

# **MEDICAID OVERSIGHT AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

## **Minutes**

**August 11, 2022**

### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The Medicaid Oversight and Advisory Committee meeting was held on Thursday, August 11, 2022, at 10:00 AM, in Room 131 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Stephen Meredith, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Stephen Meredith, Co-Chair; Representative Daniel Elliott, Co-Chair; Senators Ralph Alvarado, Danny Carroll, Jimmy Higdon, and Morgan McGarvey; Representatives Jim Gooch Jr., and Lisa Willner.

Guest Legislators: Representative Kimberly Poore Moser.

Guests: Betsy Johnson, President and Executive Director, Kentucky Association of Health Care Facilities and the Kentucky Center for Assisted Living; Emily Weber, Director of Communications, Marketing, and Public Affairs, Kentucky Association of Health Care Facilities; Krista Hensel, Chief Executive Officer, Greg Irby, Chief Operations Officer, and Dr. Lisa Cook, Behavioral Health Director, UnitedHealthcare Group of Kentucky; Molly Lewis, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Kentucky Primary Care Association; Tara Stanfield, Chief Integrated Care Officer; and Dr. John Landis, DMD, Chief Dental Officer, Healthfirst Bluegrass.

LRC Staff: Chris Joffrion, Lead Staff, DJ Burns, Becky Lancaster, and Eric Rodenberg.

### **Approval of Minutes**

A motion to approve the July 7, 2022, minutes was made by Senator Alvarado, seconded by Representative Elliott, and approved by a voice vote.

### **The Impact of Federally Mandated Staffing Ratios for Nursing Facilities**

Betsy Johnson, President and Executive Director, Kentucky Association of Health Care Facilities and the Kentucky Center for Assisted Living, discussed the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service's proposal for minimum staff ratio mandates in skilled nursing facilities and the impact it will have on facilities in the commonwealth. She discussed the current labor shortage, the cost associated with meeting proposed staff ratios,

as well as possible incentive policies that may assist in hiring and retaining employees in the future.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Meredith, Ms. Johnson stated that staffing ratios should not be a one-size-fits-all model as each facility differs in size, shape, and acuity of residents.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Carroll, Emily Weber, Director of Communications, Marketing, and Public Affairs, Kentucky Association of Health Care Facilities, stated that the association has conducted two studies on the workforce shortages reported by its members. The studies found a multitude of factors that contributed to the shortages including retirement, burnout due to Covid stress, child care issues, and transportation.

In response to comments from Senator Alvarado, Ms. Johnson stated that employees of Letcher Manor Nursing and Rehabilitation Facility stayed at the facility during the recent flooding to help with evacuating residents to other facilities instead of worrying about their own homes and families and that shows the dedication and passion all facility employees have for the care of the residents.

In response to questions and comments from Representative Willner, Ms. Johnson stated that many perspective employees are met with too many barriers when applying to work at a facility, which leads to them giving up and accepting a job outside of the field.

### **Medicaid Managed Care Organizations' Efforts to improve Health Outcomes, Network Adequacy, and Access to Care – Part 3**

Krista Hensel, Chief Executive Officer, UnitedHealthcare Group of Kentucky, discussed initiatives UnitedHealthcare has developed to improve the health of the Medicaid population in Kentucky, the adequacy and appointment availability of the Medicaid provider network, and grants to rural communities for oral and mental health. Dr. Lisa Cook, Behavioral Health Director, UnitedHealthcare Group of Kentucky, discussed the tools UnitedHealthcare is using to measure the effectiveness and efficacy of Substance use disorder treatment. Greg Irby, Chief Operations Officer, UnitedHealthcare Group of Kentucky, discussed strategies for ensuring equity in healthcare delivery across Kentucky.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Meredith, Ms. Hensel stated that the impediment to improving health across Kentucky is based locally in each community in terms of what barriers citizens face when accessing healthcare services.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Alvarado, Mr. Irby stated that the network adequacy audits are based on secret shopper calls placed to network providers, asking for an appointment with that specific provider to determine the average appointment availability timeframe. Ms. Hensel stated that UnitedHealthcare is continuing to innovate

and expand the capacity of the workforce by investing in telehealth programs and scholarships.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Higdon, Ms. Hensel stated that when a new member is assigned to UnitedHealthcare, both clinical and non-clinical staff will make multiple attempts by telephone and mail to contact that member. She stated that if their attempts are unanswered, staff will then use claim information to contact pharmacies and provider offices to ask for updated contact information for the member. She stated that United Healthcare is conducting studies to understand member's hesitation to get vaccinated for Coronavirus.

In response to questions and comments from Representative Moser, Ms. Hensel stated that UnitedHealthcare employs community health workers (CHW) who help identify the most critical cases that can be connected with a nursing professional. She stated United Healthcare has partnered with the University of Kentucky Center for Excellence in Rural Health and sponsored CHW interns during the summer in Hazard County, Kentucky.

#### **Update from the Kentucky Primary Care Association**

Molly Lewis, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Kentucky Primary Care Association, discussed the level of care provided to Kentuckian's by association members. She stated members provide whole patient, community based, consumer informed, quality, and cost effective care. Tara Stanfield, Chief Integrated Care Officer, Healthfirst Bluegrass, discussed the integrated care model of services provided to its' patients. She discussed examples of patients being treated by the integrated care team. Dr. John Landis, DMD, Chief Dental Officer, Healthfirst Bluegrass, discussed dental services at Healthfirst Bluegrass and the increase in extractions due to the lack of restorative procedures during the pandemic. He discussed and provided examples of the integrated care model.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Meredith, Ms. Lewis stated that KPCA is starting a community health center learning center in northeastern Kentucky that will have opportunities for residency programs to help grow the primary care provider workforce.

In response to questions and comments from Representative Moser, Ms. Stanfield stated that the biggest billing challenge for integrated care is the lack of reimbursement for two different visits in the same day at the same facility. Ms. Lewis stated that KPCA has ideas on how to innovate the billing issues with the integrated care model.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Alvarado, Ms. Stanfield stated that Healthfirst Bluegrass has one fulltime adult psychiatrist and one part-time child psychiatrist. They have made the shortage work by stabilizing patients with the psychiatric team and then passing the patient back to primary care. Ms. Lewis stated that the Federal

Tort Claims Act Program is limited in application to community health centers and Kentucky has 26 programs.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM.