

ECONOMIC SERVICES COMMITTEE MINUTES

June 7, 2006

The Economic Services Committee met June 7, 2006 at Wake County Department of Social Services. The sub-committees met first. At the conclusion of the sub-committee meetings, Connie Melville called all the groups together.

Geoff Santoliquido with the Division of Aging & Adult Services stated that the General Assembly is working hard. He said we have picked up 25 more slots for SA In-Home and that this program is doing well and the General Assembly sees that it is a success. He said they are looking at increasing slots again to 1500 (House Bill 2576, Senate Bill 1961). There are 72 counties on board now and he would like to see the other 28 counties ask to be enrolled in the program. He said procedures for enrolling would be the same as before. A rate increase is being looked at for Adult Home Care and would be effective October 2006. The bills would increase the SA ACH maximum monthly rate to \$1,194 (SCU rate remains at \$1,515) and to increase adult care home personal care services. (House Bill 2044, Senate Bill 1616).

Medicaid Sub-Committee Report: Sandi Morrow asked that anyone who had comments on MA-3435, Community Care of North Carolina/Carolina Access (CCNC/CA) sent out earlier this week to email them to her at: [Sandi.Morrow@ncmail.net].

It was also stated that the new policy for citizenship and identity becomes effective July 1, 2006. There are clarifications needed in the policy. Connie Melville stated that there would be an increase in cost to counties administratively because we would have to assist in verifying citizenship and identity, perhaps even have Emergency Medicaid for citizens we can't verify. The State will provide exact wording for affidavits. This was just for information purposes only and no vote required because it's mandatory.

Dora Boissy gave the Medicaid Collections Report. YTD collections for Medicaid through EPICS are \$1,760,817.48. The county incentive payments for that totaled \$322,822.99. Counties collected \$107,686.01 during May 2006 (reporting period is 04/27/06 through 05/30/06). Top collecting counties for May 2006 were Alamance (\$17,453.04), Chowan (\$14,683.23), and Davidson (\$6,158.85).

Andy Wilson stated that Senate Bill 1741 has two changes for eligibility. Rewriting transfer of resources statute & isn't sure how long that will take, and MA buy-in program under Federal Ticket To Work. Would give incentives for disabled people to work. They would pay premiums on a certain level based on their income. This would be another coverage group and would be effective July 2007.

It was asked whether pharmacies were still using Medicaid stubs and Angela Saddler reported that audit findings found they were not. There was a short discussion on why we would need to replace Medicaid cards then.

Medicaid Transportation is getting closer to verification. Charlotte hopes to send out the draft next week.

DSS – Jane Schwartz reported on Energy. Congress gave one billion the end of March. \$32 million was NC's share. The money has to be used by September 30, 2006. The recommendation was made to send out another LIEAP check to all those that received one in February this year, and that's the recommendation they went with. An announcement went out with the June Medicaid cards that said a check would go out on July 7, 2006 in the same amount of the first check. The checks, however, will be delayed and mailed on July 21, 2006 instead due to an automation issue. Another notice will go out with the July 2006 Medicaid Cards.

It was noted this additional money came with no Administrative money and there's no LIEAP staff so this check mailing recommendation was used to make it easier on counties. Jane said they would do an address matching with FSIS on all active cases. The cases that are inactive will have their checks sent to the same address as the first one. In late June the Energy System will be opened up for six days (06/23/06 – 06/30/06) to allow counties to go in and tweak any addresses that they may be aware of that have changed. Return checks this time will be handled the same as usual.

Jane said a lot more money is available to be put in the CIP program this year. There will be money put in upfront by September 30, 2006, and in the fall they will do a second allocation for the winter. The limit is still \$300. Any additional funding will go to weatherization activities in the communities.

Elva Quinn mentioned that the west gets more in their checks due to severe winters, and this time of year the east is hotter and couldn't we get more in our checks this time. Jane said that the history to having the difference in the checks was to help prevent counterfeiting if everyone got the same checks, and that there would be too much to change to do it any differently at this time.

It was asked how long counties will have to deal with returns. Jane will check on that because we will have to close out this round before the fall. Jane said a new Admin letter would come out in July about this.

It was also asked if they took out the deceased people from the mailing list. Jane said no, the check should go to the individual's estate. If the estate is closed, return the check to the State.

Jane said the Food Stamp Conference went very well and they had almost 500 people.

