

Medicaid Managed Care Weekly

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Plans Finalized for Regional ABD Consumer "Focus Groups"

Randomly selected Medicaid consumers will soon receive invitations to participate in regional forums and provide input on the Aged, Blind & Disabled (ABD) managed care enrollment process. Eight focus groups will be held in August, one in each of the managed care regions throughout Ohio. Focus group participants have been selected at random based on a sampling methodology that represents the diversity of the ABD Medicaid population targeted for managed care enrollment. Topics for each consumer forum will include an overview of Medicaid managed care implementation and feedback directly from consumers about what information they want in order to choose the best health plan for them. Space is very limited and the intended target audience is Medicaid consumers who were randomly selected to participate, and family/friends who accompany them to the forum. ODJFS will also be happy to hear from other stakeholders and interested parties on serving ABD consumers. Feel free to contact us at 614-466-4693.

Managed Care Will Not Replace Existing Behavioral Health Arrangements

ODJFS staff would like to clarify that the statewide expansion of Medicaid managed care WILL NOT affect existing arrangements between behavioral health service providers and County Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Boards. As a general rule, those services (also called community behavioral health services) will remain within the existing Medicaid fee-for-service environment. Medicaid consumers can continue to self select to receive Medicaid covered medically necessary behavioral health services from their community providers whether or not they are enrolled with a managed care plan. We appreciate input from the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities on this subject.

Progress Report: Covered Families & Children Managed Care Program Expansion

Starting this week **in the South West and West Central Regions**, consumers will begin receiving notices from ODJFS providing them with information about how to enroll in Medicaid managed care plans (MCPs). Consumers in the West Central region will receive these notices first, closely followed by those in the South West. Enrollment will begin in August and should be completed by the end of September.

In the **East Central Region**, managed care enrollment continues smoothly. Enrollment notices have been sent to all consumers in the region who make up the Medicaid Covered Families and Children (CFC) managed care population. Medicaid managed care already exists in Stark and Summit counties within this region. Therefore, the 90,000 Medicaid consumers currently enrolled in managed care have the option to continue in their present MCP or switch to a different plan. Both these existing managed care consumers and new enrollees who self-selected an MCP before July 20th, will have coverage effective August 1st. The remaining consumers who did not self-select an MCP will be assigned one and their coverage will begin September 1st.

In the remaining five Ohio Regions, MCPs are working diligently toward meeting ODJFS's requirements to assure Medicaid consumers have sufficient access to Medicaid health care providers. Each MCP must contract with a "panel" of providers - including primary care physicians, medical specialists, hospitals, pharmacies, laboratories, etc., who will serve Medicaid consumers enrolled with their plan. ODJFS sets minimum standards for a **sufficient number, capacity, variety and geographic distribution** of these providers and requires MCPs to meet these "provider panel" standards before expanding into any region. Expansions are delayed until health plans are able to guarantee sufficient consumer access to health services. To date, MCPs have been able to meet ODJFS's planned roll-out schedule for regional expansion among the CFC population. We anticipate the next region for Medicaid managed care expansion to be selected sometime in August, 2006 to begin consumer enrollment in September.