



HEALTH, WELFARE, AND FAMILY SERVICES
LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION TESTIMONY
JUNE 21, 2021

*BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA-
KENTUCKY CHAPTER*

DIANE SCHIRMER

MARY HASS

NAVIGANT REPORT

- We commend the Navigant team's effort to consolidate leadership of waiver operations and administration and streamline processes across all waivers.
- We concur that many administrative items across waivers should be standardized, however, the “one size fits all” approach to care loses the most important focus...the person served.

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide consisting of white lines and circles on a blue gradient background, resembling a circuit board or neural network.

PERSON CENTERED CARE

IF YOU WERE DIAGNOSED WITH BREAST
CANCER, WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE TOLD THAT
YOUR CARE WOULD BE DIRECTED BY AN
ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON?

NAVIGANT REPORT

- The report cites “National trends and Best Practices” repeatedly, however, there are no evidence-based, best practices cited pertaining specifically to brain injury or any other disability group.
- In fact, there is a recommendation to reduce funding to the ABI waivers, which we oppose. The fact is, rates have not increased in well over 10 years yet inflation and costs of providing services have continued to climb. Medicaid Waiver providers are charged with caring for our nation’s most vulnerable individuals yet rates don’t allow wages to be competitive.

AN INTRODUCTION TO BRAIN INJURY

- Brain Injury is not a one-time event; it can become a chronic condition that impacts an individual throughout his or her lifetime.
- Five years post injury 30% of individuals evidence a decline in levels of abilities attained at 1-year post injury
- Five years post injury...1 in 5 individuals dies
- Life expectancy is shortened by 9 years for those who sustain a moderate to severe brain injury
- There is an increased incidence of disease progression akin to Alzheimer's Disease noted in this population over time

KENTUCKIANS LIVING WITH BRAIN INJURY

- In 2014, Kentucky had 32,302 TBI-related emergency department visits and 3,062 hospitalizations.
- Many of these individuals experience lifelong disability and will develop co-morbidities such as psychiatric illness, and substance abuse, among others, and will struggle to maintain a quality of life and work that we take for granted.

CURRENT ABI WAIVERS

- Our current waivers, which have not been revised in over 20 years distinguishes Acute and Long-term categories. All of these individuals have brain injuries, and if these categories cannot be changed they should be expanded to include those individuals who are Medically Complex and Neurobehaviorally-Challenged with rates for services adjusted and based on their individual needs.
- Additionally, there is an opportunity to expand clinical expertise regarding brain injury within the departments. Expertise that is essential to properly assess a candidate for services; and to provide guidance & expertise to waiver providers to help Kentucky stay current with evidence-based brain injury rehabilitation practices.

WHAT MAKES BRAIN INJURY REHABILITATION UNIQUE?

- Our roots are in “*Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*” (PM&R)- *we are a Medical Program.*
- We work as an interdisciplinary treatment team in which all members participate in a coordinated effort toward the same goal to benefit the person served. The team brings a diversity of expertise to the beneficiary, including physicians, clinicians, rehabilitation and general practice nurses, skilled therapists, direct care staff and many other unique providers of brain injury services.
- We are *Person-Centered*.

REHABILITATION THERAPY

- Rehabilitation therapy provided is delivered in the context of the individual's real-life activities that will be pursued in the home or community after discharge from a hospital or other post-acute provider, including residential and transitional brain injury programs. These services include activities of daily living such as self-care, community mobility, transfers, environmental problem-solving, functional mathematics, therapeutic recreation, and other services to enable independent living.

THE CORE OF BRAIN INJURY REHABILITATION

- Cognitive rehabilitation therapy is the basis of brain injury rehabilitation. Cognitive problems change over time for individuals with brain injury and may evolve at a different pace for each person with many interacting factors affecting initial recovery, and recovery over time. Cognitive disorders make it difficult for some individuals with brain injury to monitor changes in their daily health or to reliably comply with medical treatment regimens. Cognitive rehabilitation is a systematically applied set of medical and therapeutic services designed to improve cognitive functioning and participation in activities that may be affected by difficulties in one or more cognitive domains.

FUNCTIONAL OUTCOMES

- Rehabilitation teams across this country focus on regaining and increasing function after illness or injury.
- The team develops a series of functional performance indicators and targets just as we set measurable goals and objectives for those we serve.
- We love to graduate individuals from our programs that have regained some quality of life again. However, there is also a need for a process to transfer off the acute waiver and into another waiver or better yet off all services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Focus on Person-Centered Care for every person served in all waivers.
- Address issues related to gaps in care across waivers such as individuals with neurobehavioral challenges and those who are medically complex.
- Provide flexibility for persons served to transition from one waiver to another without a loss of service.
- Make permanent the Appendix K changes to allow flexibility for providers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide a rate increase across all waivers to address the growing crisis (avoid choosing on waiver over another).
- Provide an immediate rate increase for all waivers to address critical workforce shortages.
- Implement a long-term funding strategy in the next budget to address our workforce crisis going forward providing sustainability for all waivers.

THANK YOU

We thank you for this opportunity to discuss brain injury services in Kentucky.

Please let us know if you have any questions.