

From: Southwest Iowa Families Inc. [<mailto:providers@southwestiowafamilies.org>]

Sent: Tuesday, December 01, 2015 12:37 PM

To: swfamilies@mediacombb.net

Subject: Iowa Medicaid Modernization

I am writing today to ask for your assistance, in any way you can, to delay the implementation of Iowa's Medicaid Modernization beyond January 1, 2016. At this time, I do not feel qualified to address the validity of the overall proposal in terms of the concerns of cost savings and quality of care. I have attempted to follow this proposal via Iowa DHS, statewide media sources, human service interest lists, CMS listening calls, and via exploration on the websites of the Iowa Medicaid Enterprise and each of the MCOs.

As the Clinical Director at a small, not-for-profit human service agency based out of Clarinda, Iowa, I see the consumers and their providers on a daily basis. Our mental health and behavioral health clients are approximately 70% Medicaid recipients. The remainder of our funding comes from self-pay, private insurance, Medicare, Early Childhood dollars, individual donations, and community and corporate grants.

We want to be sure that our clients are able to effectively navigate their insurance, review the current proposals, and assess the potential impact it will have directly on their lives. Some clients are generally well-functioning who have been placed on Medicaid as a safety net after an injury or illness disrupted their work history. Other clients are severely disabled. Finally, there are those for whom income makes Medicaid services a necessity.

Over the past few years, Iowa's mental health service structure has been changing. As a community based provider in a rural area, I feel I am a strong advocate for services in the least restrictive setting, for the shortest period of time, and close to home or work. I also believe that prevention and early intervention are key, as well as the client's ability to have choice in how and where services are accessed. As co-director of an agency, I understand the need to operate within the funds available and the unfortunate necessity to limit funds to certain services.

Last week, clients began receiving specific information about the plans and their options. Not only are they uncertain as to what it is they are receiving and what it means, but our staff - many of whom have master's degrees and privately obtained insurance - are having difficulty understanding the process well enough to help young or impoverished or otherwise at risk families successfully navigate the process.

We are fortunate to have worked through the credentialing process with all four MCOs. On 11/30/2015, we received our first confirmation on payment rates from one of the MCOs. Much of the contents of the provider manuals is generic, but there are items of potential concern in each of them.

I am not sure what specific action to request from you. Please help us help our clients in being confident that this change will be a step forward in their well-being and care.

Thank you for your time and for the work you do in overseeing these vital services.

Sincerely,

Angela Wallick, LISW

Clinical Director

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