

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

### **State—HCPF/DHS/Alliance.**

- Department of Health Care Policy and Financing—
  1. Rural Community Centered Boards—We continue to work with the Department on ways to stabilize service provision in rural communities and prevent too much migration of enrollments (and funding) from rural areas to the Denver metro. HCPF representatives continue to be very open to this discussion and the solutions that have been proposed.
  2. Conflict-Free Case Management—We had a very productive meeting with the representatives from Rocky Mountain Human Services and our case management department. We are working together on a proposal and timeline with an eye on an official switchover July 1, 2020. There are still some unanswered questions and decisions to be made before we can determine that this is a definite ‘yes.’
  3. Provider Transition Plan—We finally heard back from CDPHE (Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment) about our residential Provider Transition Plan to come into compliance with the Federal Final Settings Rules. They had some suggested updates to some of our procedures and forms. I am working with Julie Ferguson and Matt Payne (our Adult Services Program Directors) on those updates and we will resubmit ASAP.
  
- Alliance—Alliance continues to go to bat for us whenever possible. A most recent example is a letter written on behalf of members to the Director of the Colorado Department of Human Services regarding issues within the Early Intervention program. During the last year, Office of Early Childhood changed its budgeting and invoice system, leading to confusion, errors and late and/or missing payments. Getting timely communication from OEC staff has been a challenge. We open this letter will help open the lines of communication again and reduce the frustrations that CCB’s are having.
  
- Family Support—After years in the making, we have new, clearer and stricter rules for the Family Support Program.
  
- EVV (Electronic Visit Verification)—Our Program Directors for both Adult Services and Children and Families’ Services are still neck deep trying to figure out how to implement EVV by January. We are trying to strike a balance between making it easy and non-invasive for employees and clients and also cost-effective

for the agency.

- **CHRP Changes**—The Children’s Habilitative Residential Waiver Program has historically been a program for children with IDD who can no longer be cared for in their family home. This Waiver has been managed by local county departments of human services. Recently, the CHRP program has been expanded to extend the options for out-of-home placement as well as add services to help keep a child in the family home. The case management responsibility also shifted to the CCB’s. The Department of Health Care Policy and Financing is looking for providers to provide the available services in local communities. Community Connections could choose to be a provider of some or all of the services in the future; however the way the CHRP Waiver is currently written, we will have to be out of conflict (with case management and direct services in the same agency) before we could start providing services. So we have some time to study the advantages and disadvantages.

### **Local Community**

- **City of Durango**—A group of nonprofit leaders are still working with United Way to negotiate changes to the rules for Community Service Funding. We have been researching similarly-sized communities (eg. Steamboat Springs and Golden) to find examples of how the funding might be managed. We are preparing an official letter to the City with our requests.
- **Ability Summit Planning**—The partner agencies who help host the Ability Summit (the old “Family Day”) have started our planning process to look at ways to improve the event and expand our reach. We are considering changing the dates to March or April due to feedback that doing an event just after school ends is problematic for many families.
- **Equity in Emergency Planning**—We wrapped up our first year with the EEP grant with San Juan Basin Public Health last month. Through that grant, we were able to send employees to training, update our agency and client emergency plans, and host a fire evacuation table top exercise with a host home provider to identify gaps and needs in our process and planning. We are entering into the second year of the project and now that we all have a better sense of what we can accomplish, we have even more ambitious plans to support emergency preparedness for our clients, our agency and our community.

### **Fundraising**

- **Festival of Trees**—We are crashing head first into FOT planning time! Currently we are working on gathering the raffle prizes (required before we can send the information to the Secretary of State and create the tickets) and sending out the Save the Date to spark interest in businesses. The event is confirmed with the train for December 6-8<sup>th</sup>. We are looking at shortening the hours each day

(ending at 5 p.m.) to avoid conflict with the Polar Express and adding time on Sunday.

- Fundraising Plan/Committee—Ellen will be coming to the Board meeting to discuss fundraising planning. She is creating a development plan that will give us a global view, goals and strategies for tackling our overall fundraising approach for Community Connections. One piece of this planning is putting together a Fundraising Committee comprised of Board members and other interested community members. We most definitely want your input to make sure we're headed in the right direction.

