

Cross System Advisory Group Begins Work

The first meeting of the Cross-System Advisory Group was held in September. This is the group that will oversee the Cross-System Navigation in a Managed Care Environment initiative for the i2i Center. The purpose of the grant is to develop recommendations for the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) about how individuals with I/DD and their families can best be supported to effectively navigate across various service systems (cross-system navigation) as DHHS moves toward implementation of Medicaid Transformation.

During the session, a diverse group of 15 individuals participated, representing organizations ranging from state Medicaid agencies to LME-MCOs to family organizations. Erika Hagensen, Policy Consultant for the NCCDD, presented on the State of the State, and Kelly Friedlander, Project Director, provided an overview of the initiative. The guest subject matter expert, Barbara Brent, Director of State Policy at the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS), gave a presentation entitled, “The National Landscape: Navigating with Voice & Choice Across Systems.” She reviewed national trends regarding Managed Long-Term Services & Supports (MLTSS), challenges states have faced, challenges of serving people with I/DD in what has (until recently) been a medically based model, and CMS rules and regulations that are affecting states as they transition to managed care. Ms. Brent also discussed the challenges in treating individuals with I/DD who have co-occurring mental health diagnoses, as mental health issues tend to utilize a recovery-oriented approach while I/DD services have a habilitative approach. Stakeholder engagement was also discussed, with Ms. Brent emphasizing that early and ongoing inclusion has helped prevent issues in other states.

After Ms. Brent’s discussion, the group engaged in a dialogue to outline priorities and strategies for the Advisory Group moving forward. One of the significant barriers in discussing cross-system navigation is around language and defining the meaning of various terms to ensure that everyone is speaking the same language. The group agreed it would be good to identify and re-iterate current service definitions as discussions move forward and the group looks at how cross-system navigation can be redesigned to meet the emerging Medicaid Transformation system. The Advisory Group also discussed approaching Cross-System Navigation from a variety of angles, including system redesign through policy, stakeholder engagement at the state level, and developing a comprehensive overall educational approach about the systems and navigation for consumers and family members.

Mary Hooper, i2i Executive Director, and a member of the Advisory Group, offered her summary of the meeting in the following way, “Rarely have I had the opportunity to sit in a room surrounded by this level of expertise in I-DD and found such willingness to share and learn across the entire group. Kelly (Friedlander) did an excellent job recruiting a good cross section of individuals, including consumers, family members, professionals, and advocates. What I appreciated most was that people spoke from their experiences, and that all perspectives were valued equally. I have every confidence that this Advisory Group will be successful in its work, and I am grateful for the time and effort the members are committing to the effort.”

The Cross-System Advisory Group will reconvene on December 4th in Pinehurst, NC. During this meeting, they will engage in group brainstorming around what redesigns of the service system and service provisions are necessary to ensure people with I/DD and their families can navigate Medicaid Transformation successfully.