

Michigan State Report for VOR Annual Meeting

June 23, 2024

My coverage of disability issues in Michigan through my blog (The DD News Blog <https://theddnewsblog.blogspot.com/>) has not been stellar. Rather than listing my excuses, here are a few important issues that did surface during the year:

<https://theddnewsblog.blogspot.com/2024/04/missteps-by-michigan-department-of.html>

“Missteps by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services in ‘unwinding’ Medicaid eligibility”

This is a personal story concerning my son Ian, whose Medicaid was going to be cut off abruptly in March 2024. The State was technically correct in stating that he was no longer eligible for SSI (as of November 2022, his social security benefits based on his father’s retirement went above the income level that qualified him for SSI and Medicaid.) It turned out that all this was appealable and was eventually reversed.

I was not paying attention, but neither was the State. When reviewing the eligibility of someone with profound IDD for Medicaid, a person with no prospects of finding a job with good healthcare benefits much less employment of any kind, comes up for review, the State should think again before cutting him off from health insurance designed to cover someone with high medical needs. They might want to flag this for another look, to see how it is possible for an individual with profound disabilities to suddenly no longer qualify for Medicaid. Perhaps they should at least meet with the individual or his family to make sure the state is making the right decision?

I immediately filed an appeal and eventually the State agreed that Ian was still eligible for all the medical benefits he had been receiving for years. And to give the state a tiny bit of credit, they were not proposing to cut Ian off entirely. I suppose fearing that he might reproduce, the State had left Ian with Medicaid-funded family planning benefits!

Shortly after Ian got his medical benefits back, the group home received a letter from the State informing them that another resident, also with profound IDD, no longer qualified for Medicaid because she was no longer disabled.

For more information on “Medicaid Unwinding” as a national problem, this is an article based on a report from KNN:

<https://theddnewsblog.blogspot.com/2024/04/medicaid-unwinding-breeds-chaos-in.html>

Thursday, April 25, 2024

Medicaid "Unwinding" Breeds Chaos in States

‘Worse Than People Can Imagine’: Medicaid ‘Unwinding’ Breeds Chaos in States

By Phil Galewitz and Katheryn Houghton and Brett Kelman and Samantha Liss, November 2, 2023

The ARC Michigan, an organization that I routinely oppose on ideological grounds, does do something useful every year. They hold an on-line disability policy conference that includes solid information on who-does-what in the state. Here is the link to the conference held over the last two weeks:

<https://arcmi.org/2024policywebinar/>

The best presentation was from the ARC lobbyist in Lansing:

https://arcmi.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2024/06/1-6_21-Disability-Policy-Webinar-McCall-Hamilton_Emily-Henderson-2024-1.pdf

This is a thorough review of the “Current Michigan Government Landscape” in the executive and legislative branches by Emily Henderson.

For example, there is a list of State Agency Leaders who are involved with disability issues:

- Elizabeth Hertel – Director, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
- David Knezek – Chief Deputy for Administration
- Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian – Chief Medical Executive
- Meghan Groen – Senior Deputy Director, Behavioral and Physical Health and Aging Services

Administration

- Demetrius Starling – Senior Deputy Director, Children’s Services Administration
- Kristen Jordan – Director, Specialty Behavioral Health Services
- Patricia Neitman - Director, Bureau of Children’s Coordinated Health Policy and Supports
- Belinda Hawks - Director, Division of Adult Home and Community Based Services
- Chardaé Burton – Director of Legislative Affairs at MDHHS

Within this document, https://arcmi.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2024/06/1-6_21-Disability-Policy-Webinar-McCall-Hamilton_Emily-Henderson-2024-1.pdf there is a State Budget Update and a fiscal year calendar that follows the budget from the Governor’s proposal to the legislature’s enactment by September 30th.

And still relevant after all these years, from The DD News Blog:

<https://theddnewsblog.blogspot.com/2018/08/pitfalls-of-attempts-to-regulate.html>

Sunday, August 12, 2018

Regulating community services for people with disabilities: a promise fulfilled or a barrier to appropriate services?

“In 2014, the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued “[the Settings Rule](#)” as an attempt to regulate how and where Medicaid-funded Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) are provided in community settings to people with disabilities. Although the settings rule is promoted as a policy of liberation to bring about “true” integration and inclusion of people with disabilities in community settings, the corollary to that is the assertion that the rule will free up funding to be redistributed, first by closing programs that some advocates argue no one wants or needs, and then to pay for services that the same advocates claim are “truly” inclusive....”

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