

## Health Policy Oversight Committee Public Comment (11/08/17)

I'm Kay Marcel. I live in Urbandale with my husband and our adult son, Joel, who receives long-term services and supports through the Intellectual Disability Waiver and is an AmeriHealth member. I also serve on the Iowa Olmstead Consumer Taskforce and know the TF submitted comments to the committee yesterday, which I support. So my public comments will be brief highlighting some of the Task Force's comments but personalizing them on behalf of my son and family.

I've had serious concerns about the impact of managed care on folks, like my son, from the beginning. Last week's announcement that services through AmeriHealth will be ending has heightened my concerns and made them even more urgent.

Individuals with disabilities are at increased risk of being institutionalized as a result of AmeriHealth's departure and the extremely short transition period. Thirty (30) days is simply too short a time to ensure a smooth and seamless transition – there will not be sufficient time to honor prior-authorizations; for members or providers to identify which, if either, of the two remaining MCO's will support and meet their needs. Without access to specialists, medication and other services many individuals with disabilities will be at imminent risk for hospitalization or institutionalization, a clear violation of the U.S. Supreme Court's Olmstead decision and ADA Integration Mandate.

Unjustified institutionalization of people with disabilities is illegal discrimination, and many courts have also found that restricting choice and access to integrated services in the community amounts to discrimination.

I share the major areas of concern discussed in the Task Force's written comments: 1) decreased access to services with the loss of some providers; 2) lack of reliable and available qualified staff; 3) increased hospitalization and institutionalization; 4) mass confusion impacting *informed* consumer choice; and 5) the loss of adequate protections and oversight due to budget cuts to the states two (2) Ombudsman programs.

I also support the Task Force's recommendations to minimize the chaos and confusion that is sure to occur with this transition and again when additional MCOs are brought in next year.

- 1. I urge the state to identify a transition plan that will support LTSS Medicaid members to maintain their current case managers to ensure continuity of care.**

Case managers play a key role in assuring that the state's HCBS waivers work to meet participant needs and improve outcomes. Quality, reliable case management is fundamental to ensuring states meet Federal requirements for continuity of care, health, safety and well-being for waiver recipients. I sent each of you a copy of the email I sent to Sec. Foxhoven explaining my concerns about

the potential loss of Joel's case manager so I won't go into those concerns again now.

- 2. I also urge the state and MCOs make it a priority to connect with individuals whose annual care plans are up for review during this next transition period to ensure there is no loss of services.**

My son's care plan is due for review in January. Our family has already identified new goals to include in that new plan to enhance Joel's quality of life and independence. Increasing his independence has become increasingly important as his father and I age, and anticipate the day when we will no longer be able to support him as we do now.

- 3. While I realize it would involve another transition, I urge the state to carve out, like many other states have done, the most vulnerable Medicaid recipients, the LTSS population, and resume oversight and management of their Medicaid services.**

It is not realistic to expect MCOs to adequately address the complex problems of Iowa's workforce shortage, the HCBS waiver waitlist, or state budget shortfalls. It is also proving dangerous for Medicaid members, unsustainable for providers, and a poor use of tax payer dollars.

We must all work together to address issues and better ensure the health, safety and well-being of Iowans going forward. I know the Olmstead Community Task Force's leadership stands ready to assist. I also stand ready to provide information and insight as to how decisions impact individuals with disabilities and their families.

Thank you.

Kay Marcel  
12508 Horton Avenue  
Urbandale, IA 50323  
Cell Phone: 337-519-2693