NCDHHS Innovations Supported Living Levels 2 & 3 Stakeholders Meeting

Thursday, September 30, 2021, 3:30pm – 5:00pm

Meeting Notes

1. Welcome, Meeting Overview & Group Polls

- Linda Kendall Fields, UNC Chapel Hill, Cares Program Coordinator welcomed the group of 45 participants and gave a meeting overview.
- Please see Supported Living 2&3 Action Team subgroup reports on page 2 & 3 of these notes.
- Group polling revealed that 40% of today's participants represent LME/MCOs; 26% represent family/close friends; 17% providers; 14% DHHS staff and 3% Other.
- Family members/close friends (27 people) responded to an additional poll indicating that 11% represented Innovations Supported Living (SL) Level 3; 7% SL Level 2; 7% on Innovations but not SL; and 7% on the Registry of Unmet Needs.
- Philip Woodward of the NC Council on Developmental Disabilities posted the following in the chat box: *"In response to the poll questions, for anyone who is on the Registry of Unmet Needs or has a family member on the Registry, NCCDD is preparing to start a four-year initiative to address the Registry of Unmet Needs. Please feel free to e-mail me at philip.c.woodward@dhhs.nc.gov if you want more information once it starts. Thank you."*

2. Medicaid, Tailored Plans and Supported Living in NC

- Kenneth Bausell, IDD Manager, NC Medicaid, Behavioral Health shared a PowerPoint with the group which addressed the significant changes to Medicaid this year.
- Medicaid has moved to a managed care system and individuals served under the Innovations Waiver, including those using Supported Living will stay under the current system until July 2022. Individuals/Families will be notified of the Tailored Plan enrollment process in the spring.
- Kenneth's PowerPoint will be sent out as soon as the LME/MCO slide is updated and most of Kenneth's presentation can be accessed through the recording.

3. Polls, Comments & Questions from Participants

- Linda Kendall Fields invited questions and comments verbally and through the chat box.
- One of two final polls taken during the meeting indicated that 61% of participants preferred meetings be held late on Thursdays, like today; 26% preferred Thursday mornings; 3% Friday mornings; and 10% had no preference.
- The second and final poll indicated interest in several topics for future meetings, with #1) Affordable, accessible housing, including Section 811, leading the way.
- Other topics (in order of interest) include: 2) Budgeting for Supported Living; 3) Supported Living How To Guidebook; 4) More on Medicaid Managed Care/SL; 5) Finding/Retaining DSPs; 6) Family stories of trials/triumphs; 7) Roommate matching; 8) Provider stories of trials & triumph; 9) Supported Decision-Making/Guardianship; 10) Working with your LME/MCO.

4. Adjourn until early 2022 (Meeting dates and times will be announced)

*Our Action Team Subgroups are working hard to improve Supported Living in North Carolina. Please read their updates below!

Action Team Subgroup Reports

1. **NC Direct Support Professionals (DSP) Workgroup:**

Our grassroots advocacy group has continued to let legislators know about the critical need for NC Innovations DSPs. We're a very active group that meets every Thursday from 12- 1:00pm via Zoom. If you're interested in joining our efforts, please ask to be added to our email list by contacting Co-Chair Annette Smith at nettersmith@yahoo.com. Thanks for your GREAT advocacy too!

Updates:

- It is vitally important to prioritize increased DSP wages, especially as NC Innovations slots are increased.
- The NC House and Senate are working on a joint budget proposal to bridge differing approaches to the problem.
- Advocates ask that American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds be designated by the General Assembly to increase DSP wages; otherwise, these funds cannot be used for this purpose. If allocated, the federal government will provide 3 to 4 years of wage increases with a small state match.
- This will allow time for the state to continue funding so that community-based DSP wages are on par with DSP wages in state facilities ($15/hr minimum wage).
- The DSP Workgroup wiill continue to communicate with NC DHHS and the General Assembly on key points, including assuring that funding will go directly to DSP wages.

2. **The SL 2&3 Budget Subgroup:**

The Budget Subgroup has been addressing the following issues in recent weeks:

- Structuring a new tiered upgrade for the Supported Living per diem rate that will consider the unique needs faced by those utilizing supported living at the second and third levels (i.e., SL 2&3)

- Studying the changes coming to Special Assistance In-Home Services through Departments of Social Services
- Determining how to best address affordable housing across the state.
- Framing the addition of an add-on service of “Program Manager" for SL 2&3

3. Supported Living: A How To Guidebook

A grant was awarded to Liberty Corners Enterprise by the NC Council on Developmental Disabilities to develop “Supported Living: A How To Guidebook.” Grant activities began in July and include the following:

- Outreach to the Latinx community has begun. Participation in Latinx listening session on 9/16/2021.
- Focus group held with Providers of SL 2 and 3 on 9/23/201
- Identification of Parents/Family Members interested in being a part of focus group has begun.
- Jennifer Waite has been identified as the Project Director for the Grant.