



MINUTES

Transitions Stakeholder Advisory Council

Google Hangout Weblink: meet.google.com/emq-kfpb-aex

Google Hangout Call-in: +1 470-268-2030

PIN: 614 405 288#

Thursday, December 3, 2020

2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Clarice Ambler, DRCOG X
- Jenn Ochs X
- Meghan Baker, Disability Law Colorado
- Lisa Smith, Team Rubicon X
- Anne Bartels, PASCO X
- Neal Waite, ADRC Region 3B X
- Amy Dixon, CPWD
- Miriam White, San Juan Basin AAA
- Paige Gallaher, Atlantis X
- Michelle Breault, Pauline Bonifazi, Ian Engle, Monique Fleming, Julie Ferguson, Peggy Garcia, Marina Gougoulian, Brandi Griffiths, Mary Jo Honiotes, Bryana Marsicano, Cathie Martinez, Raeann Laughlin, LaShawn Love, Josh Rael, Rejan Ricottone, Frank Rivas, Veronica Rogers, Tina Stran, Brad Taylor, Luke Wheeland
- Jennifer Giurgila, Jefferson County X
- State Staff: Katy Barnett, John Barry, Nora Brahe, Matt Bohanan, Amanda Lofgren, Erin Thatcher, Courtney Thomason, Ann Watts
- Fallon Gillespie, Rocky Mountain Human Services X
- Ashly Johnson, DRCOG X
- Jennifer Krulewich, Focus Cares X
- Tracy Martinez, Touch of Care X
- Ed Milewski, Jr.

Attendance Link: <https://forms.gle/EDaybu73WZAnPZHx7>



1. Welcome and Introductions 2:30 p.m.

- Approval of the November Minutes - Minutes were approved.
- Purpose of Today's Meeting – Katy provided an overview of the agenda including welcoming of new Council Member, reviewing new Council Member application, Rural barriers to transitions listening session from stakeholders in the community and a special message from OCL on CCT demonstration.

2. Council Member Welcome & Application 2:35 p.m.

- Miriam White - San Juan Basin AAA – Clarice Ambler introduced Miriam White as the newest Council Member.
- Monique Flemings –AHOD Services – Monique submitted a new Council Member application and provided information on her background. Monique is Executive Director of AHOD, serving El Paso, Pueblo and surrounding areas of Denver. She has been providing transition work since 2015 and would like to join the Council to help the community and let everyone know the services they provide to help with transitions. Following the meeting Katy will send an anonymous survey for Council members to vote on Monique joining the Council.

3. Program Updates 2:40 p.m.

- Katy from HCPF shared that FAQ's are now posted to the main page of the Transitions website. Currently reviewing to make sure everything is ADA compliant. Nuances of the program are clarified and additional detail on the new program included. Referral link is also posted on the main page to refer members interested in Transition Services which will be sent to the correct Options Counseling Agency based on County. More information will be coming next month. The link to FAQ page is available here: www.colorado.gov/hcpf/transition-services-faq.
- Matt from HCPF provided an update on the Money Follows the Person (MFP) grant and what that looks like for Colorado. Once the Department has more information they can continue that discussion with the stakeholder community.
- Ann with DOLA shared that the 811 program is almost filled. Next week they are putting out a request for application to receive funding for new round of properties in phase two of the 811 program. Ian Engle with TCA asked if there is anything new in addition to the 811 program. Stated the program changes have been great but housing is such an issue especially



in Steamboat with payment standard. Ann responded that it is a huge issue but 811 is really helping to create spark for new housing. HCPF vouchers for transitions help but finding housing in the payment standard is an issue. Ann stated they will do a deeper conversation about Housing in January meeting. Next round will expand housing to rural areas. Katy with HCPF stated housing is a huge need and we have dedicated the entire January 14th Member Meeting to discuss housing. Reminder that the date changed from usual meeting date due to start of the New Year.

4. Rural Listening Session

3:00 p.m.

