

September 27, 2019

Dear Child Welfare Medicaid Managed Care Implementation Advisory Workgroup:

The Department of Healthcare and Family Services and the Department of Children and Family Services are committed to ensuring that our state's most vulnerable children and young adults have access to high quality healthcare. They and the families who care for them deserve coordinated, whole-person healthcare and wrap-around services to help them navigate a complex system and lead them to healthy adulthood.

There is nothing more important to us than getting this transition right, and after listening to stakeholders across the state, HFS and DCFS have decided to extend the start date for these programs from November 1, 2019 to February 1, 2020. This delay will help ensure a smooth transition and allow HFS and DCFS to engage further with families, providers and other stakeholders and to monitor the managed care organizations more closely.

Ultimately, our departments are working together to put in place a new managed care program for DCFS's youth in care as well as former youth in care and medically complex and special needs children. When this program launches, youth in care will be served through YouthCare, a standalone managed care program, while the latter groups will be able to participate in the state's existing HealthChoiceIllinois program. We are confident that, once implemented, these programs will provide crucial services that do not exist today. YouthCare is another partner to the child welfare system to focus on health needs of these children, including a strong emphasis on behavioral health, allowing DCFS to maintain its focus on keeping children safe and strengthening families.

For example, once the system is operational, specially trained Care Coordinators will work with DCFS caseworkers and foster and adoptive families to create and enforce an effective Individual Plan of Care (IPOC) for all youth in care. We have heard from countless families that having a single point of contact to shepherd them through the health care system would be invaluable.

We have already made much progress. To date, YouthCare has enlisted providers who make up over 72 percent of existing spending in the program, with more providers anticipated to have contracts in place within the coming weeks.

In addition, YouthCare has hired more than 130 Care Coordinators to date, well on the way to the goal of having 170 total workers managing individuals' cases. Training for these Care Coordinators will begin on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Following training, these Care Coordinators will begin assessment and care planning with youth in care and their families, in advance of the February transition date. This provides significant additional time for both families and coordinators to understand and finalize care options.

Over the next four months, HFS and DCFS will:

- Continue to engage the Child Welfare Medicaid Managed Care Implementation Advisory Workgroup to solicit feedback and strengthen the program.
- Meet with key stakeholders and partners to ensure a smooth transition.
- Conduct a regional analysis of the program and confirm all areas of the state will benefit.
- Renew efforts to enroll more existing providers as well as non-traditional providers who may not participate in the Medicaid system, but are able to provide services that are extremely beneficial to the youth in our care.
- Create single-case agreements on an individual child basis to make sure we are doing what is in the best interest of the child.
- Educate families who will be served in these programs so they fully understand the system and its benefits.
- Begin to connect Care Coordinators with youth in care and their families so they can begin assessment and care planning before the actual transition date.

Our continued partnership will benefit the children and families we serve. YouthCare is fundamentally designed to offer children appropriate providers at the right time, to ensure proper diagnosis and treatment, and to address their integrated physical and behavioral health needs.

We look forward to bolstering this enhanced care model and working closely with the parents, caregivers and professionals who share our mission. Thank you for your continued commitment to making this the best possible healthcare program for children and their families.

Respectfully,



Theresa Eagleson  
Director  
Illinois Department of Healthcare and  
Family Services



Marc D. Smith  
Acting Director  
Illinois Department of Children & Family Services