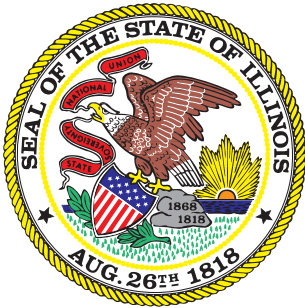


STATE OF ILLINOIS

Illinois Department on Aging



Care Coordination Unit

PERFORMANCE REPORT

October 31, 2023



Presented to:

Illinois Governor JB Pritzker

Illinois General Assembly

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT ON AGING MISSION

The mission of the Illinois Department on Aging is to serve and advocate for older Illinoisans and their caregivers by administering quality and culturally appropriate programs that promote partnerships and encourage independence, dignity, and quality of life.

Illinois Act on Aging

This Care Coordination Unit performance report is produced to fulfill requirements detailed in the Illinois Act on Aging (20 ILCS 105). The Act provides that “the Department shall conduct a quarterly review of Care Coordination Unit performance and adherence to service guidelines. The quarterly review shall be reported to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, and the Minority Leader of the Senate. The Department shall collect and report longitudinal data on the performance of each care coordination unit. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to require the Department to identify specific care coordination units” (20 ILCS 105/4.02).

Community Care Program Overview

The Illinois Department on Aging’s (IDoA) Community Care Program (CCP) is the Medicaid-Waiver Program for the Elderly for which IDoA is the Operating Agency and Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) is the Managing Agency. CCP serves 133,824 (inclusive of fee for service and managed care) older Illinoisans statewide through 41 Care Coordination Units (CCU), 398 in-home provider agencies, 64 Adult Day Service programs (ADS), and a choice of contracted providers for Emergency Home Response Services (EHRS) and Automated Medication Dispensers (AMD). This program serves as alternative to nursing home placement by supporting older adults with person-centered plans, allowing older adults to continue live and thrive in their home and community.

Care Coordination Units

General Overview

The Care Coordination Units (CCUs) serve as the front door to the CCP services. At the initial face-to-face meeting, the Care Coordinator conducts an eligibility assessment and determination of need, then works with the CCP eligible older adult to develop a person-centered plan of care based on the participant's strengths, needs, and preferences. The plan directs different connections the Care Coordinator will make on behalf of the participant outside of CCP and within CCP, including tasks and activities associated with in-home care, ADS, EHRS, and/or AMD. At this visit, the participant chooses their preferred provider, and the Care Coordinator completes the paperwork to get services started within fifteen days.

Six months after the initial assessment or Medicaid redetermination, the CCU conducts a face-to-face six-month review. This check-in could result in a full assessment if the participant is presenting with increased or decreased difficulties or needs.

The CCU must redetermine all CCP participants eligibility and level of need at least annually. At the initial and annual redetermination, the Care Coordinator will conduct the full CCP assessment as well as check for financial eligibility which requires verification of income, assets, and related financial documents. Additionally, participants are required to apply for Medicaid, which the CCU facilitates, unless there is already an application in progress, or the person is currently receiving Medicaid.

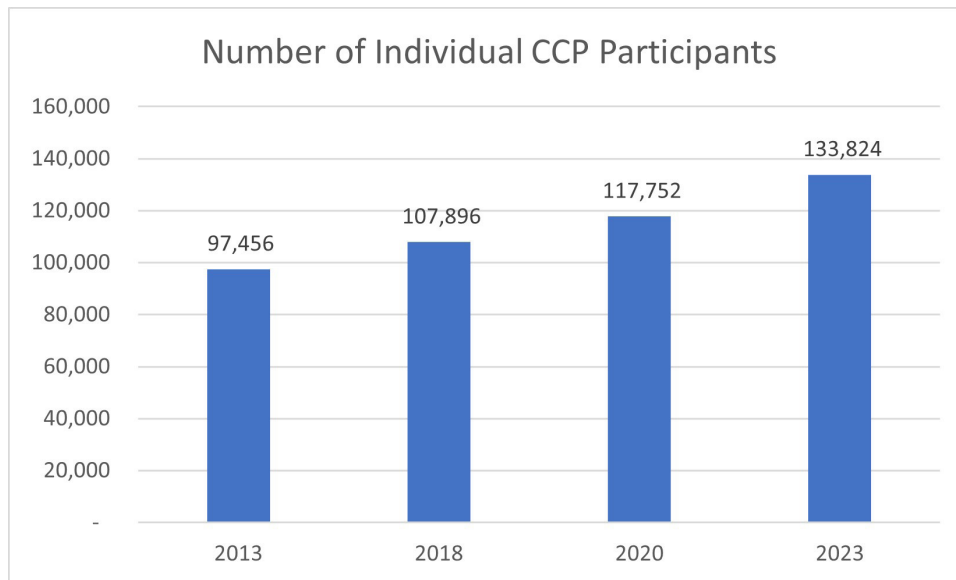
The CCUs are responsible for completing assessments to ensure emergency services are in place for persons returning to the community from institutional settings and hospitalizations, which is known as Choices for Care.

