

Governor's Health Equity Council Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) ARPA Discussion
June 2nd 2021

Theme 1: Access to technology and internet connectivity for HCBS Beneficiaries

- Vincent Lyles: Within the home modifications category can technology upgrades be provided i.e. WIFI, as well as training and support for Medicaid patients and their families.

Answer from Curtis Cunningham:

- Internet comes under room and board
- If internet is part of a device, it could be coverable
- If internet is needed for telehealth or assistive technology, it could be covered
- Reimbursement within originating site could be used to create telehealth booths within certain facilities to work around lack of internet access.

Theme 2: Strengthening HCBS workforce

- Dr. Tito Izard: Can you speak more regarding expanding provider capacity. What are the limitations within this area?
 - Are there dollars to increase recruitment and retention of healthcare workers?
 - Pipeline programs could be developed for medical students and residents to encourage them to work in medically underserved areas.
 - Funds could be used to recruit and retain certified medical assistants
 - \$120 could be granted to help individual medical assistants take the certification test
 - Being certified will help to increase wages for medical assistants
- Dr. Tito Izard: Creating small grants for health organizations to provide formal diversity education for their staff; in-training sessions.
- Dr. Jasmine Zapata: Echoing what Dr. Izard mentioned, it would be nice to pay the tuition or training fees for people interested in providing care in these settings. This would be a one-time investment to cover x amount of training/tuition fees. We could dedicate these funds to increase diversity in workforce.
- Dr. Jasmine Zapata: Also, there are many minority owned small businesses that focus on home based medical support. How can these funds support them?
- Paula Tran: Related to workforce, how, if at all are folks who are not currently citizens supported?

Theme 3: Supporting family caregivers

- Gale Johnson: What about emotional support for family care givers?

- Dr. Zapata: Has a one-time lump sum payment to assist with paying rent or mortgage for the long term caregivers been discussed?
 - Curtis: This has not come up yet
 - Jim Jones: CMS doesn't want to pay for room and board unless it is a nursing home.
- Lisa Peyton-Caire: How are family caregivers getting support now through this program—who choose to keep fragile elders at home? Are there barriers here we need to address?
- Elizabeth Valitchka: Are you also considering criteria that looks at prevention/upstream impact of the program (e.g. caregiver support/respite to reduce potential for abuse/neglect for children with significant long term care needs)?

Theme 4: Empowering beneficiaries and their families with knowledge to navigate the HCBS system

- Michelle Robinson: Do we have data on uptake in programs? Are certain populations less likely to enrolled despite being eligible?
- Dr. Jasmine Zapata: Michelle, I have that same question. How many people know they even qualify for family care, and are there barriers to enrollment?
- Lisa Peyton-Caire: I think awareness and assistance to navigate and secure support will be incredibly important in Black and Brown communities particularly. Rural and low income communities as well.

Theme 5: Eligibility/Access to enter the HCBS system

- Dr. Tito Izard: Can we briefly review Medicaid coverage for aging out foster care children. How long are foster care children covered until?
 - They are eligible until age 26
 - Lisa Peyton-Caire: Yes, Jasmine I think awareness and assistance to navigate and secure support will be incredibly important in Black and Brown communities particularly. Rural and low income communities as well.
 - We don't always know the agencies as they often don't have strong presence or outreach to our communities.
- Paula Tran: How are folks who are not currently citizens supported?
 - Jim Jones:
 - People are eligible for routine care under Medicaid if they are eligible for receiving public funds, typically after 5 years of legal residence.
 - People are eligible for emergency services regardless of immigration status
 - Refugees are eligible for Medicaid services immediately.

- Michele Robinson: Hi Secretary Timberlake, if there is time, can you share a bit about why there is a substantial waitlist for children?
 - Secretary Timberlake: Short answer: Our legislature currently funds a limited number of "slots" for services for kids with long term support needs. This is not yet an entitlement as is the case with adults. Governor Evers budget has proposed (in the last 2 budgets) to change to entitlement.

Theme 6: Questions about timeline for implementing eFMAP initiative

- Jon Peacock: If we have until 3/31/24 to finish projects, does that mean that money only needs to be obligated by DHS by March 2022, but not necessarily spent by the recipient within the next nine months?

Notes prepared by: Mohamed Abdirisik on 06/02/21