

**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (MDH)  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADMINISTRATION (DDA)  
RATE REVIEW ADVISORY GROUP (RRAG)**

**Date:** Thursday, March 6, 2025

**Time:** 12:30 PM to 1:45 PM

**Location:** Google Meet Webinar

**Chair**

1. Robert White, Chief Operating Officer, DDA

**Advisory Group Members**

1. Donna Retzlaff, Spring Dell Center
2. Shauna Mulcahy, The Arc Frederick County
3. Gregory Miller, Penn-Mar
4. Karen Adams-Gilchrist, Providence Center
5. Laura Howell, MACS
6. Karen Lee, SEEC
7. Carol Custer, SDAN
8. Chris Parks, Somerset Community Services
9. David Ervin, Makom
10. Mat Rice, People on the Go

**State Panelists**

1. Marlana R. Hutchinson, Deputy Secretary
2. Elizabeth Peters, Special Assistant
3. Will Payne, Chief of Staff
4. Nicholas Gabor, Director of Finance
5. Rhonda Workman, Director of Federal Programs and Integrity
6. Wilika Ebo, Chief of Rate Setting, Medicaid
7. Stephanie Jones, Statewide Director of Innovations
8. Antoine Williams, Director of Programs

**The Hilltop Institute Panelists**

1. Christin Diehl, The Hilltop Institute
2. Alice Middleton, The Hilltop Institute
3. Todd Switzer, The Hilltop Institute
4. Chengli Sun, The Hilltop Institute

**CBIZ Optumas Panelists**

1. Steve Schramm, CBIZ Optumas
2. Caleb Lavan, CBIZ Optumas
3. Megan Frenzen, CBIZ Optumas
4. Winter Tucker, CBIZ Optumas
5. Breanna Colvin, CBIZ Optumas

### **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

The meeting was called to order at 12:34 PM by Ms. Marlana R. Hutchinson, Deputy Secretary, Maryland Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). She opened by reviewing the meeting agenda.

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Robert White, Chief Operating Officer, DDA, asked if there were any corrections to the minutes distributed to members on February 27th. No changes were requested.

**Motion by Mr. White:** Move to approve the meeting minutes for the February 6, 2025, RRAG meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Chris Parks, Somerset Community Services, and passed.

### **Employment Services - Follow-Along Supports**

Mr. Steve Schramm, CBIZ Optumas, outlined the goals of the Employment Services (ES) discussion, which included reconciling the Follow Along Supports (FAS) service definition, identifying service gaps for the current definition and potential overlaps with other Employment Services, understanding the current billing practices, and discussing alternative reimbursement approaches.

Ms. Rhonda Workman, Director of Federal Programs and Integrity, DDA, provided an overview of the current Follow-Along Supports working definition. Several RRAG members provided examples of services that they were providing that they felt were not supported by the current FAS rate, as well as process challenges they were experiencing in providing FAS. Ms. Workman asked several clarifying questions so that DDA could better understand the additional service examples and process challenges and take them under advisement when reviewing and/or revising current service definitions and/or processes related to FAS, internally within DDA and externally with partners like DORS.

Mr. Schramm facilitated a discussion with RRAG members regarding the challenges and potential solutions related to scenarios where the Follow-Along Support rate may not sufficiently meet individuals' needs or areas where the process could be improved. Several recommendations and follow-up items from RRAG members were discussed to address these challenges, including the following (documented by Mr. Schramm on an easel board at the meeting):

- Request Rrag members to detail their ratio of indirect to direct services.
- Clarify the operational procedures distinguishing follow-along support from ongoing support and other related services.
- Identify administrative barriers within DDA/DORs that delay individuals from accessing services promptly.
- Request Rrag members to describe and categorize the additional services they provide.
- Clarify service authorization guidelines for Community Development Services (CDS).
- If DDA adopts Value-Based Payment (VBP) reimbursement mechanisms, ensure that the base reimbursement amount sufficiently covers daily expenses, with add-on funds allocated based on outcomes (added after the LEAD Webinar Key Themes discussion noted below).

Mr. Parks requested the rate-setting methodology and calculations behind the 3:1 ratio for direct and indirect hours for the Follow-Along Support rate.

Mr. Schramm provided a summary and facilitated a discussion on the key themes from the LEAD Webinars, focusing on an outcome-based approach to rates. The discussion emphasized transitioning from compensating providers for staff time to prioritizing payments for outcomes associated with the service (e.g., employment duration, level of job, increases in hourly wage, etc.), adapting methodologies to address individual needs and incentivizing improvement, and refining success metrics away from the total cost of the service to better reflect outcome achievements by incorporating outcomes in the metric formula (e.g., cost per individual covered, cost per employment duration, etc.). Additionally, Mr. Schramm presented high-level examples of outcome-based rate models from Wisconsin (WI) and Tennessee (TN) that included more sophisticated rate components (e.g., WI uses duration and individual risk components while TN includes quality payments). The discussion ended with recognizing that these improvements would only be possible once the base data from the General Ledger Template was sufficiently robust to support the current methodology.

Mr. Caleb Lavan of CBIZ Optumas presented an analysis of recent trends in the utilization of Employment Services. The findings highlighted significant growth in expenditures for Employment Services over the past several years. To identify some of the drivers of the growth, Mr. Lavan reviewed expenditure trends for Self-Direction versus Traditional Employment Services, highlighting that Traditional Employment Services were driving the growth appearing to be driven by increased utilization and increased costs per service. Mr. Lavan answered clarifying questions regarding the presented data.

### **General Ledger Template**

Ms. Christin Diehl, The Hilltop Institute, provided an update on the General Ledger (GL) Template data collection process and technical assistance that has been ongoing with the provider community for over two years. The Hilltop team continues to systematically work through each FY 2024 GL submission with a double review process and will be reaching out to every provider who submitted a GL Template with feedback and requests for edits as needed.

As of March 6th, Hilltop has reviewed over 150 templates, shared feedback with providers, and received 66 resubmissions with revised data. The team has met with over 50 providers and remains available to offer targeted technical assistance. Additionally, Hilltop is currently working with two providers who have volunteered to provide peer-to-peer technical assistance to other providers. It was noted that while the submission rate is approximately 80%, not all of those submissions will include accurate and complete data, so providers must continue to engage to improve the accuracy of the GL data.

In the coming weeks, Hilltop will contact providers who have not yet submitted their 2024 fiscal year data to offer peer-to-peer assistance and additional resources. Hilltop also plans to engage with provider groups to gather direct feedback and develop further training opportunities and resources to address identified challenges. Providers interested in sharing feedback were encouraged to contact Hilltop directly.

### **Next Steps and Adjournment**

Ms. Hutchinson shared the schedule for the remaining RRAG meetings for 2025. Details were shared on where meeting materials can be found on the RRAG website. Ms. Hutchinson adjourned the meeting at 1:47 PM.