- Katy with HCPF kicked off the session but stating the Council does not have a lot of representation in the rural areas besides Tracy Martinez who has represented the rural areas since the beginning. Happy to have Miriam White as new rural area council member. The Office of Community Living (OCL) worked with Alliance Colorado in 2020 on Rural add in for Case Management agencies. First was the geographical model which is not currently being used because of COVID. Second, is new enrollment availability based on general assembly funding, hoping to get rural areas more waitlist opportunities to get in waivers more quickly. Third, other areas identified which included modifiers for direct service provision, regulatory efficiency so that it is easier to set up shop in rural areas. Last, direct support for folks living in the community.
- Erin Thatcher, Participant Directed Programs Supervisor of IHSS and CDASS at HCPF, provided an update on the long-term work force group that started in mid-2019 which includes HCPF, DORA, DPH, Human Services and other agencies with a focus on work across agencies for participant directed programs. Two priorities of the group were data and research to know what is happening in the community and alignment of direct work force employment training. Ideally looking to provide training that will combine everything needed so that a direct care worker can perform all unskilled care duties. With support of CDPHE and DORA, research barriers that may be preventing the expansion of the CNA Medication position. Erin discussed the Direct Care Workforce Summit at end of October to support the recruitment and retention of Colorado's Direct Care Workforce. The Direct Care Workforce Collaborative Meeting will be on January 13, 2021 and will address the following topics: rural expansion efforts, Colorado Workforce Council, development of toolkit to make sure members have access to services in community, recruiting more provider agencies and employer training, provider sustainability and expansion to help agencies get into other underserved counties. Below is the link to the Direct Care Workforce Collaborative page:
www.colorado.gov/hcpf/direct-care-workforce-collaborative





- John Barry with HCPF started the rural listening session by asking
- **What is different about being a rural provider?**

Monique Flemings with AHOD, stated she a has member in Pueblo she has been working with over year in Walsenburg where there is only one home health agency providing service and member refuses to work with that agency. Member is still in facility because there are no other providers.

Tracy Martinez stated that in Delta the ability to retain and keep staff is difficult, need to look at increasing reimbursement because need to pay more than current rates due to travel and not paying drive time for non-medical services. Issues when there is storm that increases driving time, especially when there is a person that needs service to get out of bed.

Frank Rivas agreed with Tracy that the drive time is a huge issue, can be up to hours or longer with bad weather and sometimes it's such a concern they are unable to make the visit. Higher reimbursement needs to be considered to compensate for long drive time. Housing market is also different in rural areas, vacancy rate is lower than in Denver and well beyond payment on housing vouchers. Currently 2.7% vacancy and there are Denver companies coming in and raising rent, security deposit making it even harder to find affordable housing.

- **Do you see a difference in needs for clients in more Rural Areas?**

Kathy Martinez shared that there is very limited home health care availability in Montrose. Client needs are not currently able to be met due to lack of providers.

Tracy Martinez said the needs on the Western Slope are the same as in urban areas but sometimes those needs can't be met because of limited providers.

Bryana Marsicano commented that they face a very limited staffing pool in her area and finding qualified staff can be difficult due to the smaller population. For clients, they have more transportation needs due to no busses or transit stations and also have to travel further to see specialists and doctors that are not available in the area.

Frank Rivas shared the Lack of home modification contractors is an issue as it takes longer to get necessary modifications for members to transition safely. Asked if we can look at live-in aide's accommodation that can



provide services for the immediate member and also for other members in the area?

Brad Taylor from Greeley stated the home care agencies can't help members with high level of care that is needed. He went to CDASS program which has helped him get level and quality of care he needs.

- **What are challenges around housing?**

Tina shared that lack of affordable housing affects ability for home health care agencies to find staff. Issues for clients trying to transition as well as skilled care providers.

Tracy Martine said they have a hard time keeping staff in mountain towns due to affordable housing for both members and field staff.

- **How is the transition timeline impacted by rural setting?**

Tina shared that the process is lengthy working in rural areas can take 2-3 years to fully transition a member. Much longer than in the urban areas. Katy asked TC's if that is similar in Denver Metro? Paige Gallagher with Atlantis said they see a variation of timelines some take a year and some are as early as 3 months. It's usually based on the person's individual needs but has never seen 2-3 year timeline in the Metro area. Ian Engle confirmed timeline he experiences is more in line with Paige's. Ian would like to get connected with Brothers Development as that could help speed up timeline as housing is such a big issue. Mary Jo Honiotis with Champion Home Transitions shared that she completed audit for client list and average transition timeline was a little over 7 months in the Metro Area. LaShawn echoed Ian and Paige with timeline. Biggest issue has been with members who have lost their green card and dealing with homeland security to prove residency which can took 2 years for one member. LaShawn wanted to give kudos to DOLA for losing up some of the rules so they can flow through process quicker by looking at members needs and policies to make adjustments to accommodate those needs.

