

July 18th, 2018

Dear Transitions Program Participants and Families,

I am writing to keep you informed of planning timelines and efforts related to our Transitions Program. As things progress, I will continue to provide you with a monthly update.

Please note, there will be no immediate changes. Our Transitions Program Sites will continue to operate as is throughout the summer and well beyond. You can expect to participate in individualized person centered planning meetings before any changes in services are made. As site-specific timelines and plans are developed these will be communicated to you in advance.

The six information and input meetings attended by individuals and families in June were very valuable and that input has been used, as initial implementation planning efforts get underway.

Themes which emerged during the June sessions included the following concerns: loss of friendships, social connections, and connections to trusted Transitions staff members; potential for isolation of high needs individuals; the community not ready and not welcoming to individuals with disabilities; lack of routine and structure; impact on guardians work schedules and other commitments; transportation and overall safety concerns; lack of funding to support a more individualized model; not enough time for adequate planning and input from stakeholders before making any changes.

With these concerns in mind, Community Services for the Developmentally Disabled (CSDD) Leadership and other organizational leaders met to review the input and to discuss the scope of planning needed to properly address concerns.

Other Recent Actions Include:

- **Materials and FAQs:** We recorded many of the questions from these meetings. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and the parent meeting PowerPoint are now posted on our website along with other information and resources related to the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Rules included. Follow the red link from the home page at www.ceicmh.org.
- HCBSTransition@ceicmh.org: We have developed an email address for additional questions so we can continue to update the FAQ.



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- **Communication with Regional HCBS Compliance Administrators:** We continue to hear that as long as we are moving towards compliance under our corrective action plan there will be flexibility granted beyond the March, 2019 Michigan HCBS deadline.

Upcoming Actions in July:

- **Visit to Washtenaw Community Based Sites:** We will be visiting several of the community-based skill-building sites used by Washtenaw CMH on July 26 to see them in operation.
- **Meeting with Transitions Staff:** Meetings have been scheduled with staff at each of the Transitions Program sites from July 18 through August 3 to update and hear from staff about their concerns and to gather input for the future in a new service model.
- **Service array and potential staffing model development:** A service array and potential staffing models will be proposed by the end of July with the goal of shifting existing staff into new positions needed under service redesign.

August Actions:

- **Stakeholder Workgroup:** We are planning to convene a broad stakeholder workgroup to review initial planning and to provide input. This is tentatively scheduled for August.
- **Ongoing input:** We will create platforms and opportunities for review and input into planning efforts via electronic survey and other site-specific meetings in August. Separate notice will be sent later this month regarding these opportunities.
- **Program and Planning Board Committee:** The draft plan will be reviewed at the August 13th CMHA-CEI committee meeting, 812 E. Jolly Road, Lansing, MI, conference room G11-C.
- **Approval Submission:** We will submit the plan to Mid-State Health Network (MSHN) for approval of date extensions by August 23.
- **Ongoing Communication:** Consumer, Parent, Guardian, Staff communication update with next steps will be prepared and sent by August 30, 2018.

I continue to be asked why we are closing out the Transitions Program and not just bringing the existing program into compliance. I have included [a handout for families developed by the Developmental Disabilities Institute on the Home and Community Based Rules](#). Some families have found this helpful in better understanding the requirements driving these changes.



There are complex issues at play and I would like to attempt to explain the reasoning behind the eventual closing of the program sites:

1. The locations and the isolation of our largest facilities themselves do not meet the requirements of HCBS rules and cannot be brought into compliance.
2. The program-funding stream must be freed from buildings to allow for the individualized and flexible service approach required by HCBS rules as part of the person-centered planning process.
3. CMHA-CEI is (as are all CMHs) under increasingly intense scrutiny for use of Medicaid dollars via audits and Medicaid Event Verifications. This will intensify even more under the new requirements. Even though it is difficult, we must make changes that will truly bring us into full compliance and assure that we are providing services that meet Home and Community Based Services rules and are allowable under Medicaid. Otherwise, we risk the loss of millions of dollars of funds that our consumers and families rely upon for needed care.

I have truly been heartened to hear from other CMHs that closed their day programs and shifted to community-based services years ago that they have found it to have a positive impact on the lives of their consumers, and on the communities that they live in.

We truly want and need consumer, parent, guardian, and staff input and collaboration in moving us towards the future. I am hopeful that as we continue to work on improving our communication efforts with you, that you will feel better informed and more prepared for future changes.

Please submit questions to HCBSTransition@ceicmh.org.

Thank you,

Sara Lurie

Sara Lurie
Chief Executive Officer



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