

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

Date: Thursday, April 18, 2024

Time: 12:30 PM to 1:45 PM

Location: GoToWebinar

Attendance:

Executive Sponsors

1. Dr. Laura Herrera Scott, Secretary (excused)
2. Marlana R. Hutchinson, Deputy Secretary

Co-Chairs

1. Jennifer McIlvaine, Director of Finance, Medicaid, MDH
2. 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 (excused)
5. Laura Howell, MACS
6. Karen Lee, SEEC
7. Carol Custer, SDAN
8. Chris Parks, Somerset Community Services
9. David Ervin, Makom (excused)
10. Mat Rice, People on the Go

State Panelists

1. Elizabeth Peters, Special Assistant
2. Wesley Huntemann, Chief of Staff
3. Nicholas Gabor, Director of Finance (excused)
4. Rhonda Workman, Director of Federal Programs and Integrity
5. Leslie Thompson, Acting Director of Programs

6. Wilika Ebo, Chief of Rate Setting, Medicaid (excused)

The Hilltop Institute Panelists

1. Christin Diehl, The Hilltop Institute
2. Todd Switzer, The Hilltop Institute (excused)
3. Cynthia Woodcook, The Hilltop Institute
4. Alice Middleton, The Hilltop Institute
5. Chengli Sun, The Hilltop Institute
6. Elizabeth Blake, The Hilltop Institute
7. MaryAnn Mood, The Hilltop Institute
8. Dawn Aul, 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

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 12:39 pm by Ms. Marlana R. Hutchinson, Deputy Secretary, Maryland Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Administration. She opened by reviewing the meeting agenda.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Ms. Jennifer McIlvaine, Director of Finance, Medicaid, MDH asked if there were any corrections to the minutes distributed to members on April 11th. No changes were requested.

Motion by Ms. McIlvaine: Move to approve the meeting minutes for the March 7, 2024 RRAG meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. Chris Parks, Somerset Community Services and passed.

Employment Services Update

Ms. Leslie Thompson, Acting Director of Programs, DDA, MDH provided updates on the Employment First Workgroup. The workgroup is currently drafting a charter and reviewing membership to ensure an adequate cross-representation among stakeholder groups. Mr. Robert White, Chief Operating

Officer, DDA stated that the workgroup will need to finalize their policy review before any recommendations can be made to the RRAG regarding rates.

Mr. Parks asked if there is value in continuing to discuss employment services in the RRAG to provide the Employment First Workgroup with recommendations and concerns to consider when drafting policies. Mr. White acknowledged the point raised by Mr. Parks and explained that RRAG will continue to discuss employment services.

Acuity Feedback

Mr. White gave an overview of the acuity feedback survey that was shared with providers on March 7, 2024 to assist with further exploring acuity within the current rate structure, specifically on where adjustments might be necessary and what kind of data providers can contribute to support these analyses. Mr. White went on to give a high level summary of the responses received from the acuity feedback survey which included 18 responses directly related to acuity.

Mr. White turned it over to Ms. Karen Lee, SEEC, to share how her organization addresses acuity using the current service definitions.

Mr. Parks stated that when comparing the old rate system to the new rate system, there is a significant group of people at the higher end of the old matrix system, the more complex individuals, where the base rate is less. He acknowledged the add-on component of the dedicated hours that is available to get additional support, but that adding hours does not address the additional expenditures associated with those individuals. Mr. Parks stated that coming up with enhanced services such as the enhanced residential would give additional resources to address those more complex scenarios.

Mr. Parks addressed the small number of responses received from the acuity feedback survey and asked if the communication system or style needs to be examined to help improve the number of responses received when requesting feedback. He explained that if this pattern continues that there will continue to be a struggle with obtaining enough data to inform rate decisions. Mr. White responded that DDA has made the completion of data collection tools such as the GL template mandatory to all providers. Mr. White reiterated that the rate setting process is a data-driven process and providers need to participate in these efforts to inform decisions.

Ms. Laura Howell, MACS stated that the amount of responses received could be due to the complexity of the questions asked in the acuity feedback survey. She stated that the limited number of responses should not be interpreted to mean that providers are not having issues with acuity. She shared that she has heard from many providers that have issues with acuity but did not know how to answer certain questions on the acuity feedback survey.

