

April 13, 2012

To: Bea Rector and Barbara Lantz
From: Lance Morehouse, King County Parent Coalition for developmental disabilities.
Subject: Pathways to Health Proposal in Washington State

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this proposal and taking the time to meet with us and answer questions on April 4, 2012. It helped us understand although the scope of this proposal is still hard to comprehend in its entirety.

In our perspective, there might be a couple of benefits that this proposal would provide for people with developmental disabilities. For the 6% of our population who are defined as "high cost, high utilization" some of the efforts such as a medical home and a care coordinator might have positive affects on the health of this population. If proactive services can be provided to avoid a crisis and/or re-hospitalization, that would be a benefit to these individuals.

The other potential benefit might be an increase in access to doctors, therapies and other medical care for people who struggle to find a health care provider that will accept Medicaid.

Of course, savings to the state is another obvious benefit as long as it was not at the expense of the health of people who utilize necessary medical services. We are interested in who will determine necessary medical services.

Some of the concerns we have with this proposal are as follows:

If a care coordinator is going to have an impact, they need to have some authority over the services that might be beneficial to an individual. Adding another layer of oversight without the appropriate authority may not only be ineffective, but more expensive. While other populations may have structures in place to assist them, we see a lack of such a structure for people with developmental disabilities. We strongly believe this entity should exist outside of the health plans that are managing services to avoid a conflict of interest and should even provide advocacy on behalf of the individual. We believe this person should have medical knowledge as well as access to community services. We are also concerned that the additional federal match that would help pay for this entity would end within two years of implementation.

This proposal overall is not going to simplify the healthcare system. It is already difficult for a person with a developmental disability and their families to navigate the system and this adds additional confusion and bureaucracy.

We want to know how the services outlined in this proposal will be coordinated if the person has primary health insurance in addition to Medicaid and Medicare. We hope that individuals will still have access to physicians and specialists and that co-pays are still covered they way Medicaid currently provides for them. If this is not the case, this is a huge concern for us.

We are also concerned about how informed choice will be addressed for people with developmental disabilities as well as strong grievance procedures available to people who may have difficulties accessing the services they need.

In addition to our comments, we strongly support the comments submitted by Sue Elliott from The Arc of Washington.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lance Morehouse".