

WCHSA ESPAC Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 21, 2008
Fen Oak Training Center, Madison

Present: John Rathman (Outagamie), Ed Kamin (Kenosha) Liz Mahloch (Sheboygan), Timothy Gessler (Winnebago), Jackie Bennett (Racine), Chris Machamer (Waupaca), Doreen Lang (Wood), Jane Huebsch (Marathon), Kara Jenkins (Jackson), Susan Moeser (Milwaukee), Linda Halverson (Dunn) and Liz Green (Dane)

BY PHONE: Lynn Brenner (Calumet), Sarah Diedrick-Kasdorf (Wisconsin Counties Association), Sandy Potter (Washington), Shirley Kitchens (Dodge), Sue Schweickert (Washburn) and Luann Page (Waukesha)

I. BADGERCARE PLUS DISCUSSION- ESPAC members noted that the number of Medicaid applications are up significantly as a result of BadgerCare Plus. Milwaukee County noted that they normally get 700 ACCESS applications per month, last week they got 700 applications in just two days. Counties also noted a large amount of calls from employers asking questions about the impact of dropping their insurance coverage for kids and others reducing the employer contribution of health insurance premiums from 80% down to 75% to make more people eligible for BadgerCare Plus. Other counties noted that they are receiving a significant number of calls coming from families who do not meet non-financial eligibility criteria for the program. Many of these families are very upset as they feel marketing efforts have misled them to believe they are eligible for the program.

Concerns were also raised that the new CARES notices are now understandable enough that participants are reading them and now calling local offices with questions. This is also leading towards a large workload increase to our agencies.

ESPAC members also highlighted that the recipient services hotline is causing concerns for local agencies. Recipient services staff is often referring calls back to the local agencies. These clients are often very up set as they have already waited on-hold for up to two hours on the recipient services hotline. This issue was addressed at IMAC last month but needs to be raised again today.

Lastly ESPAC members discussed the problems and confusions resulting from the changes the State has made to the medication benefits covered under the new BadgerCare Plus program. All medications for BadgerCare Plus participants (both the Standard and Benchmark plans) are now fee-for-service. HMOs are no longer responsible for medications.

A few of the positive aspects of Badgercare Plus are that a lot more of uninsured individuals, especially self-employed individuals, are getting much needed health insurance coverage; the CARES Worker Web changes have been very helpful to workers, and the redesigned notices are helpful to clients and those people who help people apply for Federal and State benefits.

II. OTHER ISSUES CONNECTED TO CARES AND THE NUMEROUS PROGRAM CHANGES RECENTLY MADE

CARES has not been updated to properly reflect what items do need to be verified and what items do not need to be verified. The worker currently needs to do more independent thinking (which also increases the opportunity for errors that will impact our accuracy rate) to verify items correctly. We need CARES to be updated to accurately reflect what items need verification.

There are problems with child welfare cases where and the mother later gets pregnant. CARES is not properly determining eligibility for these cases. Counties experiencing these type of concerns have called these issues into the Call Center.

There is also a procedural change needed to properly determine eligibility for when a pregnant women actually has the baby and you need to add the baby and delete the pregnancy.

The Medical Coverage screen requires you to input the medical policy plan details to leave this screen. (There is a temporary work around by putting in a question mark that you don't know if the client has coverage or not).

There is concern from many agencies about the April 1st change that you will need to get a signature from any clients applying for FoodShare who complete their application by phone.

Concerns were also raised about a retroactive premium payment that many customers are going to have to pay for February 2008 benefits, even if the client never wanted BadgerCare plus for that month.

There is also a policy issue about adult children in the household who don't need insurance but their income is counted for other family members who are applying for benefits. Changes in BadgerCare Plus household composition rules will make some of the prior BadgerCare cases household composition incorrect. We will want to write language to make counties held harmless for these types of cases in our 2009 State/County contract.

Family Planning Waiver cases now require income verifications that previously self-declared. This is a huge workload issue and needs to be addressed again at workload and finance. Could the State centralize these type of cases at a Statewide CAPO.

III. MEDICAID TRANSPORTATION - The State has recently given the opinion that emergency detention transportation for an MA client is now billable to the MA transportation program if being taken to an MA coverage facility. Further conversations will occur with the State on how the billing for this could occur since this is now a change from prior interpretation.

There are also now issues with Funeral and Cemetery eligibility as a result of BadgerCare Plus. Future discussion on this program will need to occur with the State as well and staff at our local agencies will likely need to be retrained to the new rules.

IV. DWD ISSUES- The group discussed concerns and issues with the FSET program and what is happening with the conversion of this program to a voluntary program. Other discussion items for our DWD meeting tomorrow included: (1) Discuss Status of the Real Work Real Pay Pilot Project, (2) Discuss impact of the projected state budget deficit on W-2, Child Care, and Child Support, (3) Discuss concerns about the intensive case monitoring being completed by the regional offices, (4) Discuss FSET program, (5) Discuss performance standard changes to W-2 and why these didn't go through the performance standard workgroup and C&I, (6) Discuss Child Care face-to-face programs, (7) Discuss Senate Bill 518 (10 changes to BadgerCare Plus) and (8) Discuss transition issues of programs moving from DWD to DCF.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Next ESPAC Meeting is Thursday, March 27 , 2008 at 9:30 at Fen Oak Training Center.