### **Internal CCI highlights**

- Compensation Plan—Several of us (mostly Judy, Shannon and I) have been hard at work trying to update our Compensation Plan to be fair, transparent and hopefully pay people a competitive wage. Because we have the pass-through revenue from HB 1407 and it's our largest department, we have concentrated on the adult services department, which is ready to start this month. It has been a rocky transition because although we have increased salaries for all DSP's and adult services staff, the cultural expectation has been that DSP's get a \$1 raise every year for the first five years of employment. That strategy relied on DSP's starting at a depressed rate and then increasing 50% in a five year period. That was resulting in significant recruitment problems and isn't even possible anymore since the minimum wage continues to increase (by January 2020, the minimum wage will be \$2/hour more than what was our starting wage just a year and a half ago).

Our new strategy targets the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of pay for DSP's (i.e. paying more than 75% of other employers with similar positions) and the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile for all other positions. The initial goal is to get all employees within range of the target. Increased pay will be based on education (including pertinent certifications), experience and longevity with Community Connections. I will include the executive summary of our Compensation Plan with the Board materials in case you are interested in more details (optional reading). We are starting with the adult services department and administration this month and we will be phasing in the other departments (children and families services, case management, and then executive team) over the next few months. Of course, this is all dependent on what we can fit within the current budget.

The timing of this change is also fortunate due to the recent passage of SB 19-085, the "Equal Pay Bill." The bill prohibits discrimination in wages based on gender. Any wage differentials for the same or similar position must be based upon specified criteria; our new Compensation Plan meets those criteria.

- Technology upgrade—Planned obsolescence strikes again! In January, Microsoft will stop supporting Windows versions prior to Windows 10, which means a significant portion of our computers need to be updated. We also are overdue for an upgrade to our exchange server. Laura has been working with Netforce (our

contracted IT provider) for over a year researching our options and getting the pieces in place. Thanks to funding from TechSoup, our cost will be minimal. Netforce is scheduled to do the upgrades within the next few weeks.

We've also been experiencing some internet issues at Holly House, seriously disrupting the effectiveness of the team there. Brainstorm seems to have finally fixed the major problem (quick, knock on something), but because of the difficulties, Laura has been exploring other internet provider options. Once Holly House is fixed, she will be looking at connectivity at Harrison.

- **Training**—As part of our Strategic Plan, we have been emphasizing the importance of training for both onboarding and experienced team members, trying to find the balance of teaching the right competencies at the right time in the right way. Our Learning and Development Workgroup, led by Judy Schreckenbach, has developed an onboarding training plan for DSP's, combining classroom, online and one-on-one training to provide the essential knowledge for incoming employees to be successful. (A version of the plan is included in your Board packet, in case your interested.) Other pieces of this project include:
  - Developing training plans for all other positions in the agency (about 75% complete)
  - Evaluating the effectiveness of training through a standardized evaluation form
  - Perfecting the process of getting employees through the training program (which has been difficult due to the low number of people onboarding)
  - Testing new training sessions with experienced employees (PS Thanks to Anne for attending my pilot "IDD Past, Present and Future" training at Holly House!)
  - Continuing to develop training materials and curriculum to meet the needs of a diverse team.
  
- **Annual Meeting in August**—Don't forget that our Board meeting in August will be in Cortez and you are cordially invited to a Community Picnic beforehand. We are creating an invitee list, which we'll bring to the Board meeting for your input.

### **Facilities**

- **Pine Street**—Pine Street fit several important projects into the FYE 2019 budget, including bathroom updates and a great new porch on the south side. I will try to remember to take pictures to share at the Board meeting.
- **Holly House**—Part of the First UMC Donation had to be used on some necessary roof repairs. We have about \$6800 left to spend and a long list of needed repairs and updates. Matt Payne and Laura are working to prioritize those and keep our property in good shape.

### **Other**

## 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)
- 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) Marcy’s department
- 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)