



MINUTES
Rate Work Group Meeting
Friday, May 17, 2024 / 10:00AM - 12:00PM
Held via: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Rate Work Group Member Attendance: Laurie Vachon, DLTSS; Jessica Gorton, BDS; Jessica Kennedy, BDS; Melissa Morin, BDS; Lindsey Magee, BDS; Abby Conger, BDS; Christy Roy, DHHS; Susan Ryan, DHHS; Aida Ramirez, DHHS; Kerri Zanchi, A&M; Krista Stephani, MSLC; Lesley Beerends, MSLC; Martin McNamara, MSLC, Erin Hall, Ellen McCahon, Kim Shottes, Matthew Cordaro, Shelley Kelleher, Sudip Adhikari, Susan Silsby, Denise (Captioner)

Note: Members of the public who joined as attendees in listen-only mode are not included in this list.

Please reference the corresponding slide presentation for the detailed agenda, including topics and themes covered in the meeting and corresponding takeaways and applicable action items.

Topic	Key Takeaways & Action Items
<p>Exceptions Request Review Team</p>	<p><u>Exceptions Process Development Conversation Continued</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This meeting is focused on the Exceptions Review Team. <p><u>Items for Consideration:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What types of people/groups should be represented in the Exceptions Review Team? Will there be one review team per region or one for the state? What is the process for review team alternates? <p><u>Other State Examples for Experience/Trends of Exceptions Request Process:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presented information summarizing the Supports Intensity Scale - Adult (SIS-A) administration and verification/review teams for Maine, Rhode Island, and Virginia. <p><u>Feedback Received</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presented feedback from the Assessment Focus Group related to these considerations. Feedback received from the Rate Work Group Members prior to Rate Meeting include:

- # of review team members needed for a quorum.
- If one team statewide, cross section of members from all parts of the state.
- To address the demand concerns, perhaps 2-3 teams with 1-2 consistent members.
- Consider member role/review team to weigh in/vote for requested exception.
- Agree with representation on the review teams from area agencies, service coordination, DSPs, consideration of funds to pay for the additional workload.

Discussion During Rate Work Group Meeting

- BDS: Today we would like your feedback for this process. In March, there was discussion on how often the team should meet and when the team will meet. We will start with discussing how often the team should meet. Is there any feedback?
 - BDS: Let's revisit the Exceptions Review Timeline discussion from April 19. Stakeholders prefer a 30 day turnaround, process should be uniform, confirmation of receipt of the request should be sent within 7 days, and the review should occur within 14 days. Is this still a desired timeline?
 - Comment: This cadence seems appropriate. It allows flexibility with Crisis funding and allows for a deeper dive, if needed.
 - Comment: Out of the gate there may be a high demand for exceptions because of misunderstandings. We just need to make sure to not create a backlog at the beginning of the process. This process should be re-evaluated after the initial rollout.
 - BDS: Should the process allow for meeting more frequently in the beginning?
 - Comment: Yes, this would be good to reduce potential frustrations and allow for timely reviews.
 - Comment: I agree with this suggestion.
 - BDS: Looks like there is a recommendation that upon initial implementation, the team would set up weekly meetings and in future meet two times per month.

