Supporting Early Development and Learning Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: Early Childhood and Medicaid Panel Discussion

April 27, 2021, 2:00-3:00 pm ET
Part of the *Early Childhood and Medicaid Innovations Amid COVID-19* webinar series

*Made possible through support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*
To submit a question online, please click the Q&A icon located at the bottom of the screen.
This webinar is the third in a series, *Early Childhood and Medicaid Innovations Amid COVID-19*.

The webinar series, made possible by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is spotlighting state efforts to align or innovate early childhood and Medicaid programs to help families with young children find resiliency in the face of the pandemic and beyond.

The series is part of *Aligning Early Childhood and Medicaid*, a national initiative led by the Center for Health Care Strategies, in partnership with ZERO TO THREE, the National Association of Medicaid Directors, Social Determinants of Health Consulting, and the Public Leadership Group.
Welcome and Introduction: Armelle Casau, PhD, Sr. Program Officer, CHCS
Session Overview and Goals: Gretchen Hammer, Founder, Public Leadership Group
Ohio Department of Education: Wendy Grove, PhD, Director, Office of Early Learning & School Readiness
North Carolina Department of Health Benefits (Medicaid): Emma Sandoe, PhD, MPH, Associate Director of Strategy and Planning
US Department of Health & Human Services: Sangeeta Parikshak, PHD, Lead for Behavioral Health, Office of Head Start
Panel and Moderated Q&A
Wrap Up
Resources

• **Early Learning Guide for Restart**: program-specific guidelines, as well as developmentally appropriate considerations for local decision making

• **Student and Staff Well-Being Toolkit**: lots of resources, guidance, and considerations for all program types

• **Remote Learning Guide**: for educators and for parents, anchored in child age and development

• **Health and Well-Being**: information for parents about the whole child supports while balancing the stressors of the pandemic, including modeling resiliency and keeping adult conversations among adults
Link to All Resources

http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Reset-and-Restart

- Planning Guide for Ohio’s Schools and Districts
- Career Technical Education
- Early Childhood
- Educator Evaluation Systems
- Educator Licensure
- English Learners
  - School Administrators Serving English Learners
- Family Engagement
- Gifted Students
- Graduation Flexibility
- Health and Well-Being
- Planning for Blended or Remote Learning
  - Remote Learning Attendance Considerations
  - Submitted Remote Learning Plans
- Preventing Abuse and Neglect
- Prevention Education
- Properly Certified or Licensed Teacher Requirements
- Readiness Assessments
- Remote Learning Guide
- Social Emotional Learning
- State Support Team Supplement
- Student Readiness Toolkits
- Students Experiencing Homelessness
- Students in Foster Care
- Students with Disabilities
  - Additional Considerations
  - TeleHealth Guidance
  - Resources
- Third Grade Reading Guarantee, Reading Achievement Plans and District Reading Improvement Plans
  - Reading Diagnostic and Remediation Activity
- Whole-Child Nutrition
  - Child Nutrition Technical Assistance
Supporting Young Learners

- **Basic Needs**: nutrition, housing, safe places to be
- **Health**: testing for virus, well-child visits, public health knowledge and information to mitigate & respond
- **Education Access**: technology, devices, instruction
- **Connection**: social and emotional for children, as well as adults (parents, teachers, school counselors)
- **Normalcy**: play, activities to support learning, and parent engagement and interactions
North Carolina’s COVID-19 Policy Changes

Emma Sandoe, PhD, MPH,
Associate Director of Strategy and Planning,
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Health Benefits
NC MEDICAID COVID-19 RESPONSE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Member Experience and Access to Quality Care
- 690,471 COVID-19 tests covered by Medicaid
- 12,211 Members enrolled in optional COVID-19 testing group
- 1.6M Medicaid eligibility extensions conducted (776k individual cases)
- 2.1M Enrollment applications processed since 3/1/2020
- 135 Telehealth flexibilities implemented, which spanned 482 codes
- 2,618,672 Telehealth claims processed
- 272 PA & Service Limits waivers were put in place
- Total of 212,620 Pharmacy mailing and delivery Fees Paid, $568,620 paid to Providers
- 150+ Service Tickets & FMRs completed
- 203 individual flexibilities implemented across LME-MCOs
- 26 LME-MCO ILOS: 23 of which are Approved

Provider Enablement and Financial Support
- 152 Disaster applications processed
- 94 Provider closures managed & 228 negatively impacted members assisted with access to Care
- Reverification Due Dates pushed out for 8,292 Providers
- Effectuated over ~$1 Billion in rate changes supporting providers across ~210 rate FMRs
- Over $40 Million in Cares Act Funding distributed ~300 Congregate Care Providers to support COVID-19 testing
- ~$50 Million in advanced payments issued to Rural Hospitals & Long-Term Care Outbreak Providers

Authority
- 27 Waiver documents submitted to CMS; 27 approved
- 250+ Flexibilities sent to CMS; 75% Approved; CMS FAQs Follow-ups Received and reviewed: 386

Communication and Education
- 121 Provider webinars hosted with 53,941 attendees
- 163 COVID-19 Special Medicaid Bulletins published
- 143 NCTackles blasts to providers covering 164 topics
- 1,281 Inquiries received through COVID-19 Mailbox, 97% Addressed
- Since the MCC went remote:
  265,982 calls offered; 255,342 calls handled, 4% abandonment rate, 30 sec avg wait
- COVID-19 Triage Plus line enabled with CCNC, 149,975 calls received since launch

