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Beth Moss, on behalf of the
Dane County Families and Long Term Care Participants

Re: Transition to IRIS/Family Care in Dane County

Dear Dane County Families and Long Term Care Participants:

Thank you for your letter and for allowing the Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) and the IRIS Program to respond to your questions. We apologize for the delayed response.

Question #1:

Many of us have a support broker who has played a trusted role for our family member, often over years or decades. Some people in our county do not have family members to help them make decisions and rely on the advice of a support broker. No other county system uses support brokers the way we do in Dane County. Can that person attend and participate in options counseling meetings with us?

Response:

Any family member, friend or other person the individual wishes to include, who is not a paid provider, is permitted to participate in enrollment counseling when invited by the individual. The Department of Health Services is currently discussing under what condition a support broker may be allowed to attend the enrollment counseling session.

Question #2:

As an MCO/ICA, how will you plan to collect information from current providers, including support brokers/case managers, vocational agencies, and supported living agencies, who work with individuals directly once a participant has selected you?

Response:

When an individual chooses an MCO or ICA the County will transfer the individual's file to the appropriate agency. This includes 12 months of case notes, most recent Long Term Care Functional Screen (LTCFS), recent assessments, individual service plan, detailed contact information for the individual's providers and caregivers, including informal support and physicians, etc. The MCO or ICA will ensure all identified services and supports are in place upon date of enrollment. This is the same process MCOs and ICAs have used successfully in the other 70 counties.

Question #3:

The integrated employment rates of the two MCOs and the IRIS consultant agencies chosen to serve Dane County are very low. Keeping my/my loved one's job is incredibly important. What investments or changes are you making in your organization to ensure that people's jobs will continue and at the current number of hours per week they are working?

IRIS Response:

The number of hours per week a participant works is up to the individual and their employer. During the person centered planning process, the IRIS consultant will discuss with the participant their current employment and the services and supports needed to achieve these goals, including transportation, which are required to continue their employment. If the participant wants to continue (or increase) the current number of employment hours, the relevant services and supports will be placed on the participant's individual support and service plan. If the participant's budget is not sufficient to meet the participant's long term care outcomes, including employment, the participant can submit a budget amendment requesting an increase of their individual IRIS budget amount.

MCO response:

The Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) staff will ensure that the member is at the center of the member centered planning process. The member will actively participate in the planning process, in particular, in identification of personal outcomes and preferences. The IDT will talk with the member about preferences in regards to integrated employment and will assure their employment needs are met. The MCOs have employment specialists that are a resource for the IDT staff in making important local connections to maximize community employment options.

Question #4:

The transportation system that supports people disabilities in Dane County has been built over time and includes key relationships with city and county public transit. Without guaranteed maintenance of transportation options, many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities will lose their jobs. Dane County's model for transportation does not exist in any other Wisconsin counties. How will you ensure no one loses their rides that connect them to other key parts of their life and supports, including their job?

IRIS response:

The IRIS program has available the same transportation options currently available in Dane. The number and type of rides will be discussed with the participant during person centered planning and the transportation services required to meet the participant's long term care outcomes will be built into the participant's individual support and service plan. However, it is important to note that since IRIS is a self-directed option, the participant will be responsible for arranging transportation for their LTC services.

MCO response:

Transportation is integral to community and employment participation. The MCOs are experienced in coordinating transportation on behalf of members with employers, vocational agencies and community supported living arrangements. MCOs have successfully built transportation networks in the most densely populated urban communities and in the most rural parts of our state. Conversations with the transportation providers are currently underway and the transportation providers will become part of the provider networks that will be shared with consumers.

Question #5:

Because Dane County's system is so different than other parts of the state, (we have very few people in sheltered work; we have very few adult family homes and many people in supported living and their own apartments) families need more detailed information about provider networks and implementation plans in order to make informed choices prior to choosing either Family Care or IRIS or an MCO or ICA. How can we get this information now? What safeguards will you put in place to ensure that residential providers do not move people to more congregate settings, e.g. from apartments to adult family homes?

IRIS response:

The IRIS program does not place anyone in any living setting. Having a place of one's own is one of the six domains of self-direction. The Dane county model, in respect to living situation, is not unique. In IRIS, over 95% of participants live in their own home or apartment, not in congregate residential settings such as adult family homes.

MCO response:

The MCOs develop and manage a comprehensive network of long-term care providers. The MCO's provider directories are listed on their websites and updated every 45 days. Neither MCOs nor residential providers do not make decisions regarding where members should live. The IDT staff will work with each member to identify the preferred living arrangement based on their long term care and personal experience outcomes. A tenet of Family Care is to maintain individuals in the least restrictive living arrangement.

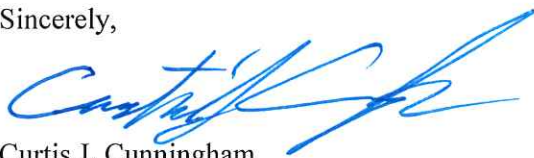
Question #6:

As referenced previously, Dane County's current service system is different in several key ways from the services provided in other counties. What plans do you have to adapt your models so that they can better match the services and outcomes desired by consumers in Dane County? This information will be particularly useful to have prior to visiting the ADRC for Options Counseling and prior to the enrollment deadline.

IRIS and MCO response:

The IRIS and Family Care models are designed to meet the needs of each individual. Individuals participate in determining the services they receive and play an active role in developing their care plans. The programs foster independence and quality of life for individuals, while recognizing the need for interdependence and support. Also, the community forums will be another opportunity to receive further information regarding the questions above or any other concerns you may have.

Sincerely,



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