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February 13, 2012

Dear Stakeholder:

The purpose of this letter and the enclosed handouts is to give you information on a process in Michigan that will impact the services and supports received by people who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid (“dual eligibles”). We think it is important to be informed. **Knowledge is power and your voice is important.**

The State of Michigan is currently planning for the integration (combining) of the management of Medicare and Medicaid funds for those people who are eligible for both. This is being done to help improve care and simplify the rules and regulations for both programs.

This effort could be very helpful for those individuals who have both Medicare and Medicaid. However, with any such major change there are also concerns. Many are worried that this change may take away services and supports they currently receive.

What does this mean to you?

The potential effect is unclear as the plan is still being developed. At Northern Lakes CMH, we hope: that services will be improved by ensuring that all the health (physical and behavioral) needs of an individual are considered and addressed, that available funding will not be reduced, and that there will be better coordination of physical and behavioral health services.

At the same time, there is concern that funding for and availability of behavioral health services will decrease and there will be a loss of local control, coordination, and decision-making. Behavioral health services are critical to persons served and we want to ensure that their value and importance are not lost in the development of this plan. There is concern that the values which drive the system will change from person-centered, local community control to a business model that focuses on the bottom line (profit).

If the management of the funding for services for dual eligibles is removed from the CMH system, the individuals risk losing their current services and supports. They could lose their providers and the homes they are living in, and self-determination arrangements might not exist under a new model. Also, if the individuals get to keep their services, the amount of services might be reduced.

What should you do with this information?

It is very important that stakeholder voices like yours are heard. In coordination with the Michigan Department of Community Health and the Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards, we have scheduled a regional information forum which will take place in Traverse City and by videoconference to Houghton Lake and other locations:

Regional Community Information Forum

Tuesday, March 13, 2012

2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Munson Medical Center Lower Level Conference Room, 1105 6th Street, Traverse City
Northern Lakes Community Mental Health, 2715 S. Townline Rd., Houghton Lake

We hope you will be able to attend. If you are not able to attend a forum but you have Internet access, we encourage you to email your comments and concerns to IntegratedCare@michigan.gov.

The Michigan plan will be submitted to the federal government sometime in April. The regional information forums will likely be your last opportunity before the plan is submitted to hear Michigan Department of Community Health staff explain their planning materials and progress, clarify information that may not be well understood, and be able to ask your specific questions and express your concerns in person.

It is important that you be aware of the plan and have time to make decisions based on how the plan will work. This includes if the plan will offer dual eligibles an “opt in” opportunity to stay in a Medicaid managed care plan when they become eligible for Medicare.

More information is also available on this website: <https://janus.pscinc.com/dualeligibles>. If you have questions please feel free to call Customer Services at (800) 337-8598 or (231) 933-4907.

Respectfully,

Gregory D. Paffhouse

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