

# KANSAS MENTAL HEALTH COALITION

.....Speaking with one voice to meet the critical needs of people with mental illness

## KANSAS MEDICAID AND MENTAL HEALTH

**Position:** The Kansas Mental Health Coalition supports a Medicaid program in Kansas that provides medically necessary services for those Kansans who have a mental health issue. Any changes to the system must be subjected to stringent Legislative oversight and offer open access to eligible consumers, efficient delivery of services, and adequate provider reimbursement.

**The Problem:** Our Medicaid program provides much needed access to mental health services in the State of Kansas. Of the state's 300,000 Medicaid recipients, 44,000 receive mental health services. The Administration has proposed a new approach to funding and managing Medicaid, titled KanCare, that aims to improve health outcomes for Medicaid beneficiaries and to slow the growth of Medicaid expenditures by improving care coordination and reducing fragmentation across programs. It wants to do this while preserving Medicaid rates, eligibility and benefits. We agree the path we are on is not sustainable, but such an immediate transformation (KanCare goes into effect January 1, 2013) must have stringent oversight by the Legislature and the Administration. KanCare must ensure that we move toward rewarding clinical outcomes that improve quality and reduce costs in an organized and agreed upon process that involves key stakeholder participation.

**Why this matters:** Of the 44,000 Medicaid recipients who receive mental health services, many have severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI). These individuals rely heavily on the care management, treatment, medications and services they receive from community mental health providers. It is important that these Kansans not be lost in a new system that may make it more difficult for them to navigate their care and treatment.

For KanCare to succeed, it must ensure that mental health consumers have timely access to care—making it available at the right time and in the right amount. We will remain strong in our advocacy to make sure this happens in the new world of managed care.

**The bottom line:** In Kansas, we are invested in community based treatment for those with mental illness. Services and treatment allow individuals with mental illness the opportunity to remain in their own homes and communities, find meaningful work, stay active in their communities, and have healthy relationships with their families and friends. For KanCare to succeed, it must ensure that mental health consumers have timely access to care—making it available at the right time and in the right amount. We will remain strong in our advocacy to make sure this happens in the new world of managed care.

**Need more information?** Drill deeper into this issue on the back of this page.

## **The rest of the story about Medicaid Managed Care in Kansas**

The Administration has issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the management of all Kansas Medicaid services and population through a program to be known as KanCare. This program will go into effect on January 1, 2013. The Medicaid program provides much needed access to mental health services in the State of Kansas and we in the mental health provider and advocacy community view these changes as positive for persons with mental illness. Among the positive changes include improved care coordination across multiple systems, thus improving overall health outcomes and quality of care. We see opportunities for the mental health system in Kansas and those we serve. Among those opportunities include:

- Integrated person centered care
- Financial incentives tied to outcomes
- Health homes with a focus on mental health
- Disability preference for State employment
- Cash incentives for hiring of persons with disabilities
- Health and wellness initiatives
- Continued access to mental health medications

The Kansas Mental Health Coalition supports those changes in Kansas Medicaid that improve access to the right treatment, at the right time, in the right place, in the right amount and for as long as necessary to ensure a timely and durable recovery for people with mental illnesses. The Coalition encourages oversight by the legislature and the administration of the operation of the KanCare program. It is imperative that, in addition to the 24 specific objectives outlined in the reform proposal, the new contracts for Medicaid services for mental health care provide:

- Statewide access to public and private mental health providers;
- Medical homes that are accessible to people of limited means;
- Access to an array of services that address the critical needs of individuals with serious mental illnesses;
- Treatment by professionals with the appropriate level of expertise and education;
- Access to mental health medications complying with current Kansas law prohibiting preferred drug lists for behavioral health medications;
- Transparent utilization review and effective implementation of a medical necessity definition that recognizes the ongoing needs of persons with mental illness for services and supports;
- Sufficient preparation key to preventing delays in turnaround time and backlogs in determinations of Medicaid /Healthwave eligibility;
- And reliable information and assistance to be provided to participants and families by unbiased advocacy organizations for eligibility, information about services and treatment available, complaint processes, and dispute resolution.

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