Sheila Dorsett gave the Program Integrity Updates for Food Stamps. The Food Stamp collections for May 2006 were \$396,216.16. The county retention from that was \$90,511.73. The YTD totals for collections are \$5,159,131.02.

Sheila said that if you have an IPV disqualification without an overpayment, you should enter an IPV claim in EPICS with a claim amount of \$1.00. Enter the disqualification and a debtor. Then key a \$1.00 AJCA "payment" to reduce the balance to zero and close the claim. Do not link a disqualification to an unsubstantiated claim. It is possible to have a disqualification without an over issuance with front end referrals, or when the amount of the claim is less than \$125.00 and is not discovered by QC, and the client is not currently participating.

She also said that if someone has been disqualified and doesn't have a valid social security number, do not enter the disqualification in EPICS. Key the IPV claim in EPICS and include the method to substantiate the IPV. Do not use all zeros for a social security number either. You will need to record the disqualification in the county's records and track it from there. Should the disqualified person move to another county in NC, notify that county of the disqualification. USDA is aware of this problem, but does not have a solution at this time.

Also, if you have debtors on a claim that have a social security number that was issued to another person, please do not enter them as a debtor in EPICS until the social security number has been changed in CNDS to all zero's or to the correct number. This prevents us from intercepting someone's tax refund that does not owe us any money. USDA is aware that every state has debtors without valid socials that are not being submitted to TOP. They do not have a solution at this time.

EPICS has a new referral type code. The code is "S" and is for the suspected IPV referrals. Use this code for your suspected IPV referrals. Continue to code known agency error and known IHE referrals as "R". By using the "S" code, you can retrieve information from Data Warehouse to help complete the DSS-8648 report once the EPICS conversion is complete. It's important to begin using the code now so the information will be in place for the DSS-8648 for the last quarter of 2006. Code all front-end referrals with a referral type "F". This is equally important if you want to use Data Warehouse in completing your DSS-8648.

Food Stamp Sub-Committee Report: Nancy Reiner stated the committee along with the Program Integrity Sub-Committee went over clarifications and rewrites to Program Integrity policy (Sections 710, 800, 805, 810, 815, 820, 825, 830, 840, 855). The sub-committees voted for the policy with the noted changes. It was also noted that the vote was not unanimous (five for, and two against). The policy will be effective August 1, 2006.

Work First Sub-Committee. Elva Quinn stated they did not have any policy. She said that QSAP is in the process of being reorganized and that it's the time of year to be thinking about biennial county Work First plans and whether to be a standard or electing county.

It was reported that there is a State Holders meeting July 24th in Greensboro and that Work First Regional meetings will be held in eight different areas throughout the State in July & August.

Elva also asked if any policy was coming out for Work First in how it involves Medicaid and the new citizenship & identity laws. Sharon Moore said we do have some policy from DMA but she can't speak on it yet, and she was hoping to get something out on it soon. Elva said we needed to know what it looks like.

Elva also said there needed to be communication between Work First, Food Stamps, and Medicaid to be sure all programs develop the same waiver that's going to be used when we start doing fishing licenses effective January 1, 2007.

Denise Shipman gave the Work First Program Integrity collections report. Total collections for April 2006 were \$146,919.23, and total collections for March 2006 were \$402,119.09. The top 5 collecting counties for April 2006 were: Mecklenburg (\$39,851.14), Guilford (\$10,064.10), Harnett (\$5,867.95), Cumberland (\$5,408.80), and Forsyth (\$5,225.66).

Executive Session, Old Business: Connie Melville introduced our new Co-Chairs for ESC. They are Betty Beasley from Cumberland County and Alvania Parker from Sampson County. Connie said that sub-committees need to get updated lists of their State people.

David Smith said that voting members should get a new statement for this next year if they are a voting designee. If you are a NCSSA voting member, that list goes to NCSSA Executive Director, Pam Lee, in Wilson to be sure dues are being paid.

Millie Brown stated that Betty Barnes has agreed to help get some reorganization back into the committee.

The minutes from last ESC meeting were read and approved.

New Business: Millie referenced an email that was sent out to committee members referencing where Sammy Haithcock was asking our committee to endorse a "Wrap Around" to Medicare Drug Benefits. After a short discussion the committee voted to give their support.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Sharon Beasley, Washington County

