



**COTTONWOOD**  
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To: Representative Will Carpenter & Members of the Special Committee on Targeted Case Management

From: Colleen Himmelberg on behalf of Cottonwood, Inc.

As a representative of a concerned stakeholder deeply invested in the prosperity of individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) and staff supporting them, we are writing to express our enthusiastic support for the vital work carried out by Targeted Case Managers (TCMs) and to underscore the significant impact they have on families and the individuals they support.

TCMs play a crucial role in our community by providing comprehensive, personalized support to individuals facing various challenges. TCMs help individuals to shape their own future through knowledge, community support, consistency of service and advocacy. TCMs provide consistency and guidance as individuals create their own support plan to shape the life they want. From school to the workplace or from family homes to new living situations, a TCM can be there, if requested, giving support and guiding persons-supported and their families through their new endeavors. Their dedication and expertise are instrumental in fostering positive outcomes for those they support. As I am writing this testimony, I overheard a conversation in the hallway between a very independent, capable person-supported and a TCM which I must relay to you all as I feel it embodies the very essence of what a TCM is:

*Person-supported:* "I'm sorry to have just dropped in, but I needed reassurance in person that there are things coming to my life to make it worthwhile. I just needed to hear it from you."

*TCM:* "Of course, let's just head to my office and we will just talk through what is going on right now. There are lots of things worthwhile in your life."

I have witnessed firsthand the remarkable contributions of TCMs and would like to share some key areas where their efforts make a profound difference:

### **1. Personalized Support and Advocacy:**

TCMs excel in offering tailored support that meets the unique needs of each individual. They act as advocates, ensuring that their clients' voices are heard, serving as a valued member of their team to ensure that their specific needs are addressed and help them to clear a path to goal

*"We help people with disabilities shape their own futures."*

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achievement. Through their meticulous approach, they help families navigate complex systems and access essential resources.

## **2. Coordinated Care and Service Integration:**

One of the most significant benefits of TCMs is their ability to coordinate care across various services and providers. They create and maintain comprehensive care plans that integrate medical, psychological, and social services. This holistic approach ensures that clients receive seamless and effective support, reducing fragmentation and improving overall outcomes.

## **3. Empowerment and Skill Building:**

TCMs are committed to empowering individuals by helping them develop essential life skills and achieve greater independence. Through personalized guidance and support, they enable clients to build self-sufficiency, improve their quality of life, and achieve their personal and professional goals.

## **4. Crisis Intervention and Stabilization:**

In times of crisis, TCMs provide critical intervention and stabilization. Their expertise in managing emergencies and their ability to remain calm under pressure are invaluable. They offer immediate support, develop crisis plans, and work closely with other professionals to ensure the safety and well-being of their clients.

## **5. Positive Community Impact:**

The work of TCMs extends beyond individual clients and families. Their efforts contribute to the overall well-being of the community by fostering healthier, more resilient individuals. By addressing underlying issues and connecting people with appropriate resources, they help build stronger, more supportive communities.

As we explore the possibility of divesting from our Case Management Department, it is critical to evaluate the ramifications of this decision. This memo outlines the potential impacts of such a move on our organization, clients, staff, and stakeholders.

## **1. Impact on Client Services**

- **Loss of Support:** Case management is a vital service that helps persons-supported navigate our complex service system. Divesting of this department could leave persons-supported and their families and guardians without necessary guidance, which may affect their ability to access vital resources. Relationships with their case manager can be one of the longest standing relationships for a majority of clients and families.
- **Reduced Client Outcomes:** Our TCMs play a critical role in connecting clients with services that directly affect their quality of life. Without these connections, clients may experience delays or a reduction in access to services. Even the best external case manager comes nowhere near achieving the depth of knowledge, experience, and relationship building with persons supported that in-house case managers do.
- **Client Dissatisfaction:** A divestiture may lead to a perception that we are withdrawing from a client-centered approach. This perception could negatively impact client trust and loyalty to the system and any organization. Also, TCMs partnered with service providers benefit from the financial stability and resources of the provider organization. This

valuable support improves TCM hiring and retention, and thus lessening disruption for persons-supported and their families/guardians.

- **Loss of Expertise:** Case managers possess specialized skills and relationships within the community, which could be lost if the department is outsourced. This knowledge may not easily be replaced or transferred to other departments.

## 2. Funding & Financial Considerations

- **Increased Costs from Outsourcing or Partnerships:** If we divest from our case management services, additional partnerships would need to be established with external organizations, where feasible, to fill this gap. This could lead to increased operational costs or require additional resources for coordination.
- **Viability of Standalone TCM Organizations:** Aside from the integral connectivity necessary to provide a seamless, person-entered approach for persons- supported, it is difficult to see how the current funding mechanism could support a stand-alone TCM entity, including all of the overhead and administrative costs which are shared within a larger organization.

## 3. Community & Stakeholder Repercussions

- **Damage to Reputation:** Divesting from a key service like case management may harm our standing in the community as a comprehensive service provider and could affect partnerships, collaborations, and our broader community relationships.
- **Community Needs Gaps:** Many community members rely on our case management services to connect them to essential resources. As the largest provider of TCM services in the community, the discontinuance of this service may leave significant gaps in the community's social safety net.

In conclusion, the dedicated work of TCMs is indispensable in supporting and uplifting individuals and families. Their commitment to personalized care, coordinated services, empowerment, and crisis management makes a significant and lasting impact. Cottonwood is committed to helping to mitigate risk of extreme decisions that will negatively affect individuals and service providers alike based on KDADS interpretations of CMS' Final Settings Rule and conflict of interest concerns.



Colleen Himmelberg, CEO  
Cottonwood, Inc.