National Council for Behavioral Health

Association Executives Teleconference Summary Notes

Tuesday, May 26, 2020

2:00 – 3:00 p.m. ET

Participants: Laura Aldinger, Jeremy Blair, Melanie Brown-Woofter, Danette Castle, Nadia Chait, Shelly Chandler, Tom Chard, Ann Christian, Phaedre Cole, John Coppola, Paul Curtis, Terry Dosch, Lori Doyle, Mark Drennan, Mark Fontaine, Doyle Forrestal, Robyn Garrett, Amanda Gilman, Lauren Grimes, Shannon Hall, Lisa Henick, Kimberley Higgs, Cynthia Humphrey, Heather Jefferis, Julia Jernigan, Lee Johnson, Maryam Kiefer, Mark Levota, Marvin Lindsey, John Magnuson, Brett McGinty, Pete Nielsen, Michelle Ponce, Harvey Rosenthal, Mary-Linden Salter, Flora Schmidt, Adrienne Shelton, Chris Stoner-Mertz, John Tassoni, Jr, Kerran Vigroux, Debra Wentz, Ellyn Wilbur, and Mary Windecker.

Staff in Attendance: Chuck Ingoglia, Jeannie Campbell, Brett Beckerson, Frankie Berger, Neal Comstock, Rebecca Farley David, Joe Parks, Michael Petruzzelli, Sarah Surgenor, Mohini Venkatesh, Reyna Taylor, Sara Haywood, Stephanie Katz, and Diane Millard.

**Summary Notes:**

Doyle Forrestal thanked everyone for joining today’s call and asked Neal Comstock to review the Raise Hand function of Zoom. Doyle told the Association Executives that, typically, the meetings start with an update from Reyna Taylor and Frankie Berger but due to an urgent issue that the National Council needs help with, she will turn it over to Chuck Ingoglia.

Chuck Ingoglia, President and CEO

Chuck Ingoglia said last week CMS made payments to nursing homes out of the provider relief fund. He continued saying that the associations that represent nursing homes pulled together all the information that CMS needed, gave it directly to CMS, and CMS then made payments. Chuck said that CMS asked states for this information, states have had some difficulty pulling this information together, and that some states are not comfortable giving financial information that CMS requested such as bank routing numbers. He explained that in order for CMS to make payments they need to know specifically where to send the payments. Chuck noted that National Council has been making the case for several weeks that behavioral health providers need additional funding. He said that the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use is meeting with Secretary Azar today to raise the issue of payments to behavioral health providers. Chuck specified that we are asking for Association Executives help to get 7 data points from members that we can aggregate and provide to CMS, making it as easy as possible for the government to be facilitate payments. Reyna Taylor responded that we do have an email that will go out to Association Executives that will explain this, as well as a template for Association Executives to send to their members with the information needed. Rebecca Farley-David clarified that the information will be in a secure on-line form so members will not have to worry about sending secure information via email. Reyna said we have an ASAP timeline and hopefully this information can be sent in by Friday.

Anne Christian (WA) asked how we should coordinate with state Medicaid offices on this. She stated that she would not want (Neal-not sure what is trying to be said here) be at cross purposes with the state Medicaid office. Reyna replied that the data the state submitted will work in conjunction with this and that the data is going to the same place. She said that CMS will be able to aggregate the data. Chuck commented that not every state was comprehensive in what they submitted.

John Magnuson (MN) asked if we can include questions seeking this data into another member survey. Reyna replied that this information is specific to each organization and cannot be aggregated so it needs to be separate.

Paul Curtis (CA) asked if associations should collect the information on behalf of their members or ask them to submit it. Reyna replied that members should submit it themselves to the secure online portal.

Shelly Chandler (IA) commented that they have members that are non-traditional behavioral health providers focusing on services for people with intellectual or developmental disability and brain injuries and asked if the 7 questions are inclusive of services that might fall outside of traditional behavioral health. Reyna replied that the items are simply the members’ taxpayer identification number (TIN), Medicaid revenue for 2018/2019, total revenue for 2018/2019, bank routing number, total number of people served. She said that the answers are not behavioral health specific so all types of members should be able to generate their responses.

