

Survey: Medicaid Transition for Foster Youth in Ohio County Agencies

September 2009

The purpose of this survey is to gather information on how counties assist foster youth to access the Medicaid expansion to age 21. The results of the survey will be shared with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and stakeholder groups. The goal is to share best practices with counties so that all youth eligible for the Medicaid expansion are able to receive it in a timely manner. The survey was developed by the Medicaid Committee of the Independent Living Legislative Workgroup. Contact Mark Mecum at OACCA for more information: mmecum@oacca.org, 614-461-0014.

Summary

While all counties submit the JFS 1958 form, some simply provide instructions for the youth on how to apply at the county JFS for the Medicaid, while others do much more to facilitate the process. Some counties arrange for transportation and an Independent Living staff member to accompany the youth during application. Pre termination reviews (PTR) are not completed on a consistent time frame across counties. Some counties complete it 30 days prior to the youth's emancipation, while others do not have a specific time frame, other than at some point prior to the youth's emancipation date. It is unclear if some counties wait until after emancipation to complete the PTR. Some counties may actually allow the foster youth's Medicaid to terminate upon emancipation before completing the PTR, thus leaving the youth uninsured until the latter Medicaid coverage is active. Counties request additional training on the Medicaid expansion. In fact, some indicate that there has been little or no training made available to their county. Topic areas for additional training include a general overview of the program, as well as recommended processes and communication methods of transitioning the Medicaid coverage to youth. Barriers identified include youth do not provide forwarding addresses to the county upon emancipation, although this can be resolved by improved communication between the county independent living unit with the county JFS. One respondent stated that information about emancipated youth needs to be transferred from SACWIS into CRIS-E upon emancipation. *Survey responses collected May-June 2009.*

Recommendations

- ODJFS should offer additional trainings to counties to provide guidance to county JFS and PCSA workers. Additional trainings should focus on recommended processes and communication methods to facilitate smooth transition of Medicaid coverage for foster youth.
- Counties should have independent living unit workers physically accompany youth to apply for Medicaid at the JFS Department. This will help alleviate confusion by the JFS staff and the foster youth and it will promote a timely transition of coverage.
- Counties should develop time frames for completing the PTR, such as 30 days prior to emancipation, to ensure that the youth will be able to successfully apply for Medicaid as early as his or her 18th birthday.

Survey Participants

Individuals from the departments of Job and Family Services from the following counties participated in the survey:

- Lorain County
- Scioto County
- Guernsey County
- Portage County
- Coshocton County
- Hamilton County
- Jackson County
- Hardin County
- Mahoning County
- Champaign County
- Preble County

- Ross County