


September 22, 2023

Engaging Beneficiaries through Medical Care Advisory Committees (MCACs)

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Overview

- Background on MCACs and beneficiary engagement
- Key findings
- Next steps



Background on MCACs

- Federal regulations require every state to have a Medical Care Advisory Committee (MCAC) to advise the state Medicaid agency (42 CFR 431.12)
- MCACs must include:
 - Physicians and health professionals who work with the Medicaid population
 - Members of consumer groups, such as Medicaid beneficiaries or consumer organizations
 - Director of the public welfare department or the public health department

Meaningful Beneficiary Engagement

- Beneficiaries' lived experiences can inform state Medicaid agencies' policies and programs
- Establishing trust takes time and dedicated effort
- Beneficiaries often cite barriers to participation such as:
 - Lack of trust and uncertainty of how feedback will be heard
 - Inability to take time off work
 - Limited availability and cost of transportation and child care

Proposed Rule: Ensuring Access to Medicaid Services

- CMS released a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) that would change federal MCAC rules:
 - Rename MCACs to Medicaid Advisory Committees (MACs);
 - Expand the scope of topics to be addressed outside of health and medical care services;
 - Establish a Beneficiary Advisory Group (BAGs); and
 - Require state agencies to publicly post information related to MAC and BAG activities

Key Findings

Diverse Beneficiary Representation is Lacking

- The majority of states explicitly require beneficiary representation or consumer group representation
- Few states require representation from historically marginalized groups
- The NPRM encourages states to consider diverse representation in their recruitment efforts, but does not mandate it

Majority of States Have Beneficiary Vacancies

- State Medicaid agencies note difficulties in finding beneficiaries willing to participate in MCACs
- State recruitment strategies include web advertising, recruiting beneficiaries who are active in other committees, and working with community-based organizations
- Some interviewees cited that applications can be long, complex, and overly formal, and can deter beneficiaries from applying
- The NPRM indicates additional guidance on recruitment strategies is forthcoming

Participation and Meeting Requirements Can be Burdensome for Beneficiaries

- Some states expressed difficulty in finding beneficiaries willing to participate in a multi-year commitment
 - Membership term limits and frequency of meetings vary by state
- Inconvenient meeting time and location are common barriers to participation
 - Hybrid or virtual meetings increase beneficiary participation

Beneficiaries and States Cite Engagement Challenges

- Beneficiaries are unsure how Medicaid agencies use their feedback
- Beneficiaries seek more technical assistance to engage in MCAC discussions
- State resource challenges limit additional engagement efforts
- The NPRM suggests more guidance will be released with best practices for meaningful beneficiary engagement

Financial Compensation and Additional Supports May be Underutilized

- To incentivize beneficiary participation, most states offer financial stipends, reimbursement for travel expenses, or child care
- Most beneficiaries are either unaware of these supports or the support is underutilized
- State Medicaid officials had questions about the use of some incentives
- The NPRM does not indicate whether there will be additional guidance about how states can offer financial arrangements

Beneficiary-only Subcommittees Experience Engagement Challenges

- Some states reported more robust consumer engagement and participation when using these smaller and more specific groups
- Subcommittees may also experience challenges to beneficiary engagement:
 - Lack of advanced briefings
 - Imbalance ratio of Medicaid staff to beneficiaries
 - Time commitment especially if a member has to participate in both the subcommittee meetings and the MCAC meetings
- The proposed rule would mandate beneficiary-only subcommittees

Next Steps

- Commission reactions to findings will inform next steps
- Discussion questions:
 - Does the Commission wish to address diversity of beneficiary representation on MCACs? Are there particular issues to highlight?
 - Are there areas related to beneficiary recruitment that the Commission would like to comment on (e.g., recruitment approaches or the application process)?
 - Are there areas related to beneficiary engagement that the Commission would like to comment on (e.g., financial compensation or additional supports)?


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