Robyn Garrett (GA) asked if this request was for a separate funding opportunity. Reyna replied that this request is both for the approximately $5-7 billion in remaining COVID-19 relief funds, but also in preparation for additional funds such as our $37.5 billion request.

Tom Chard (AK) said that some of his members are community centers and hospitals and asked if they would get in trouble if they respond through this and have also responded through another mechanism. Chuck responded that CMS will have the organizations’ TINs and can figure this out.

Lee Johnson (TX) asked if the form that is going to be used will go back to the National Council. Rebecca Farley David responded yes, the form will be coming to the National Council and we will transmit it to CMS. She said that the National Council will not save, preserve, or use the data in any way.

**COVID-19 Policy Related Efforts to Support Members**

Presented by Reyna Taylor and Frankie Berger

Reyna discussed how the latest House-passed COVID-19 relief bill not going to be considered in the Senate. She said that we are pursuing a Senate advocacy strategy and that we have a bit of time because the Senate is unlikely to move any legislation until end of June or early July. Harvey Rosenthal (NY) commented that New York is looking at some major state cuts due to COVID-19. He asked Reyna when additional federal legislation might be enacted.

Reyna said we are currently hearing the end of June or early July at the earliest.

Frankie Burger reported that directed payment guidance has come out from CMS and that it has been posted on Engage. She said that the guidance gives states a clear plan of action for using directed payments and may provide a level of comfort that some states did not have with these options before. Joe Parks commented that for some states, it is easier for a payor to reprocess claims at a higher payment rate than it is to do a new directed payment.

**Announcements**

Presented by Michael Petruzzelli and Jeannie Campbell

Michael Petruzzelli provided an update on Hill Day at Home. He said that we have over 1,500 registrants thus far, speakers have been confirmed, and we are now in the preparation stage. He said that the next thing that will be coming out is more promotion to members and our partner organizations.

Jeannie Campbell reminded the Association Executives about the “The Future of Conferences - National Council Association Executives Discussion” webinar which will take place Wednesday, June 27 at 12 noon ET. She also reminded the Association Executives about the Spring Association Executives meeting which takes place on June 16 at 1:30 pm ET and the Public Policy Meeting on June 18 at 2:00 pm ET.

**Open Discussion**

(Discussions grouped by topic. Not all discussions captured.)

Ann Christian (WA) said that as we continue to advocate for continued flexibility for telehealth, they have had some emerging concerns in Washington about standards of care, quality control and whether adequate monitoring and supervision is happening. She noted that there have been two related suicides in Federally Qualified Health Centers. Chuck replied that we are trying to put together to develop some standards of care related to telehealth. Doyle said that we could all use this information and will plan on discussing this next week.

Joe Parks said we need to figure out how to do an assessment of who our providers have engaged with that we could not maintain engagement with, in the absence of the emergency rules. He said it is clear in a number of states, that people would have never come in to see us are now getting some kind of care.

Mark Fontaine (FL) asked do we know how many in our care are getting tested for coronavirus, especially in residential programs. Joe Parks replied that we have a brief paper describing the 2 major categories of tests available, discussing what they can and cannot tell, and the false positive/false negative rate. The paper describes the thinking around the two tests, it does not recommend a specific test because the field is changing so rapidly that would we not be able to keep if fresh.

Chuck said we are looking to broker an arrangement with a testing company where we can get discounts for our members. We are very early in this.

John Coppola suggested that on one of these calls that the Medical Directors provide some guidance on when to test, who to test, where to test, diagnostic test versus the antibodies. Joe Parks said he would be happy to do this during the next call. Chuck said that we would send to Association Executives the document that we developed for residential treatment facilities which has guidance of when to test.

**Next Association Executives Teleconference**

June 2, 2020, 2:00 PM ET