Successes

Public Health Emergency and Unwinding

The CCUs continue to be the eyes on older adults across the state. Knowing the devastating effect of social isolation and loneliness, IDoA required Care Coordinators to return to face-to-face visits in July of 2021 to determine the impact of the pandemic on participants and to ensure the person-centered plans of care continued to meet the needs and preferences of the recipients. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Care Coordinator and in-home providers served a pivotal role interacting with older adults and mitigating against the effects of social isolation.

The aging population in Illinois is growing, with the fastest growing segment comprised of adults most likely to need assistance—people aged 85 years and older, who are projected to more than double from by 2040. Prior to the pandemic, CCP was already experiencing significant growth, adding 20,000 more participants to the CCP roles from 2013-2020, then another 16,000 since the pandemic began (see chart below). This growth is attributed to the general increase in the older adult population, presumed CCP and Medicaid eligibility during the pandemic, and restrictions on Medicaid terminations required by federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid during the Public Health Emergency (PHE). All contributed to higher caseloads for the CCUs. Since the end of the PHE, the CCUs have begun reassessing all participants to ensure they meet the pre-pandemic eligibility requirements. However, CCP has not seen an overall decrease in the number of participants as the program continues to receive new enrollees.



Care Coordination Unit Quality Insurance Program Audits

From January - July of 2023, the IDoA monitoring team completed programmatic quality insurance audits of all CCUs. The audits revealed a general high rate of compliance with the regulatory requirements set forth in 89 Ill. Admin. Code 240, IDoA's policies, and contract obligations. Additionally, CCUs demonstrated a high level of concern for program participants' health, safety, and welfare through operating in a person-centered manner to help to ensure needs are met outside of the scope of CCP. This includes providing referrals to Home Delivered Meals and other Older American Act services; connecting older persons to benefits like SNAP, LIHEAP, and local resources; referring to transportation services to go to doctor appointments, senior centers, social activities, and run errands; connecting older Illinoisans to gap-filling and emergency services funding for household repairs; adding accessibility features, or help with paying utilities; and, in general, finding resources for the needs that are presented by the older person, as available locally.

Top compliance issues include, but are not limited to, workforce shortage; incomplete files; untimely assessments and follow-up; untimely authorization for billing; and failure to complete all 18 hours of in-service training for Care Coordinators. The CCUs remedied these compliance issues by submitting and completing a plan of correction, which included targeted staff training to address deficiencies. During follow-up review, almost all CCUs were in full compliance.

Challenges

Stigma of Medicaid in Older Adult Generations

On May 12, 2023, HFS increased the asset level for Medicaid Aged, Blind, and/or Disabled (AABD) from \$2,000 to \$17,500. This increase is now reflective of the asset limits required for an individual seeking enrollment in CCP. Prior to this change in Medicaid asset limits, long-time CCP participants that maintained assets above \$4,000 but below \$17,500 did not have to apply for Medicaid as they were assumed ineligible. The CCUs are observing an increased reluctance among applicants/ participants to disclose financial information and/or apply for Medicaid. One factor contributing to the stigma about Medicaid is the potential loss of generational wealth due to Medicaid Estate Recovery. To help educate participants and ease these concerns, IDoA developed a standard letter that the CCUs provide to the participants regarding Medicaid Estate Recovery, which includes the boundaries for recovery:

- Your spouse is NOT affected. If you are married, no claim will be made against the estate during the lifetime of your spouse.
- A blind or disabled child of any age is NOT affected during their lifetime.
- No claims will be made until any children are over the age of 21.
- No claims will be made on an estate with a value less than and up to \$25,000.
- No claims will be made if asking the heirs for the money would then cause an undue hardship.
- As a result of recent legislation, liens will not be placed on your estate. However, liens placed prior to the legislation will remain in effect until they are due to be renewed. The prohibition on issuing liens does not preclude HFS from filing an estate recovery claim.

Care Coordination Unit Workforce Shortages

The CCUs have experienced notable workforce shortages across the state. In August 2022, IDoA conducted a workforce survey of the CCUs and found that many of the CCUs continue to experience significant issues both with recruitment and retention.

Where workforce shortages impact a CCUs ability to comply with regulatory and contractual requirements, IDoA's Office of Community Care Services staff facilitates a monthly monitoring call to discuss the CCU action plans for increasing redetermination rates, ensuring timeliness in responding to Critical Events, and increasing the workforce. For CCUs in compliance, IDoA facilitates a quarterly monitoring call to learn about successes and challenges.

Summary

The CCUs have persevered through the challenges the PHE presented along with the natural increase in CCP participation owing to an increasing number of older persons. Now as the State unwinds from the PHE, CCUs have been on the forefront of ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of diverse older Illinoisans across the State by providing person-centered plans that support older adults in their home and community.

Workforce shortages along with the sustained increase in need for CCP will continue to be a challenge for the CCUs. As the General Assembly focuses on workforce shortages across the state, IDoA hopes the labor needs of the aging network, particularly Care Coordinators and In-homecare Aides, will be a topic of focus and future workforce investments.



State of Illinois

Department on Aging

One Natural Resources Way, #100
Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271

Senior HelpLine:

1-800-252-8966, 711 (TRS)

8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday

24-Hour Adult Protective Services Hotline:

1-866-800-1409, 711 (TRS)

ilaging.illinois.gov

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