



October 1, 2024

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

From: Steva Stewart, IDD Case Manager

Re: Conflict Free Case Management

Subject: Professional Summary and Concerns Regarding Case Management Services

I have dedicated the past 29 years to the field of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (ID/DD) services, accumulating extensive experience and knowledge. For the last 14 years, I have specialized in case management, currently overseeing a caseload of approximately 30 individuals. Throughout my career, I have maintained long-term relationships with many clients, some of whom I have supported since childhood. I have guided them through significant transitions, including moves from institutional and foster care settings to adult residential environments. This sustained engagement has enabled me to build strong, lasting relationships with both clients and their families.

Providing case management to individuals receiving services from the same provider fosters enhanced communication between myself and provider staff, which is crucial for addressing clients' specific needs. These close relationships facilitate quicker resolutions to challenges, ensuring that the complex needs of individuals are addressed promptly. Case managers play a vital role in providing personalized support, often becoming intimately familiar with the unique circumstances of the individuals and families we assist. Our relationships are founded on effective communication, respect, advocacy, and trust. However, potential changes in service providers or case managers, prompted by the Center for Medicaid Services (CMS) "Conflict of Interest" policy, could be detrimental to many families who have carefully selected their providers after enduring lengthy waiting periods. This concern is further exacerbated by significant capacity issues within Kansas.

My unique perspective is shaped by my experience with both an independent case management agency and a service provider. In my current role, my team and I work collaboratively, supporting one another's caseloads to ensure continuity of care when someone is out of the office. This teamwork is one of the key advantages of provider-based Targeted Case Management (TCM). Additionally, I receive comprehensive training through Lakemary Center, which exceeds the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) licensing requirements. My active participation in KDADS meetings and other relevant forums keeps me informed about system changes and best practices, allowing me to access a broader range of state updates, training opportunities, and resources.

In my experience, there were no notable advantages regarding conflict of interest or business practices at the independent case management agency where I was employed. However, working directly for the service provider offers several benefits, including improved health and life insurance options, 401(k) matching, paid time off, and a more competitive wage. Furthermore, my current position allows me to manage a more accessible caseload, primarily within my county and nearby areas. This is a significant improvement compared to my previous role, where a substantial portion of my caseload was located over an hour away from my home or office. Consistent supervisory oversight further enhances the quality of person-centered planning processes, ensuring that our clients receive the best possible care.

The proposed options to address the conflict-of-interest issue are unsatisfactory for many families receiving services. I am concerned that without more reasonable solutions, we may witness a decline in case management capacity, complicating the landscape for those we serve.

Thank you for considering these important concerns. I look forward to discussing potential pathways forward that prioritize the well-being of those we support.

Sincerely,
Steva Stewart
Targeted Case Manager
Lakemary Center