Monitoring and Evaluation
- 17 Clinical, Financial and Enrollment Dashboards developed
- 17 Telehealth uptake analysis visualizations developed
- 26 Telehealth Evaluation metrics delivered
- 34 LTSS Evaluation questions developed

Process Efficiencies and Automation
- 520+ Medicaid staff enabled to work remotely
- 242 Devices issued to support remote work

Streamlined FAQs/Inquiries Management
- 1,855 Incidents opened since 3/27
- 1,837 Incidents have been resolved

Knowledge Management
- 162 FAQs and 143 Bulletins incorporated since launch on 4/24/20

Circuit Breaker Process
- Two rounds of evaluation complete
- 386 Flexibility groups evaluated
- 44 were recommended to continue
- 68 were recommended to continue with changes

Link: https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/about-us/covid-19-guidance-and-resources
Telehealth, Telephonic, and In-person Claims Volume

12/31/18 – 03/01/2021

- Dramatic decrease in in-person visits at the outset of the pandemic
- Steep increases in telemedicine during the same period
- All visit types decrease with claims adjudication
Keeping Kids Well Program: Interventions

- Use the EHR to generate a list of children who are behind on well child care
- Utilize the Internet and social media to reach parents and families
- Utilize your staff and physical space to promote well child visits & immunizations
- Partner with local school systems to get the message out about well child care and immunizations
- Remind families across in your catchment area of the importance of well child care and immunizations via local news outlets
- Run a WCV/Immunization Promotion Month
- Incorporate well child care into acute care visits
- Develop workflow to document immunizations that were received elsewhere
- Implement group visits for well child care (Post-COVID-19 pandemic)

Link: https://www.communitycarenc.org/files/KKW/kkw_project_faq-7-31-1
Sangeeta Parikshak, PhD, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Head Start, Lead for Behavioral Health
Head Start COVID-19 Response Funds

- **CARES Act**: $750 Million has been awarded to all grantees – approximately 43% of funds have been drawn down by grantees.

- **CRRSA**: $250 Million was appropriated with FY21 Budget – will be awarded in the Spring.

- **American Rescue Plan**: An additional $1 Billion – Signed by the President March 11th, 2021.
COVID-19 & Beyond

Immediate and longer term program needs
Extended program year
Meal and Nutrition Services
Family Economic Mobility
Vaccine support
HVAC and ventilation
Staff Wellness / Mental Health Support

Additional Space
Family Support
Outdoor Spaces
Supplies
Transportation
Staff and consultants
Mental Health is Integral to Addressing COVID-19

Mental health concerns related to COVID-19:

Staff, child, and family wellness
- supportive relationships
- schedules and routines
- feelings of uncertainty or anxiety
- physical health
- social emotional development
- mental health

COVID-19 as a potential trauma:
- grief and loss
- substance use
- domestic violence
- food insecurity
- abuse and neglect
- poverty
- isolation

The National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety has training and resources for Head Start staff and families on these topics:

- Trauma-informed care and Head Start Heal
- Staff wellness
- Vaccine confidence
- Mindfulness and stress reduction
- Having difficult conversations
- Using infant and early childhood mental health consultants
- Addressing children’s challenging behaviors
- Substance use screening and recovery
Head Start Heals Campaign

Frequently Asked Questions

- Child Abuse and Neglect
- Engaging Families
- Self-Care and Stress Management
- Supporting Grief and Loss
- Supporting Staff, Families, and Children During Social Distancing
- Supporting and Understanding Trauma During COVID-19
- Talking to Children About COVID-19
- Transitioning Back to School

https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/mental-health/article/head-start-heals-campaign
**Additional Strategies Programs Used to Support Families’ and Children’s Mental Health**

- **54%** Programs reported providing mental health resources to families and children.
- **37%** Programs reported providing workshops, trainings, and/or virtual parenting classes for families.
- **36%** Programs reported providing families with access to virtual mental health consultants.
- **25%** Programs reported teachers and/or mental health consultants conducting observations in the classroom.
- **24%** Programs reported conducting activities focused on positive mental health and social-emotional development.
- **15%** Programs reported mental health consultants joining virtual classes to conduct observations and activities.

*Percentages on this page resulted from qualitatively coding mentions from open-ended questions in the COVID Addendum*
The program offers a virtual telehealth clinical care service that meets with parents privately and confidentially to offer parents counseling support. This includes therapy, mental health services, and weekly packets sent home to families with information about services available if parents were reluctant to ask. Lists of mental health clinicians in the community were also offered. Parents' primary concerns were managing a 24/7 parenting routine. Guidance and resources were provided to inform families of community agencies offering support services such as the United Way. Access to the CDC website or other information websites was offered. - 210617F2

MH Consultants create videos and stories that help children identify and organize feelings and emotions. Videos are uploaded onto the program's YouTube channel. Teachers also create referrals for children they feel may benefit from the support or due to ASQ3 and ASQ SE scores. The MH Consultant observes children during their virtual classes and offers feedback and strategies to the teachers. Currently, all support is provided virtually, by phone, and through Teams. - 211846F2
Panel Discussion
Question & Answer
Questions?

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Wrap Up
Visit CHCS.org to...

- **Download** practical resources to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of Medicaid services
- **Learn** about cutting-edge efforts to improve care for Medicaid's highest-need, highest-cost beneficiaries
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