

CCoA
California Commission on Aging

AGEWATCH

CCoA Issues Recommendations on Medi-Cal Managed Care Expansion into Rural Counties

Access to providers and assurances that quality services will be available region-wide were the primary concerns raised by stakeholders at a June informational briefing on the rural expansion of Medi-Cal Managed Care for Medicare/Medi-Cal eligible individuals (dual-eligibles). Sponsored by the California Commission on Aging (CCoA) and the California Collaborative for Long-Term Services and Supports, the briefing and subsequent recommendations are summarized in the new report, *Rural California: Examining the Transition to Managed Care*. Release of the CCoA report coincided with the first meeting of the Medi-Cal Managed Care Rural Stakeholder Workgroup meeting on July 27, 2012.

Drawing from the comments of service providers, consumers and stakeholders presenting at the June 2nd informational briefing, the report provides the Administration and other interested parties with a **snapshot of the unique constraints and opportunities found within the state's 28 predominately rural counties**. The document offers recommendations to guide the development of a coordinated care model that is responsive to those constraints and beneficial to consumers who make up the rural dual-eligible population.

Reflecting the concerns of rural consumers and providers alike, the report points to the magnitude of implementing Managed Care in counties where no managed care plans exist. Following that theme, the report calls on the state to assure equitable service levels across the entire coverage area, to address the development of the service infrastructure in remote areas, and to consider new ways to recruit and **retain providers**. **The report points out the geographic challenges of delivering services to California's** sparsely populated rural counties, where tiny communities are tucked into high mountain valleys or dot the vast southern deserts and where many individual residents live in isolation, scattered throughout the surrounding areas.

To read the full report, visit <http://www.ccoa.ca.gov/publications.htm>

AGE WATCH is an occasional publication of the California Commission on Aging (CCoA) intended to inform, educate, and advocate. The CCoA is an independent state agency established in 1973 to serve as the principal state advocate on behalf of older Californians. The CCoA office is located at 1300 National Drive, Suite 173, Sacramento, CA 95834. (916) 419-7591

www.ccoa.ca.gov

Senate Committee Votes on the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities

On July 26, 2012, the 22nd anniversary of the ADA, the U.S. Senate took steps to further protections for Americans as they travel abroad, as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held its markup and vote on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Developed by the United Nations, the CRPD is intended to promote, protect and ensure “full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.” The CRPD recognizes that persons with disabilities worldwide are kept from opportunities that are commonly available to the general population, such as employment, an education, access to information and healthcare.

The CRPD received bipartisan support from the Senate Committee members, who noted the importance of protecting the rights of Americans traveling abroad, including wounded members of the armed services. The Convention also serves as a statement of the United States’ ongoing commitment to people with disabilities worldwide. The CRPD goes next to the full Senate where it will need a two-thirds majority to be ratified.

Excerpted from NASUAD Friday Update, July 27, 2012.

New “10 Things” Publication from The SCAN Foundation Promotes Aging with Dignity and Independence

The latest publication in The Scan Foundation's "10 Things" series, "10 Things to Discuss with Your Doctor to Promote Aging with Dignity and Independence," describes important conversations to have with your doctor to prepare for changing health needs as you grow older. This publication is the fourth in the series, designed to encourage people to start thinking about and planning for their care needs, and is also available in Spanish.

According to “10 Things to Discuss With Your Doctor to Promote Aging with Dignity and Independence,” it is important that your doctor knows as much as possible about your current health situation. This way, if your health needs change over time, you and your doctor can tailor your care and make sure that the focus of your decisions together is on helping you live safe and well.

To read, "10 Things to Discuss With Your Doctor to Promote Aging With Dignity and Independence," please visit The SCAN Foundation website at www.thescanfoundation.org.

Excerpted from NASUAD Friday Update, July 27, 2012.



Not-for-Profit Requirement for CBAS Providers Postponed

California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) has announced a six-month postponement of the deadline for adult day health care providers to establish non-profit status. The change moves the deadline to January 1, 2013 for adult day service providers to remain eligible to receive Medi-Cal funding through the Community Based Adult Services program.

According to an article published by California Healthline, the delay resulted from the DHCS' need for a substantial number of former ADHC providers to transfer into the CBAS program. To date, 80 percent of ADHC beneficiaries -- about 28,000 individuals -- have been deemed eligible under the new CBAS eligibility criteria. More than 2,000 others are in the process of appealing their denials for program eligibility. With the large proportion of clients remaining eligible, the State will need a similar proportion of providers to remain operative.

