset on 6/30/21.

The 10% FMAP funds from the American Rescue Plan Act has not been accompanied by guidance from CMS as of yet. OPW does have the appropriation authority to access the funds without a lengthy bidding process. Stakeholder input will be sought as to the best way to utilize this one-shot infusion. More to come there.

Vacancy and Occupancy Adjustments

The 5/1/21 cuts to the Residential program IRAs are on track to be implemented. As per Kevin's presentation, these cuts were part of the OPW financial plan prior to the pandemic. The first rate year affected will be 5/1/21-6/30/21. With only 61 days in those two months, the restrictions to the programs (and families) will not be felt.

On 7/1/21, the limitations of 96 days as well as the cut in reimbursement to 50% will take effect.

As for the rates, you remember those, the final touches on the 1/1/21 rates are almost there. By 7/1/21, the inclusion of the 1%, covering 15 months (with start of 4/1/21) will most likely begin. By now, no one reading this will hold those exact dates as a promise.

FLOW Initiative:

Speaking of the FLOW, Abiba informed everyone that the best method to commence this initiative is for the Day Service providers who provide services to folks from State Operated Residences in their day services, and who are interested, should begin the outreach to the families of the individuals in question. Due to the relationship formed at the Day program, they believed it would be best to begin the contact there, then inform the Care Manager at about the same time. For any backfill situation, from a CRP to a State Operated Residential opportunity, the State Operated program staff will make contact with the out-of-state CRP. There will be a FLOW liaison in each region of the State. The list is attached. Currently there approximately 2,300 individuals who are living in a State Operated residence and attend a Voluntary Operated Day services program.

CAS:

John Barbuto provided some updated data on the CAS Assessment process.

There have been 61,000 assessments completed out of nearly 90,000 individuals who have received their first assessment. The majority of the assessments were conducted for people in certified residential settings; they are nearly 85% complete for those in residences. They are

averaging nearly 1,700 assessments a month, up from 1,200 a month over the last few months of the pandemic. There were no assessments done in the first few months of the pandemic. Since that time, all assessments have been virtual. Yes, virtual. The plan is to have a reassessment every two years; an additional assessment may occur should there be a need, such as in a sentinel event. It was also understood that there will be some reassessments conducted as the initial CAS' were conducted over 3 years ago.

Housing Subsidy Certification Requirements and QA checklist:

Abiba began the discussion after receiving comments from many providers about the level of oversight, responsibility and process in 'certifying' that a person living in an independent setting is living in a 'safe' setting. The frustration from the providers was more than evident in discussing many of the elements of the checklist that places DSPs understanding the full range of hazardous conditions, and assuring that the apartment/unit is free of those conditions. The concern over those who are Fiscal Intermediaries was also raised. Abiba fielded those comments and spoke to the responsibility of the ISS Contract. If the person is receiving rental subsidy, and the provider has their name on the contract, the responsibility cannot fall to a Care Manager, but to the ISS agencies and the FIs. We asked Abiba to review some of the questions on the checklist, and she will accept suggestions from the providers. The Associations will have further discussions on this topic to try and get to a more reasonable outcome with OPW.

5.07 Plan

Maryellen Moeser will be the project manager for the initiative. Currently, OPW is conducting some internal meetings and planning sessions. The response is due back to the Executive Chamber and Legislature by 11/1/21. There will be a general notice to the stakeholders in early May; OPW will be conducting 5 Regional Forums with an overview about the 5.07 Plan, its strategic priorities and an opportunity to provide feedback. There will be a dedicated mailbox manned throughout the process to accept feedback (planning.opwdd.ny.gov.). The mailbox will be up shortly along with the announcement of the 5.07 Plan and timelines. Local government planning units, such as Mental Hygiene Directors, will also be part of the planning process.

Employee Training Guidance:

Sharon Devine announced a Training Webinar for this Friday, 4/23, that is intended to review recent regulations and guidance on flexibilities and other abbreviated training allowances that were in place during the pandemic. They will share some additional resources including a DSP training through the SUNY For All program. OPWDD released the announcement of the Webinar shortly after the meeting. Link is below.

<https://meetny.webex.com/meetny/onstage/g.php?MTID=eae97194a5c4fa29246852722d28f86d0>