

HIGHLIGHTS

State—HCPF/DHS/Alliance.

- Department of Health Care Policy and Financing—
 - Conflict-Free Case Management—As you can imagine, with the pandemic going on any movement on changing the case management system has ground to a halt. One piece of news is that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) may allow Colorado to extend its deadline for compliance to 2024 in order to enact the changes proposed.
 - Rural Sustainability—With the state of the budget, it is unlikely that any new enrollments will be authorized for the next fiscal year, so the question of how they are allocated across the state is pretty moot now.
 - CCB Designation/CCB Contract—We submitted our application to continue to be a CCB next year. We should get our formal designation letter in May. We also received a draft of our new CCB Contract for fiscal year July 1, 2020—June 30, 2021. The new contract contains some new reporting requirements for next year, so Shannon, Elizabeth, Pat and I will be meeting in early May to review and ensure that we have necessary processes in place by the time July comes around.
 - New Case Management agency and CCB rates—HCPF released the final version of its new rates for case management and CCB activities. There is some good news—they are moving from the 15 minute billing increment in case management back to a Per Member Per Month (PMPM) billing methodology. This means that instead of logging and billing everything they do in 15 minute increments, case managers will be able to bill a flat rate for each client who has recent any case management service within the month. This is an important reduction in administrative burden for case managers. The bad news is that it looks like it will be about a 30% reduction in revenue for that program. For other CCB activities, rates have been applied per activity (ex. holding a Human Rights Committee meeting, preparing our Continuity Plan or managing the waiting list) rather than wrapped into a couple of more general billing categories. As Shannon puts together the budget, we will have a better idea of the impact of these changes, though some will be difficult to predict because we don't have historical data. Let's say, I'm not terribly hopeful but willing to be pleasantly surprised.
 - Retainer payments—At the beginning of this crisis, HCPF responded proactively by arranging for agencies to bill “retainer payments” for a few services when they cannot be provided due to COVID-19. This is probably going to be a life-saving benefit for many agencies, including Community Connections. Not all services are covered, and some clients are choosing

not to have retainer payments billed (we have to get approval from the client), but the payments we will be able to bill will help tremendously.

- Alliance—
 - End the Wait campaign—Well...it was a nice thought! Then COVID-19 happened, so End the Wait is not. At least not this year, because...
 - Colorado Legislature—The revenue forecast for the 3rd quarter is bleak and the 4th quarter will be even worse. The legislature will likely need to cut billions from the budget. HCPF has already been asked to cut \$20 million from its budget for the remainder of this year. Fortunately, they are anticipating that there will be enough cost savings from postponed physician visits and surgeries that they are not expecting to have to cut any provider rates. The economic recovery may take years, though, so cuts may still occur in the near future. The legislature plans to go back into session in mid-May and they will at least have to pass a new budget before July 1st, so we should have a better idea of what fiscal year ending 2021 will hold by then.

Local Community

- Ability Summit—We managed to squeeze in the Ability Summit just in the nick of time. Folks on the planning committee were really pleased with the result. Turnout was better than expected and the sessions were excellent. The theme of inclusion was woven through the day very well with a World Café style activity. People with disabilities were better represented as presenters during the day. Hopefully we'll just keep getting better at this every year!

Fundraising/Development

- Fund Development Committee—Unfortunately, the FDC has been temporarily placed on hold until people can leave their homes safely!
- El Pomar—Ellen submitted a \$10,000 General Operations request to El Pomar. We should hear back early summer.
- Community Concerts—Ellen also applied for the Community Concert Series in the secret garden at the Rochester. I was a little reticent about applying for our original intent (match Ballantine fund to develop another video) because it seemed a little frivolous in the current environment. Ellen came up with the idea to use it as a scholarship fund for past FOT business sponsors to be able to participate in FOT this year if they are facing financial hardships. It is too early to tell if they will even be able to hold some or all of the concerts this year. We'll let you know what we hear.
- Payroll Department—A request for the Payroll Department grant was also declined. The review committee had a hard time seeing how they could make an impact with a few thousand dollars within our \$5.5 million budget. This shows us we may want to recraft our message.
- Contribution letters—Ellen and I were right in the midst of this beautiful, compelling contribution letter that emphasized our efforts in building community inclusion and then the world as we know it ended. We did a major reworking of

the letter to make it more appropriate for the current environment. I believe the Board should have received a copy so you know what was said.

Internal CCI highlights

- COVID-19 Operations—Our offices and day programs have been closed since March 16th and we will continue to be closed until at least the end of the month. All administrative personnel are working from home and staying extremely busy with managing the crisis on top of many of their usual tasks. Many client services are not occurring—community outings are canceled and most clients with jobs are not working. We are able to provide some services by phone or web (such as EI therapies, case management monitoring and meetings, virtual social gatherings, prompting for some home tasks) and staff are checking in with clients on a regular basis. A few residential PCA services are happening in the home and of course our family caregivers are continuing with business as usual.

