

IL Council of Care Coordination Units

Testimony on Medicaid Reform

December 13, 2010

The IL Council of Case Coordination Units would like to thank the Chairpersons and Special Committee on Medicaid Reform for this opportunity to provide comments on the issues related to Medicaid services for frail older adults. The Illinois Council of Case Coordination Units (ICCCU) is an association composed of community agencies designated by the IL Department on Aging to be Case Coordination Units and/or Protective Services agencies that assist frail older adults to remain as independent as possible.

Medicaid is an essential resource for low income frail older adults and provides necessary medical, nursing home, and community based services that address the health and welfare of thousands of older individuals. The ICCCU supports the effort to make improvements in the Medicaid system which promote the highest level of independence and welfare for older adults, improve access and service for those eligible for Medicaid, and which promote cost savings.

Case Coordination Units speak from 27 years experience in evaluation and coordination of care for older adults and experience in improvement of services through innovations. When frail older adults and their families need to make decisions and secure long term care services, the Case Coordination Units play an important role to assist older adults to be able to stay in the community as an option to nursing home placement. Older adults and families often turn to nursing home because they do not know how to package community services or negotiate services. Case Coordination Units have years of established cross referral patterns with a wide variety of community services, resources and faith organizations. Case Coordination Units assist elders to make informed choices, to find appropriate levels of care, to secure services, problem solve, and coordinate care so they can remain as independent as possible.

Case Coordination Units offer many important components of the community based system:

- **A single point of access** to make it easy to secure community based services as options to nursing home placement
- **Comprehensive assessment** conducted in their home to help older adults and caregivers evaluate their needs in all areas impacting their ability to remain independent
- **Eligibility determination for Community Care Program (CCP)** which provides homecare, adult day care, emergency response, money management and other services to help frail elders to remain at home.
- **Assistance with Medicaid applications** for individuals receiving Community Care Program services. Medicaid enrollment allows the cost of CCP to be shared by the federal government, reduces the State's share for CCP services, and benefits elders.
- **Service planning** with the older adult and family to utilize informal family support and **Linkage** to secure needed community services and programs
- **Service Authorization** for Community Care Program to assure that services are cost effective and appropriate for participant's needs
- **Casework** to stabilize situation, provide advocacy, and bridge all gaps
- **Reassessment and monitoring** as needs change over time

- **Pre Admission nursing home screening** to offer community based options for older persons who are considering nursing home placement
- **Assistance for appropriate nursing home residents to return home (Money Follows the Person)**

The ICCCU would like to contribute a perspective based on working with 70,000 older adults each year, a concern for older adults, and the State fiscal considerations. Many of the ICCCU recommendations are in line with the HFS Report on Efficiencies and Improvements provided in August 2010.

The IL Council of Case Coordination Units offers these suggestions:

- **ICCCU promotes efforts to strengthen and support community based services as options to long term facility placement and as a solution to caring for the growing population of older adults who need long term care.** Community based care is a cost effective and preferred method of providing needed care to frail older adults. Facility care can be three times the cost of community based care for an individual. Illinois needs to rebalance the system of care. More individuals could remain at home with an enhanced network of community care.
- **Case Coordination Units (CCUs) offer an important component of the community based system and expansion of the role should be included in Medicaid reform.** Case Coordination Units are part of the solution because they make services accessible to frail elders through in home visits, facilitate frail older adults' informed choice, coordinate care to meet individual needs, meet Medicaid Waiver requirements, and assure appropriate use of the long term care system. Case Coordination is one door for all those services that are delivered in home or in the community for frail older adults. As Illinois moves toward aging and disabilities centers, CCU functions could play a greater role.
- **Affordable Care Act has a central theme of improved coordination of care. IDOA Case Coordination Units could be of more assistance in care management of the older Medicaid recipients if there was improved coordination and sharing of information between primary care physicians, hospitals, Medicaid Managed Care, other health providers and Case Coordination Units.** The ICCCU has begun efforts to improve coordination with home health, mental health, and hospitals. CCUs are interested in working with the new Integrated Care demonstration in suburban Chicago area. Many health problems are compounded by environmental, financial, accessibility, health education, or language issues. Because Case Coordination Units provide services in the home, know the participant and family caregivers, offer bilingual staff, and coordinate many community options already, Case Coordination Units could be of greater assistance in the management of high risk elders' health.
- **Case Coordination Units' prescreen process could be enhanced into a transitional care model based on a current demonstration project.** In that model, CCUs are more integrated with the hospital setting and receive referrals sooner. When older adults discharge from a hospital stay, they can experience unmet social needs which can increase the likelihood of rehospitalization. Case Coordination Units can provide coordination of the community service network to meet those needs and support medical discharge plans.

- **Follow ups from prescreen process can be expanded so that those entering nursing home for short term stays or those who improve, can receive support to return home or transition to more independent settings.** Efforts, presently under nursing home prescreening program and “Money Follows the Person”, could be expanded through more routine follow up of individuals likely to return home. Money Follows the Person demonstration which is showing success could be structured to have designated Care Coordinators who focus on those specific program objections and follow up efforts.
- **A streamlined application process between Illinois Department on Aging (IDOA), Case Coordination Units, and Public Aid could reduce inefficiencies and problems with accessibility.** When eligible Community Care Program participants are on Medicaid, the State’s cost of community based care is reduced through a federal share. Case Coordination Unit staff conduct assessment in the frail elder’s home and can assist with the Medicaid application and scan available eligibility documents during the assessment. The process often bogs down when the application is submitted to the busy local Public Aid office. For every month that clients’ applications are delayed and inappropriately denied at the public aid level, the State is losing many thousands of dollars which could translate into millions on an annual basis. Because Care Coordination Units see people in their homes, they can play a significant role in facilitating the application process. There is a need for a consistent, statewide fast track approach to applications gathered by Care Coordination Units, improved coordination between IDOA Case Coordination Units and Il Public Aid Office Medicaid protocols, and an expanded role for CCUs in the Medicaid eligibility process via an electronic application process. This could reduce duplication of efforts, workload for Public Aid and inefficiencies.
- **Improvements in IT systems at IDOA and Department on Public Aid could reduce fragmentation in data and maximize federal share for Community Care Program and other programs**
- **Improvements in payment cycles for Care Coordination and providers will improve service.** Delayed payments have caused agencies to reduce staff hours or hold staff positions open. This ultimately reduces the hours of service for older adults and causes service delays.

The IL Council of Care Coordination Units will work actively with the State by sharing information and experience from 27 years of working with frail older adults. The ICCCU looks forward to planning and implementing changes that will improve long term care services, increase efficiencies, and further develop a network of community based services.