- BDS: Let's discuss how many teams there should be. Is it one team or multiple?
 - Comment: If there are multiple teams, there should be one centralized team. This should include individuals from around the state and would allow for a unified process. Also having something local would be beneficial as a first step.
 - Comment: I agree. Having one team for consistency would be good. There should also be alternates.
 - Comment: Allow for flexibility. There isn't one particular group of people, but allow for accommodations based on the individual's situation.
 - BDS: Are you saying there should be flexibility to allow individuals who are familiar with the individual to participate?
 - Comment: That is correct. For individuals who are already receiving services, consider an appropriate representative to provide input or provide additional information to the review team.
 - Comment: I agree. Florida has a local review committee for the implementation of behavior plan. There is a downfall to that process. There should be considerations for multiple team members with varying skills and backgrounds (multidisciplinary team) to provide input, but should not be distracting. The team should be diverse.
 - BDS: Sounds like we are leaning towards a centralized team that has diversity and provide an opportunity for a support team familiar with the individual/services to provide input.
 - Comments: Yes, that is what it sounds like.
 - BDS: Would individuals/representatives sign a release to allow for the team to review the process? We are interested to hear from individuals. Is there a privacy concern?
 - Comment: Only concern is a conflict of interest, so alternates should be allowed. These need to be closed hearings. Technology helps monitor who is involved in the building. We need to make sure to have an electronic option for efficiencies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Comment: If there was a swing from a centralized team to local teams, would need to consider recalibration meetings so process stays consistent.○ Comment: Need to determine the minimum number of people in the group. It would be nice if all areas could be represented to reduce the chance of an unfair hearing.○ BDS: Agree. This goes along with the suggestion of alternates. Also, not everyone will have to present to the exceptions team. The documentation may provide information.○ Comment: I agree the documentation should support the request. Maybe consider implementing a Business Associate Agreement? Families should have releases and make sure the review team members understand their role and importance.○ BDS: Is anyone concerned with inconsistency between local groups?○ Comments: We talked about requiring the Area Agency to review the exception documentation before submitting for an exceptions process to make sure information is adequate. Create a standard uniform process for all Area Agencies to follow.○ Comment: There already isn't consistency between the Area Agencies and this is a concern.○ BDS: Are you saying all exceptions would have to go through the Area Agency?○ Comment: Yes, there has to be some sort of preliminary review at the local level. This can be a fast process. This would happen before the submission. Similar to the process today, service coordinators would get involved in the request for a different funding level.○ BDS: Currently, new funding requests do not go through the Area Agencies.○ Comment: There is a first tier of decision making that has a quick turnaround.○ BDS: Are you envisioning a separate review team per region or one team made up of various area representatives?
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Comment: One team would review the request, but the service coordinator or Area Agency is involved and documents their support of the request. This team should be made up of the service coordinator and area agency to say if the Area Agency supports the request or not. The Area Agency is not the final approval, but would weigh in on the request.○ BDS: Does each Area Agency have a review team or one statewide?○ Comment: One team made up of multiple Area Agency representatives. If the service coordinator supports the decision, they pass on to the Area Agency representatives for review/support decision. If the service coordinator does not agree, they should add a short description of why they do not support, but still allow for the exception request to move forward to the review team. There should also be a right to appeal.○ Comment: For a number of individuals we serve, they do not have an Area Agency connection. If someone is going up for appeal, my thought is the team would be in agreement for the appeal to happen. There are always exceptions where one party agrees and disagrees. Our concern is then do we bring in the Area Agency when they are not involved.○ Comment: The Area Agency should be involved.○ Comment: Do you mean the Area Agency is involved or just notified?○ Comment: The Area Agency should at least be notified. There needs to be someone at a managerial area signing off on the service coordinator's request, either from the Area Agency or provider agency.○ Comment: I would agree.○ BDS: When a service coordinator is compiling an exceptions request, the Area Agency is notified. Are you also suggesting the Area Agency have a review team to sign off?○ Comment: No. The director should sign off. Three step process: 1. the service coordinator would prepare the exceptions request. 2. The service coordinator would document if they agree. 3. The service coordinator
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	<p>would notify the Area Agency for awareness of the exception.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Comment: I have concerns with chasing down a service coordinator. If this proposed process is enacted, there should be clear timelines.○ BDS: Are you saying the Area Agency is informed but not required to review?○ Comment: Correct.○ Comment: There is just a concern the local process at the Area Agency would hold up the request.○ Comment: How about upon submission of a request, the service coordinator has 5 business days to review and schedule a team meeting, if needed, within 14 days of the request?○ Comment: Should the change request be allowed to be applied retroactively?○ Comment: I think that is a great idea.○ BDS: There are some concerns about how far back for retroactive applications.○ Comment: The timeline would be paused upon notification of the review team.○ Comment: Once a SIS is performed and a tier is determined, who is notified and what is the timeline?○ BDS: This is a great question. This process has not been determined.○ Comment: I have the same question. It is hard to come up with a timeline if we don't have this information. There should also be a transition period, especially if there is a change.○ BDS: The goal will be at the 5 year mark and will allow six months for the review. Considerations will need to be made if the individual needs a higher rate. Does the 6 months still apply?○ Comment: You have to have a service coordinator involved no matter what and the Area Agency should be notified, so it shouldn't slow down the process. If you are successfully supporting an individual, it doesn't mean payments actually need to increase, but rather the additional funds would be accessible. We need to change the thought process.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Comment: We need to plan for the future, but there is a lot of angst around what rates will look like. Will there be a situation where an individual who is doing really well and then their SIS level changes, would payment go down?○ BDS: The SIS will be based on the support needs of the individual, so the results shouldn't change because the responses should be based on the current support needs the individuals.○ Comment: The SIS will provide the ability to plan for the future. We are not sure if we will ever get rates because it is up to legislature. We just need to keep planning for budgets according to the individual's needs.○ BDS: There needs to be a timeline of SIS implementation and how to apply for an exceptions process. It sounds like we are working towards one SIS exceptions team with the Area Agency being informed when an exception request is occurring. This will help the state to trend the number of exceptions and what can be learned from the number of exceptions.○ BDS: Let's go back to discussing what skill or area of expertise should be represented on the review team.○ Comment: I would start with a clinician.○ Comment: I would have a behavioral clinician and medical clinician.○ Comment: Someone familiar with ITS needs should be available.○ Comment: The person should have experience in the services that are provided, such as nurse trainer.○ Comment: A BDS representative, such as a liaison.○ Comment: Someone like Josh G. from the Bureau, so maybe two BDS representatives.○ BDS: Comment in the chat asked if the family gets a say who is reviewing the situation, such as inviting their own clinician.○ BDS: Earlier in the conversation, we discussed that individuals can have key people familiar with them advocate and present on their behalf.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comment: I want to make sure we are doing this process in the best interest for everyone. Having a family member who understands the rules and financing may be difficult. We don't want to turn this into a courtroom proceeding. ○ Comment: Would it be helpful to have someone on the provider side involved? ○ Comment: It would make sense to have someone with experience in on the team. ○ Comment: What would their qualifications be? ○ Comment: It would be to have someone familiar with how programs are administered provide input. Really need to think about the consequences of what happens if the exception is not approved. There should be someone on the team to represent reality. ○ Comment: Is this a clinical review or practical review? Would it be appropriate to have a SIS evaluator on the team? ○ BDS: We need to define the role of the team and manage the size of the team to be efficient. ○ BDS: The family's representative will have input compiling information for the exception request. ○ Comment: Can we limit to 6 individuals? A BDS Clinical administrator, SIS evaluator, nurse, BDS liaison, ITS expertise (provider), behavioral, 2 Area Agency representatives (one lead and one alternate).
<p>Next Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We are meeting in June. We will plan on summarizing all of the information from the past three meetings for final recommendations. ● We will provide an update on the roll-out of the provider cost report.
<p>Questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No additional questions.