

MEDICAID SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES AUGUST 14, 2006

Present: Commissioners Barb Cohee, John Vandel, Lorraine Saulino-Klein and Dixie Roberts, and Medicaid Subcommittee member Greg Gruman. Staff: Susan Anderson. Guests: Bev Morrow, Aging Division, Dept. of Health, Cliff Mikesell and Chris Newman, Developmentally Disabled programs (by phone)

The focus of the meeting was to examine preliminary areas for study proposed by Milliman, Inc. the contractors performing a study of how Wyoming can use Medicaid waivers to improve care and reduce cost for the Longterm Care and Developmentally Disabled populations.

Longterm Care

Greg Gruman described various efforts to give people treatment in the community rather than in a nursing home:

- “Money follows the person” – Wyoming is applying for this waiver that would support and expand such programs as “Project Out.”
- Longterm care partnership – allows people to disregard certain assets in planning for longterm care and encourages responsible planning
- Cash and counseling – allows cash payments to longterm care recipients for needed support uses

Bev Morrow described a list of programs for older and disabled persons. Among the issues discussed were:

- The needs of the elderly and of the people who can be employed to provide community services don’t have an active voice to explain their needs to legislators. The committee members discussed ways to improve visibility to legislators, and outreach to the seniors who don’t know what services are available.
- Low pay is a barrier to providing in-community services
- These programs can help stabilize people in the community: Family Caregiver Support Program, Ombudsman Programs, Programs for Prevention of Elder Abuse, State Legal Assistance, Nutrition Services, Supportive Services (transportation, health and wellness activities and others), community-based in-home services, Senior Companion Program, Project Out.

Outreach and education discussion:

Commissioner John Vandel suggested that pharmacists could become a resource for the elderly as they are often the first point of contact. He suggested continuing education training for pharmacists.

Bev Morrow described a Caregiver Handbook which offers resource information

DD Services

- Cliff Mikesell was asked about cost savings to DD populations by providing services in homes rather than institutions. He said the savings at home is major. It costs one third the institutional cost to keep a DD person at home.

- John Vandell suggested the need to show statistically how a dollar invested in community and home services saves in institutional costs.
- Wyoming has a high rate of out-of-home placement. The hope is that the Milliman study can point out triggers that take people out of the home.
- More training for those caring for DD children could reduce their need for respite care, according to Chris Newman.
- Need for coordinating case management was discussed.