

March 2024 Newsletter: *LTSS Providers and Partners*



Members of Leadership at several agencies have joined together to ensure streamlined communications are occurring. Partners in this effort include: The Arc of Pueblo, The Arc of the Pikes Peak Region, Pueblo County DHS, El Paso County DHS, The Resource Exchange, and CCHA. Welcome to our first edition!

We hope you had a chance to read the letter provided by HCPF earlier this month ([HCPF Statement on CCM Impact for CMAs to Send to Members Feb 2024 - Google Docs](#)). We recognize that this is a lengthy read and our strategy is to outline all the issues and then provide regular updates. To build on this letter from HCPF, we offer the following information.

The Issues

Colorado's system for long-term care and services for people with disabilities is experiencing unprecedented challenges causing system-wide instability and jeopardizing care for many of Colorado's most vulnerable citizens—the people receiving long-term services (henceforth referred to as members). These challenges are a result of compounding effects to organizations and their workforces. These include impacts to workforce from the pandemic, CMA organizational disruption due to Case Management Redesign, Care and Case Management System (CCM) dysfunction, and unwind from the end of the Public Health Emergency (PHE). The confluence of all of these challenges at the same time has led to significant backlog and disruption of services for a vulnerable and at-risk population, creating severe financial challenges for Counties, Case Management Agencies (CMAs) and HCBS providers, and overwhelming direct service staff who are unable to meet the demands of the work necessary to support people.

Counties, CMAs, and Advocacy Organizations have raised these issues with HCPF at the highest levels, The Joint Budget Committee (JBC), and the Governor's Office (OSPB). The severity of the challenges and the urgency for solutions and remedies are being taken very seriously at the state level as well as our local level.

What is being done?

Health Care Policy and Financing has announced several strategies to address the issues. There are both short-term and long-term strategies being explored.

- ❖ **CCM Interventions:** HCPF has brought the leadership of AssureCare to Colorado to meet with and learn from CMA staff the issues being experienced with the CCM. These meetings are being held 3/11-3/15 and a report on the next steps and identified solutions are expected by 3/18. HCPF will be disseminating a Known Issues Tracker very soon (within a week).

- ❖ **Protecting Coverage for LTSS Members:** HCPF is pursuing a number of solutions through several system and process changes in order to mitigate payment delays for providers and ease the backlog and capacity challenges being experienced by counties and CMAs.
- ❖ **Expedited Backlog Processing:** HCPF will expedite an eligibility system change to process the backlog of Level Of Care (LOC) Certification entries.
- ❖ **Preventing Termination During Processing:** HCPF will implement a system change to prevent financial eligibility terminations for missing the LOC while the LOC is being processed.
- ❖ **Temporarily Pausing Terminations:** HCPF will temporarily pause terminations for all reasons for LTSS members for two months past the member's original termination date, unless the termination is for a member who has moved out of state or has passed away. This system change will replace the 60-day extension for the renewal period for Long-Term Care (LTC), individuals on Home and Community Based Services (HCBS), and Buy-In recipients who have yet to return their renewal packet on time. Instead, the system will apply a two-month extension for **all** denial reasons. A notice will be sent to members to let them know they have a two-month extension.
- ❖ **Reinstating Eligibility:** Until the eligibility system change described above can be implemented, HCPF will continue to reinstate eligibility for all LTSS members when their eligibility is set to end, similar to what occurred in February 2024 when HCPF reinstated eligibility for LTSS members after a system update unintentionally terminated their coverage. Once HCPF reinstates a member's eligibility, they will remain active until their case can be properly processed through the two eligibility system changes described above.
- ❖ **Monitoring and Reversing Inappropriate Terminations:** If the member's eligibility is still pending due to missing documentation or verifications after the two-month extension, county workers may manually implement a pause by applying a Good Faith Extension, further delaying termination until the member's case can be fully reviewed. HCPF reissued guidance to county workers on the Good Faith Extension on March 1, 2024, and will be monitoring this closely to watch for any inappropriate terminations and work to reverse those identified.
- ❖ **ARPA funding to CMAs** - to provide assistance with CCM clean up and data entry needs.
- ❖ **Prior Authorization Request (PAR) Extension:** HCPF will extend PARs for LTSS eligible members who do not have a current PAR in the claims payment system for an additional year.
- ❖ **Benefit Plan Extension:** HCPF will extend the member's current benefit plan (e.g., HCBS BI-Brain Injury) for an additional year. This will allow HCPF's claims payment system to continue to pay for services if necessary, information has not been provided through the HCPF Bridge system.
 - If providers are unable to locate a PAR in the Provider Portal, providers should verify eligibility for the LTSS benefits and provide services as they have traditionally provided and submit a claim for services, so HCPF has a timely record of the service being billed. Providers can also call 844-235-2387 for breaks in PARS and the Bridge.

Local Action

- ❖ The establishment of this Communication Workgroup!
- ❖ Collaboration
- ❖ Active Participation in State Level Problem-Solving
- ❖ Collaboration Across Partners/Stakeholders
- ❖ Provider/Member Portal to streamline processes and access to status of services
- ❖ Commitments to staff for support and well-being

Resources/What You Can Do

- ❖ HCPF Website: Stabilizing Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) – This landing page can be accessed by Members, Providers, CMAs and other Partners to learn about the status of efforts and remedies. [Stabilizing Long-Term Services and Supports \(LTSS\) | Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing](#)
- ❖ Sign up for OCL and HCPF Communications
 - If you are not currently on the communications list receiving these emails, [you can sign up here](#). [See a list](#) of all HCPF newsletters you can subscribe to.

What is next?

- ❖ Formal guidelines on implementation of the HCPF efforts above.
- ❖ These newsletters to be distributed biweekly
- ❖ Follow TRE on its primary social media platform, Facebook, [here](#)

Acronym Alignment

- ❖ Acronym Guide: [Office Of Community Living Acronym Glossary | Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing](#)
- ❖ Member = person in services
- ❖ CCM = Care and Case Management system (statewide Member health record). This replaced the Benefits Utilization System (BUS)
- ❖ HCPF = Health Care Policy and Financing
- ❖ CMA = Case Management Agencies. Formerly CCBs and SEPs.
- ❖ CMRD = Case Management Redesign
- ❖ DSA = Direct Service Area. This is how CMRD designated CMAs. TRE works with both DSA 11 (El Paso, Park and Teller Counties) and DSA 12 (Pueblo County).
- ❖ LTSS = Long Term Services and Supports. Also known as HCBS (Home and Community Based Services) or LTC (Long Term Care).