National Council for Behavioral Health

Association Executives Teleconference Summary Notes

Tuesday, November 24, 2020

2:00 – 3:00 p.m. ET

**Participants**:

Laura Aldinger, Melanie Brown-Woofter, Gian-Carl Casa, Ann Christian, Lori Doyle, Mark Drennan, Annette Dubas, Richard Edley, Doyle Forrestal, Linda Grant, Lauren Grimes, Jesse Hambrick, Kelly Hansen, Heather Jefferis, Julia Jernigan, Kyle Kessler, Maryam Kiefer, Misty Leitsch, Mark Levota, Holly McCorkle, Brent McGinty, Carolyn Petrak, Michelle Pone, Flora Schmidt, Steve Shannon, Adrienne Shilton, Andrea Smyth, Chris Stoner-Mertz, John Tassoni, Jr., Alex Wolff, and Stephen Wilder.

**Staff in Attendance**:

Jeannie Campbell, Brett Beckerson, Frankie Berger, Neal Comstock, Rebecca Farley David, Stephanie Katz, Conner McKay, Joel Nepomuceno, Joe Parks, Michael Petruzelli, Reyna Taylor, and Mohini Venkatesh.

**Summary Notes:**

**Housekeeping**

Doyle Forrestal

Association Executives Weekly Schedule

Doyle asked for Association Executives input on continuing to meet weekly and received feedback that many would like the meetings to continue weekly. She asked about potentially not having meetings over the holidays on December 22nd and December 29th, resuming the weekly schedule after the new year. Association Executives agreed.

**Federal Legislative Update**

Reyna Taylor, Brett Beckerson, Frankie Berger, and Michael Petruzelli

President-elect Biden’s Transition

Reyna provided an overview of how the National Council is preparing for President-elect Biden’s transition. She said that we expect to see a short list of possible heads of HHS, CMS, SAMHSA, and ONDCP soon. Reyna stated that President-elect Biden’s healthcare nominations will most likely be announced in early winter, and, hopefully, include individuals with whom the National Council has relationships with.

ONDCP and SAMHSA Meeting

Brett stated that National Council staff had a meeting ONDCP and SAMHSA officials last week and that some topics they covered included: relaxing methadone rules, recovery language, and harm reduction. He said they also discussed the long-term strategy for 9-8-8 implementation and how best to coordinate. Additionally, Brett said they discussed how to strengthen relationships and engage stakeholders such as the National Council.

Provider Relief Funds

Reyna stated that they also discussed our members’ experience with provider relief funds, getting through the pandemic, and the impact of social injustice on behavioral health. She said that they emphasized the need to get additional funds to providers quickly, in addition to the need for mental health and substance abuse treatment coming out of the pandemic. Reyna said that the National Council developed a letter highlighting the National Council’s immediate concerns and what the National Council would like to see in the next administration. Reyna also stated that they will highlight talking points from the letter and send to Association Executives.

Best Practices Seen Around 9-8-8

Frankie sought feedback from Association Executives from states who have implemented 9-8-8 regarding best practices, causes for concern, and analysis of 9-8-8 implementation. Frankie stated she would like to have one-off calls with Association Executives around their feedback regarding implementation.

Wit vs. United Behavioral Healthcare Settlement

Reyna provided an overview of the settlement regarding Wit vs. United Behavioral Healthcare. Reyna said the decision stated that under the settlement, United Behavioral Healthcare can only use clinical guidelines developed by non-profit professional societies and that they must provide additional training for all staff. Reyna said that the decision also mandates the readjudication of 67,000 claims with a potential of $30 million in corrective billing.

Crisis Stabilization and Reentry Act

Reyna and Michael also gave an update on the Crisis Stabilization and Reentry Act, which was passed by the Senate. Reyna stated we are now advocating for the passage of the act in the House. This is the second ask we focused on during Hill Day at Home that has seen positive progress (9-8-8 being the first). Michael stated the bill is currently before the House Judiciary Committee and we are hoping the bill gets passed by the end of the year.

**Next Association Executives Teleconference**

Tuesday, December 1, 2020 2-3:00 p.m. ET