- **What are the benefits of rural setting?**

Ian shared that everybody knows each other and there is a sense of community that is enhanced. They tend to get innovative to come up with workarounds if there isn't enough money for household items. Cultural divides between disability and business community is smaller and they work together to help neighbors. People in rural areas are more inclined



to take tools and resources for themselves instead of somebody doing it for them.

- **What are the gaps in services in rural areas?**

Ian commented that as TCA they don't have a lot of community partners like Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado (BIAC) or ALS Assn to leverage capacity through collaboration. Another barrier is when different agency is paid to do options counseling but they are really the ones doing it. Katy asked Ian to reach out to her if there any issues with OC screening people out of the program. If the member is in a qualified institution and they want to move the OC shouldn't block that. It can be tough in that area with one OC covering so many counties. Katy said she can help establish relationship and provide direction on rules.

- **What do your community resources look like in rural areas?**

Frank stated that recently they are having a serious problems finding wheelchair accessible or even wheelchair friendly units in the rural area. He started a count of units and they are severely lacking in that area.

Tina shared that there is an issue with non-medical providers, home health and hospice. If you have a whole county that only has one provider and can only provide limited hours that becomes a gap and challenge.

Monique Flemings had a successful collaboration with American Medical Alert. Instances where members came out without lifelines and approved PARs and they stepped into gap for 5 members. Lifeline is the first responder in any situation for member that is left alone and needs emergency services. John asked who initiated the collaboration and Monique shared that the agency contacted AHOD to ask about providing webinar on services and did virtual in-service. Monique reached out to representative to help with case that didn't have lifeline and they went above and beyond to set up service. Frank stated they have had problems with lifeline not being installed when scheduled on the day of discharge. Sometimes up to 22 days after discharge. LaShawn shared she has had success with Qlinks and ordering free services for members to purchase cell phone and get minutes and transfer to QLink with free minutes, data and lifeline as well instead of going through HCBS. Frank asked question on QLink as he keeps getting response they can't bring their own phone. Is there a specific company that will allow it? LaShawn confirmed she went directly through Qlink and member has to have an active number or they can't transfer service over.



- **Anything Department should prioritize in rural areas?**

Katy confirmed focus on rural area issues will remain on the Council's priority list as well as looking at housing with rural area lens as we move forward and how the Department can make an impact.

Monique added transportation is challenging in rural communities.

Matt with HCPF commented that this has been fantastic conversation, thank you everyone. This sort of feedback is extremely helpful.

5. Council Updates

3:45 p.m.

- Council Charter/Bylaws Update

Clarice provided Council update that the Bylaws workgroup officially finished bylaws and sent a copy to all council members. Clarice thanked Tracey Martinez, Neal Waite, Anne Bartels and Katy for their fantastic and productive work. Goal is for the Council to vote on finalizing and approving bylaws during January meeting. Clarice provided her email for any questions, comments and feedback. cambler@drcog.org

- Education, Training and Awareness Update

Paige Gallagher, Transitions Support Services Director at Atlantis is chair of the committee. First meeting discussed initial feedback, what to focus on. TCA's getting misinformation from SNF's. Reviewed FAQ and provided feedback. Decided the name will be Education Committee moving forward but the Committee will also be looking at training and awareness needs. Identified need to train social workers in facilities and TCA's. If anyone else is interested in joining the committee please email Katy, Paige or Clarice.

- Council Member Updates

Fallon Gillespie- RMHS/SEP, shared concerns with EVV changes coming in January. From her understanding providers aren't able to bill on services without approved PAR. How will this impact TS members that don't have PAR's? Fallon said RMHS's understanding of the EVV rules is that providers will need approved PAR and they won't be able to backdate services as they currently are doing. Matt B. said great question, asked Fallon to email him and he can take EVV group to answer questions and address at the next meeting. Mary Jo asked if EVV is affecting all providers? Katy stated she will include the EVV inbox in meeting notes that are sent out. Brad shared that EVV is so much more cumbersome and time consuming



for CDASS, process is lengthy if someone doesn't clock out, etc. and it has created a burden to system rather than helping. Brad said he needs to be able to pay healthcare providers for service or he can't get out of bed in the morning or get meals throughout the day. Katy said we can have someone from EVV team join a future monthly meeting to address questions and concerns.