The California Healthline report noted that the Department believes the postponement demonstrates DHCS' intent to complete the program transition within several months' time. To read the article in full, go to <http://www.californiahealthline.org/capitol-desk/2012/8/not-for-profit-status-requirement-delayed.aspx?p=1#ixzz22VhdWH5T>

Excerpted from California Healthline Capitol Desk, State Delays Not-For-Profit Requirement for Adult Day Centers, Aug. 3, 2012

Healthcare-Associated Infection Action Plan Update: Long-Term Care Facilities Chapter Available for Public Comment

The Federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recently announced the release for public comment of Phase 3 in the 5-year *National Action Plan to Prevent Healthcare-Associated Infections: Roadmap to Elimination* (HAI Action Plan). The new Long-Term Care (LTC) chapter focuses on combating HAIs in nursing facilities and skilled nursing facilities. It extends earlier efforts that focused on acute care hospitals (Phase 1), ambulatory surgical centers and end-stage renal disease facilities (Phase 2) and influenza vaccination of healthcare personnel (Phase 2).

The LTC strategy proposes to expand the activities of multiple federal and nonfederal partners to combat HAIs that commonly occur in LTC settings, including urinary tract infection (UTI), lower respiratory tract infections, influenza and influenza-like illness, *Clostridium difficile* infection (CDI), and skin, soft tissue, and wound infections. The chapter proposes that progress be assessed by tracking resident influenza and pneumonia vaccination rates and the rates of two HAIs.

HHS encourages comments from the general public, state and local health agencies, professional groups, foundations, Medicare and Medicaid-related organizations, insurers, business groups, and others. Comments may be submitted to OHQ@hhs.gov until 5:00 PM (ET) on August 22, 2012.

To review the plan or for additional information about the HAI Initiative and the HHS Partnership for Patients, visit www.hhs.gov/ash/initiatives/index.html

Reprinted in part from ACL News and Information, Administration for Community Living, July 30, 2012.

Barrier-Free Health Care Initiative Stresses ADA Standards in Healthcare

The U.S. Justice Department has launched an initiative to ensure medical information is made accessible to patients with disabilities, particularly related to hearing loss. As part of a partnership between local U.S. attorney's offices and the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, the department is implementing the *Barrier-Free Health Care Initiative*, which reiterates that healthcare providers cannot discriminate against patients with disabilities. The multi-phase plan covers issues such as physical access to healthcare facilities as well as communicating medical information in a way that's understandable to deaf or hearing-impaired patients. The multi-phase plan covers issues such as physical access to healthcare facilities as well as communicating medical information in a way that's understandable to deaf or hearing-impaired patients.

Launch of the initiative occurred in conjunction with the 22nd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act in July, with a focus on sending stronger message that discrimination is “illegal and unacceptable,” according to a Justice Department release. For more information on the Barrier-Free Health Care Initiative, visit: www.ModernHealthcare.com.

Excerpted from ModernHealthcare.com, *Justice Department to Stress ADA Standards in Health Care*, Healthcare Business News, July 26, 2012.

Research Finds Lower Death Rates With Expanded Medicaid Coverage

A new study published in the New England Journal of Medicine finds that expanding Medicaid programs to reach more of the uninsured lowers mortality rates among beneficiaries. Conducted by researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health, the study's findings were released as the U.S. Supreme Court announced its decision to let individual states decide whether or not to expand Medicaid services to persons with income up to 133% of the federal poverty level. The expansion was challenged as part of the federal Affordable Care Act.

Using data from New York, Maine and Arizona, where expanded Medicaid is already available to low-income adults without children or disabilities, the researchers reviewed data from the five-year period before and after those states' Medicaid expansion. The numbers were compared to a control group of three other states where expanded Medicaid was not offered, revealing lower death rates among newly covered individuals in expansion states.

When researchers adjusted the data for economic factors like income and unemployment rates, as well as population characteristics like age, sex and race, and then compared those numbers with neighboring states, they estimated that the Medicaid expansions were associated with a decline of 6.1 percent in deaths, or about 2,840 per year for every 500,000 adults receiving coverage.