Host homes are mostly hunkered down with their clients, and we have worked with them all on contingency plans in case of any illness within their household. We have also offered grocery delivery for host homes, though this hasn't been needed yet. Once again, we are enormously thankful for our host homes. They are shouldering a lot of responsibility with very few opportunities for a break (though respite has been offered, people are wisely choosing not to expose the household to new people coming in and out). Group homes in other areas are getting hit hard with virus spread in some areas and some agencies are struggling to find enough staff to support their homes—either because the staff are home caring for their own children or are simply afraid to come to work. We are extremely fortunate not to be in that position. We sent a small stipend to our host homes at the beginning of the month and hope to do more as we gain a better understanding of the financial impact of this situation. If we do receive the Payroll Protection Program loan that the Board approved, this would mean we could use more of the residential revenue to support the host homes during this time rather than having to use residential revenue to subsidize losses in other programs.

So far we have not had to furlough anyone or reduce hours. We've given DSP's a variety of ways to work even when they aren't working with clients, including online training, curriculum development, and disability and advocacy research. We're hoping with the combination of the retainer payments, the Families First Coronavirus Recovery Act (which gives payroll tax credit to companies who pay an employee during the isolation or quarantine of themselves or a household member or to care for a child who is out of school due to coronavirus), and the Payroll Protection Program, we will be able to keep the employees we've worked hard to recruit and train.

As of the writing of this report, we know of no clients or employees with a confirmed case of COVID-19. We hope our luck will hold out in the future weeks.

- Class B Plan of Correction—Our Plan of Correction from our Class B survey has been accepted and we will need to submit our documentation by mid-May. Fortunately, a majority of the items are already completed, so we should be in full compliance very soon! That will be a blessing. We’ve also submitted our annual license renewal with only a small hissy fit necessary on my part.
- Quality Program—The Administrative Review Team met in April to review our quality indicators. The minutes are included in your Board packet.

Facilities

- Harrison—Security cameras have been installed at Harrison for staff safety.

Other

- The CCB Transparency group agreed to pause its advocacy during the pandemic. However, we expect they will renew their efforts to require CCB’s to provide detailed ledgers to the public once this crisis is over. Janice sent their representative some very informational messages, but he was unswayed. We believe they also sent letters to our local County Commissioners condemning our financial transparency. I wrote letters to our local counties explaining the situation and inviting a conversation if they had concerns. I have heard nothing in response.
- We have another Board member application this month! It will be in your packet and I hope you will have a chance to consider the application at the meeting.

So, how are *you*? We hope that you and your families are staying well throughout this crisis and you are finding ways to make use of your forced time at home. If you have Netflix and haven’t watched “Crip Camp,” you must find a couple of hours to see this thought-provoking film! I promise that you will NOT be sorry.

Acronym Cheat Sheet

- ART (Administrative Review Team) –The Executive Team and Program Directors oversight of Quality Indicators
- The Arc – advocacy organization for people with intellectual disabilities
- ANCOR (American Network of Community Options and Resources (for DD)
- BHO (Behavioral Health Organization)
- CCB (Community Centered Board) we are 1 of 20 in the state
- CCI (Community Connections, Inc.)
- CDLE (Colorado Department of Labor and Employment)
- CFCM (Conflict-Free Case Management) Federal mandate that the provision case management must be separated from direct program services.
- CES (Children’s Extensive Services)
- CHCBS (Children’s Home and Community Based Services)
- CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) Federal
- CORA (Colorado Open Records Act)

- DHS or CDHS (Colorado Department of Human Services)
- DSP (Direct Support Professional) – field staff working with clients
- DVR (Department of Vocational Rehabilitation)
- EI (Early Intervention) Developmental services for kids Birth to 3
- FOT (Festival of Trees)
- HCPF (Health Care Policy and Financing) State Medicaid office
- I/DD (Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities)
- JBC (Joint Budget Committee at the Colorado legislature)
- MOU (Memorandum of Understanding)
- PASAs (Program Approved Service Agencies) agencies approved to provide Medicaid Waiver services across the state
- PCA (Personal Care Alternative) residential services not in a host home
- RAE (Regional Accountable Entity) Medicaid Care Management organization
- Residential (a.k.a. Comprehensive – our adult 24/7 support)
- ROI (Return on Investment)
- SJBPH (San Juan Basin Public Health)
- SLS (Supported Living Services) – Services for adults living independently or with family
- TCM (Targeted Case Management)