Ian asked if there are any efforts or initiatives to engage landlords as partners for HUD vouchers for concerted effort? Clarice said we can cover on next meeting January 14th, 2021 focused on housing. Katy suggested Ian sends questions in ahead of time.

6. Special Message from OCL

4:00 p.m.

- Katy said this time is being used to celebrate and acknowledge the success and accomplishment of the CCT program. Katy introduced Amanda Lofgren, Case Manager Director of OCL, who is joining the meeting on behalf of the HCPF Executive leadership team to share in celebration of the permanent transition services that have taken off in Colorado due to the hard work of everyone on the call. National level conversations point to Colorado for the foundation to build upon and to expand the great work we have done here to other States. Creating a Medicaid service delivery program from scratch is amazing and the Department is incredibly grateful for everyone's work to make it a success. Excited for the opportunity to continue and expand MFP for collaboration to build on the program.
- Katy shared CCT highlights of successes and services created. CCT has helped 1000's of Coloradoans from 2013-2020 including 680 transitions completed, 1599 assessments and 1542 Options Counseling. CCT touched so many lives, reminding people they have choice of where they live and receive services in Colorado. Developed benefits and services including TSA, Home Delivered Meals, Life Skills Training, Peer Mentorship and Transition Setup. Contracted services for Options Counseling and Housing Navigation.
- DOLA Housing Vouchers in 2014 less than 30 and up to 391 in 2020. CCT is graduating final members in Dec 2020, sustained CCT benefits are now called Transition Services. Increased Options Counseling and Transition Coordination availability. Great progress with housing navigation which has helped 543 people.
- Matt B. said he is thankful for all the work that has gone to CCT when just starting out as a project and now at the State level. Lots of work has gone into this program and credit goes to Tim Cortez, Sam Murillo, Sara, Cathy,

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Don Martin, Teresa and all the work the current team has done.
Tremendous job to Katy and Nora!

- Jennifer Ochs shared her amazing transitions story and what the program has meant to her and her independence. Jennifer said the presentation made her tear up as CCT is so important to her. Jennifer shared that Neal Waite, Boulder Options Counselor and Transitions Stakeholder Advisory Council Member connected her with Center for People with Disabilities to help with Medicaid and Transition Services. Because of their help she is now living alone on her own. Jennifer has a CNA that comes 5 days a week and housekeeper that comes 2 days a week to help her. Jennifer is able to live on her own and thrive because of CCT.
- Mary Jo and Pauline Bonifazi shared their story on starting a TCA from scratch. They took their first client in 2018, met 124 clients in 2 ½ years, 57 are currently on their case load and 10-12 are in the community. Out of 124 clients they met, they didn't recommend transitions for 45 of them. They received two grants which were critical to starting up. Mary Jo and Pauline appreciate the stakeholder process including the state listening to concerns and allows learning as they go and important to grow slowly. They appreciate the perfect blend of program rules and their ability to get creative and innovative. Shout out to Nora who they felt supported them at every turn! First transition was a success story, they are living in the community and grateful for the program.
- Jenny with Focus Care thanked everyone for sharing, it is rewarding to see all the wonderful outcomes and extremely proud to be a part of this program.
- LaShawn Love said she would like to congratulate and thank the following people and teams for their collaboration to fellow TCA supervisors. Thank you to Nora and Matt for their endless work and support. Grateful for Dom who was instrumental in getting Love Foundation set up. Thank you to THI (Transition Home Inc) Michelle Johnson for the introduction to the CCT program. Pauline- concurred Michelle is the reason the program is as successful as it is and the entire team at THI is phenomenal.

7. Open Forum 4:20 p.m.

8. Adjourn 4:30 p.m.



Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request for persons with disabilities. Auxiliary aids and services for individuals with disabilities and language services for individuals whose first language is not English may be provided upon request. Please notify John Barry at john.r.barry@state.co.us or the 504/ADA Coordinator at hcpf504ada@state.co.us at least one week prior to the meeting to make arrangements.