Ms. Hutchinson reminded the members that technical assistance is available to all providers and to direct any providers having issues to DDA. Mr. White explained that there are ways that providers can

appropriately provide services for higher acuity individuals while still receiving reasonable and accurate reimbursement. He shared that support is available to assist providers with learning the appropriate tools to handle high acuity individuals and encouraged providers experiencing challenges to reach out to their regional offices for assistance.

Mr. White explained that they did not receive specific feedback regarding the particular challenges that service providers are facing, that are not already effectively addressed through existing DDA services and policies. As such, it was decided that acuity would not be pursued for the FY26 rate cycle. The DDA will work to coordinate and schedule a series of acuity lunch and learn sessions to assist providers. Sessions will highlight current strategies and range of services available. Dates for these sessions will be shared at a later date.

Mr. Parks suggested using these sessions to gather feedback from providers on acuity, which Ms. Hutchinson confirmed would occur. Ms. Retzlaff expressed that it would be beneficial for providers and CCS agencies to both be in attendance for these sessions to ensure both are receiving the same messaging. Mr. Parks suggested that it would also be beneficial for the regional office fiscal staff that approve plans and authorizations to attend the sessions as well. Mr. White stated that more information on the sessions will be shared in the coming weeks.

General Ledger Supplemental Updates

Ms. Hutchinson reminded the group that the GL template is the data collection strategy for informing rates, both now and going forward.

Ms. Christin Diehl, The Hilltop Institute provided an overview on the feedback received from Day Habilitation providers on the General Ledger Supplemental (GLS) template that includes the productivity factor data points to support the rate priority for FY 26 rate cycle. Of the 114 Day Habilitation providers, only 20 provided feedback. Two technical assistance training sessions were held to review the GLS template, instructions, and walk through an example template.

Ms. Diehl stated that all claims for day habilitation services provided between July 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023 were reviewed to identify the number of participants served and provider reimbursements. As of April 18, 2024, three (3) providers have submitted GLS templates with the required data. The deadline for providers to submit their completed GLS templates is May 1st.

Mr. Parks asked how many providers are struggling with the concept of separating it versus how many felt that they didn't have any non-billable time. Ms. Diehl responded it was about 50/50. Ms. Howell asked if Hilltop had a sense of whether providers felt they had non-billable time in LTSS versus PCIS2. Ms. Diehl responded that Hilltop has not dug into those details but that they will be able to know more once they receive more submissions from providers.

Open Discussion/Public Comment

Mr. White provided time for an open discussion with the RRAG and comments/questions from the public. Ms. Lee asked when the employment rates would be addressed. Mr. White responded that there will be a rebase based on the data received from the GL tool. The data should help give a sense of what components within the employment services need to be adjusted.

Mr. Parks asked if employment, acuity and productivity can still be discussion points for the current rate cycle in order to move forward with these priorities even if there is no rebase. Mr. White responded that RRAG will continue the discourse around employment services to help prepare for the next cycle. He also stated that updates will continue to be shared from the Employment First Workgroup. Mr. Parks suggested employment and acuity be added as agenda items for the remainder of the rate cycle to discuss the plan for these priorities moving forward. Mr. White stated that DDA will discuss and consider his suggestion.

Ms. Lee asked for clarification on if the NEON SME are helping with rates around employment. Mr. White clarified that they will not be helping with rates but that they will be assisting with the crosswalk from recommendations that come from the Employment First Workgroup to policy and waivers.

A member of the public, Dr. Michael Greenberg, requested to speak and spoke on the topic of intensive support needs. Dr. Greenberg suggested a more direct approach with providers to increase compliance with data requests.

Next Steps and Adjournment

Ms. Hutchinson shared the schedule for the remaining RRAG meetings for 2024. Meeting minutes will be made available prior to the next meeting. Details were shared on how to register for upcoming RRAG meetings and where meeting materials can be found on the RRAG website.

Meeting was adjourned by Ms. Hutchinson at 1:51 PM.