Excerpted in part from *Medicaid Expansion May Lower Death Rates*, Study Says, July 25, 2012, New York Times.

Commission on Aging Appointments Made



Virgie P. Walker

The California Commission on Aging is pleased to announce two appointments recently made by the Speaker of the Assembly.

Virgie P. Walker was recently appointed to her second term on the Commission. Ms. Walker is President and CEO of People Coordinated Services of Southern California, Inc, a non-profit human service agency providing older adult social services, adult substance abuse recovery services, and inspiration, education, and prevention services for low-income children and families at risk in South Los Angeles. She was elected last December to serve on the **Commission's Executive Committee and was a member of the Advisory Committee for the CCoA's 2011 Senior Center Forum.** Ms. Walker is a resident of Carson.



Paul Downey

Paul Downey of San Diego was appointed to his first term with the CCoA last week. Mr. Downey has served as President/CEO of Senior Community Centers since 1995, a non-profit organization providing meals, health and wellness services and housing for low-income seniors. He currently serves as elected President of the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Service Programs based in Washington DC and a Steering Committee Member for the California Elder Economic Standard Initiative. He is past chair of the City of **San Diego's Senior Affairs Advisory Board and past chair of the Dean's Advisory Committee for the College of Health and Human Services at San Diego State University.**

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Triple-A Council of California Elects New Officers

The Triple-A Council of California (TACC) chose new officers in August, electing Antonio (Tony) Rodella from Orange County to serve as



Antonio "Tony" Rodella

President for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. Vicky Ludwig of El Dorado County was elected to serve a second term as Vice President.

TACC is an information sharing and educational organization composed of the elected leaders of the state's 33 Area Agency on Aging Advisory Councils. The group is administered by the California Commission on Aging.

California Department of Insurance Urges Consumers to Report Insurance Fraud

When it comes to buying insurance, seniors often fall victim to fraud or scams. Unscrupulous agents may sell inappropriate annuities, worthless long-term care insurance, or charge fees for helping older adults sign up for **Veteran's benefits or Medicare.**

Reporting insurance fraud can help the Department of Insurance track and prosecute scammers. Last year the Department recovered more than \$49 million through complaints filed with the Consumer Services Division.

To report insurance fraud or abuse, call the toll-free hotline at 1-800-927-HELP.

Learn more about senior scams and how to avoid them, visit: <http://www.insurance.ca.gov/0150-seniors/0100alerts/Alerts.cfm>

U.S. Treasury Hoping to Educate Seniors about “Go Direct”

California Commission on Aging

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Sharon Monck,
Rio Vista

Carmen Reyes,
Whittier

Havard L. Staggs,
Jackson

Donna Ueland,
Fresno

Virgie Walker,
Carson

The U.S. Department of the Treasury wants to remind seniors that by **March 1, 2013**, all federal benefit and non-tax payments will be paid electronically. This change to direct deposit will impact people who are about to apply for federal benefits (e.g. SSA, SSI, SSDI) as well as all those who are already receive benefits by mail. The change will take place for different groups by the following deadlines:

People applying for federal benefits (new enrollees) after May 1, 2011, will need to choose their preferred electronic payment option when they enroll in federal benefits.

People already receiving federal benefits by check will need to make the switch to electronic payments by March 1, 2013.

People already receiving benefit payments electronically do not need to take action. They will continue to receive their payments as usual on payment day.

The **Go Direct** public education campaign is a national effort to raise awareness around the 2013 deadline. The Department is working with community-based organizations, government organizations, law enforcement agencies and financial institutions across the U.S. to help disseminate information on **Go Direct** and the 2013 deadline.



Free materials, including newsletter copy, educational fliers and educational videos are available for outreach to various constituencies. Any organization or service provider is encouraged to become educated about this deadline and to share it with their network. To learn more or to obtain informational materials, visit www.godirect.org

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Upcoming Events

- September 11-13, 2012 International Conference on Aging in the Americas National, International, and Comparative Studies of Hispanic Aging and Related Methodological Challenges, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. (213) 740-1887 or uscroybal@usc.edu for information.
- September 18, 2012, The SCAN Foundation's 2012 Summit on Long-Term Services and Supports, Sacramento. www.thescanfoundation.org.
- September 18-19, 2012, California Commission on Aging, Sacramento. www.ccoa.ca.gov for information.

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