

September 30, 2024

To: Representative Will Carpenter and Special Committee on Targeted Case Management

From: Corine Priddy, IDD Case Manager

Re: Conflict Free Case Management

I have been engaged in Case Management in Kansas for over 23 years, currently managing a caseload of 26 individuals. Throughout my career, I have supported individuals ranging in age from 5 to 83 across various environments. Many of the clients on my caseload have benefited from my assistance for over two decades.

In my role as a Case Manager, I am tasked with ensuring that individuals receive all necessary benefits, supports, and services, while empowering them with the tools to lead fulfilling lives. The structure of Case Management in Kansas allows for a profound understanding of the individuals we support, encompassing their hygiene needs, daily living skills, social and behavioral support requirements. This intimate knowledge fosters trust and reliance from both individuals and their families, who depend on us to advocate for their unique needs. We cultivate strong relationships, and families often express a desire to maintain continuity with their Case Managers rather than transitioning to someone new who must relearn their personal histories.

In Kansas, we have long valued the ability to tailor services to meet specific wants and needs. However, proposed changes regarding Conflict of Interest may restrict these choices based on the employment of the Case Manager. Individuals and families should not have to choose between a service provider that is instrumental in enhancing their quality of life simply because their Case Manager is affiliated with that agency. Often, individuals select their service provider not due to coercion from their Case Manager, but because they believe the provider aligns best with their needs. Service providers that also offer Case Management typically have extensive experience and established oversight mechanisms to ensure that individuals' support needs are comprehensively addressed. The families I work with appreciate the added layer of agency oversight in all services, including Case Management, regarding their loved ones' care.

The recent proposal suggests that Case Managers would operate independently, without agency affiliation. However, it is crucial to recognize that many Case Managers choose agency employment precisely because most agencies cover 50-80% of healthcare premiums, provide retirement benefits, and offer paid time off. Additionally, agency Case Management ensures that there is backup support available when a Case Manager is unavailable. For instance, I recently required an extended leave, yet my clients' support needs continued to be met seamlessly due to the presence of supervisory and colleague support.

Becoming an independent Case Manager entails significant out-of-pocket expenses, including the development of policies and procedures, compliance with licensing requirements, and meeting various affiliation obligations, as well as other extensive administrative tasks. The financial burden and complexities associated with establishing an independent practice could deter many individuals from pursuing this path. Consequently, this may result in a reduction in available Case Managers, further exacerbating the challenges within an already demanding environment, ultimately jeopardizing the support that individuals rely on.

Please consider the comprehensive measures Kansas has already implemented to address potential conflicts of interest. These include the Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) serving as payers, external entities conducting annual assessments, rigorous Conflict-Free training, and regular reviews of Targeted Case Management (TCM) and agency choices by MCOs and Community Developmental Disability Organizations (CDDOs) at least annually.

Again, thank you for your interest in supporting Kansans with Intellectual Disabilities.