



October 1, 2024

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

FROM: Emily Lang, Case Manager, Lakemary Center

RE: Impact of Conflict-Free rule on Targeted Case Management for Kansans

I just celebrated my 23rd anniversary at Lakemary Center and it was a great milestone. I have been fortunate and lucky to be a targeted case manager for many of the same great individuals who I started with on day one. I not only am a case manager myself, I also supervise a team of case managers which allows me to do the work itself and support others in the position. I also have many of the same co-workers that I did on September 25th, 2001. I would not still be doing this work if it wasn't for the wonderful support of my agency and my team. It has allowed me to grow and navigate all the changes of this field with a wonderful agency backed support. If you look at our case management department, we have had longevity and quality because of this support. I can say without a doubt, that would not be the case if we were independent case managers or at a TCM only agency. The fiscal support and benefits that a larger agency provides along with the teamwork and mentorships we have are a huge key to making this career a success. My great fear for case management as whole is that we will lose many case managers if this transition and change occurs. We will see capacity issues even greater than we do now. At one point recently, Johnson County's list for openings had no open case manager names or agencies on it. No one was taking new referrals and this is with our current framework of services. We will see a huge impact on quality of services and access to case management if these change are made.

Over the 23 years of providing quality case management, I have facilitated countless transitions. When looking for services and supports for individuals, I always educate and expose them to ALL of the options available to them. We look at all options and I provide unbiased and constant support to them. Many times, we don't even tour or talk to anyone at my agency for additional services. Through all the years, I've only had a few individuals that have started day and residential services at Lakemary. I can speak for my entire team when I say the vast majority have started day and residential services elsewhere. That is their choice and what fits their needs and has absolutely nothing to do with where I am employed. I can say with complete confidence that over my 23 years, not one of my individuals or their teams have ever felt a conflict of me being their case manager and also being employed at Lakemary. Maybe I'm the exception? There's the saying that one bad apple can spoil the bunch. However, I believe there is a reasonable solution to meet the CMS guidelines and the needs of our beloved Kansans. Increased education and oversight about conflict of interest can combat this, our agency along with the CDDO's can provide this. Why remove choice and control from folks who have been fighting for it their whole life. This is a self directed waiver service, lets adhere to that and let them make the choice on their own. Thank you for your continued support.