

NEBRASKA

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DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



Jim Pillen, Governor

December 31, 2024

Mr. Brandon Metzler
Clerk of the Legislature
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509

Subject: Family Support Program Annual Report

Dear Mr. Metzler:

Nebraska Revised Statutes § 68-1530 requires the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) to file an annual report on the Family Support Program. You will find the information for the period March 1, 2024, the effective date of the Family Support Waiver, through November 1, 2024.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tony Green".

Tony Green
Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities

Attachment

Division of Developmental Disabilities

Family Support Program Annual Report

December 2024

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 68-1530

Distribution of Funds and Children Served

The Family Support Waiver (FSW) received CMS approval on March 1, 2024. As of November 1, 2024, 1,175 offers have been made to eligible individuals and their families. Of those individuals, 584 offers have been accepted, 213 offers have been declined, and 378 are pending a response by the individual or family.

As of November 1, 2024, 183 individuals have completed all waiver eligibility requirements to officially come onto the waiver, and 28 individuals have submitted invoices for services. As of November 1, 2024, the Family Support Waiver has spent a total of \$45,395.10. This is an average of \$1,621.25 per person. It should be noted this does not represent a full year of applications or spending on the waiver which was approved and went live on March 1, 2024.

On March 28, 2024, Governor Jim Pillen announced the end of the Developmental Disabilities (DD) waitlist for services. Since that time, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) has made a total of 1,262 offers including the 1,175 FSW offers, 33 offers for the DD Adult Day (DDAD) Waiver, and 54 Comprehensive DD Services Waiver. This has reduced the DD waitlist for services to 1,020 individuals. At the current rate of offers per month, DDD anticipates the elimination of the DD waitlist for services by mid-2025.

Summary of Grievances Regarding the Family Support Waiver

As of November 1, 2024, no grievances have been submitted to the Division of Developmental Disabilities specific to the Family Support Waiver.

Applicants Found Ineligible

Between March 1, 2024 and November 1, 2024, twenty individuals were found ineligible for the program. These individuals were found ineligible during the disability review process completed by the State Review Team.

Quality Assurance Activities and the Results of Annual Measures of Family Satisfaction

The stated purpose of the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waivers quality improvement (QI) strategy is to ensure the health and safety of participants through continuous participant-focused monitoring and improvement by implementing and sustaining a system of quality management and improvement strategies.

The DDD QI Strategy uses an evidence-based tiered approach, which includes a number of activities and processes at both the local and state levels. This system has been developed to discover whether the federal waiver assurances are being met, to remediate identified problems, and to carry out quality improvement.

The DDD QI efforts for the DDD waiver services are coordinated through the DDD Quality Improvement Committee comprised of (at a minimum), representatives from DDD Central Office, DHHS Medicaid (MLTC), and DDD Service Coordination. The QI Committee meets at least quarterly and reviews data and reports including, but not limited to, statewide monitoring, critical incidents, complaints and investigations, Medicaid Home & Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver performance measures, service utilization, post-payment claims, and certification surveys to identify trends and consider statewide changes to support service improvement.

Both DDD Central Office and QI personnel are involved in discovery related to complaints, incident reports, and data collection and analysis. In addition to DDD Central Office and QI personnel, Liberty Healthcare, a quality improvement partner, is also involved in the discovery, data collection, and reporting related to mortality review. Liberty Healthcare compiles and produces reports related to mortality reviews, which are analyzed by DDD personnel, DDD administration, and the QI Committee. QI reports include data from mortality review, appeals, supervisory file review, Central Office file review, critical incident, state-mandated web-based case management system reports, post-payment claims, and service authorizations. These reports are compiled by DDD personnel and analyzed by the DDD administration, and the QI Committee at least annually and as needed. When a provider is cited during certification review or complaint investigation and it is determined a plan of improvement is required, DHHS personnel monitor the plan of improvement to assure completion.

DDD participates in the National Core Indicators (NCI) survey for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities (NCI-IDD) to collect family satisfaction data. At this time, no data is available from that survey which would include individuals served by the Family Support Waiver because the waiver was not approved until March 1, 2024. Data will be available from future iterations of the survey.

Recommendations to innovate the family support program

The Division of Developmental Disabilities and DHHS recommend that Neb. Rev. Stat. § 68-1530 be amended to strike the limitation on the number of individuals served on the waiver (currently 850) to allow the Division to serve as many individuals who are otherwise eligible to receive waiver services on the Family Support Waiver.