**NCACDSS Advocacy Hybrid Committee Meeting**

**January 10, 2024**

**Attendees:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Korey | Fisher-Wellman | Dolly | Clayton |
| Karen | Harrington | Lynette | Byrd |
| Tyeshia | Phelps | CARLTON | PAYLOR |
| Marissa | Adams | Jessica | Adams |
| Trish | Baker | Angi | Karchmer  |
| Candice | Gobble | Dwella | Hall |
| Marcy | Mays | Denise | Romeu |
| Lori | Leggett | Dee | Hunt |
| Charles | Lycett |
| Amanda | Mcgee |
| Yvette | Smith |
| Tracie | Murphy |
| Kimberly | Irvine |
| Lynn | Fields |
| NCACDSS | NCACDSS |
| Kim  | Arnett |
| Wendy | Boone |
| Bobbie | Boyd-McConnell |
| Stacey | Presnell |
| SHANTELE | WILLIAMS |
| Debbie  | Green |
| Willie R. Smith III |
| Angela  | Jordan |
| Matthew | Hillman |
| Valerie | Phelps |
| Kristy | Perry  |
| Rebecca | Johnson |
| Kimberly  | McGuire  |
| Sharon  | Barlow |
| Glenn | Osborne |
| Laurie Potter |  |
| Kathy Smith |  |
| Annie | Murrell |
| Micah | Ennis |
| Lula Jackson |  |
| Candice | Gobble |
| Tonya | Jackson |
| Rob | Wheeler |
| Velvet | Nixon |
| Janet Payne |  |

Matthew Hillman opened and welcomed everyone to the first Advocacy Meeting of the year. He explained that the minutes for the December 2023, minutes will be provided at the February 2024, meeting and apologized for the inconvenience.

**Medicaid Expansion:**

Matthew discussed that his staff are feeling very overwhelmed due to Medicaid Expansion (ME) and asked others if they are experiencing the same issues. His agency is seeing a lot of walk-ins and supervisors are also working cases due to the increase in applications.

Patrick Betancourt stated his staff is also experiencing the same issues and their applications doubled, despite having a good plan in place. However, they did not anticipate the increase in the number of FNS applications and they are trying to address this issue as well.

Sharnese Ransome shared that the state wants to hear from counties regarding the volume of cases they are receiving since the implementation of ME. Amanda McGee stated she has been in contact with the State regarding the increase of applications and to address her concerns, as it relates to staffing and timely processing of the applications. She stated the number of applications have tripled and feels the estimated State numbers have increased about 30%. Since the launch of ME, counties have not received a lot of communication from the State even after emailing them.

Sharnese requested a copy of the letter so she too can follow up with Eva Fulcher. She will also ask Eva to forward the email and her response to the OST to ensure that they too on are the same page. Sharnese asked Directors include her on the emails to the State in the future so she too can follow up with them.

It’s apparent that the State did not anticipate the increase in the number of applications that resulted from ME in this short period of time.

**Child Care Concerns:**

Matthew opened the floor to address the childcare issues as it relates to the childcare centers closing and asked Patrick to chime in. Patrick discussed that due to the current market rate to pay childcare centers, we may experience more centers closing in the near future. He voiced concerns about the state of childcare centers in the future and rural counties and counties with limited resources may feel more of the impact than larger counties. Childcare centers cannot continue to remain open with inflation, low pay for workers and the lack of increase in the state supplement.

Matthew stated that the Advocacy will continue to focus on this and is working on establishing a committee to address the daycare concerns and the survey provided will assist us in identifying the issues.

**Social Work Field:**

Glenn Osborne discussed concerns that some states are considering allowing paraprofessionals, who do not have a college degree, experience and or the skill set to work as a social worker and perform social work duties. This can be a liability to not only the agency, but the family and employee. If the employee is scared to address the issues with family, the employee will not be able to assess the issue, which could result in them being scared to work with these families. Glenn suggested that instead of lowering the social work education and social work experience, they consider focusing on increasing salaries and training.

Several in attendance were not aware this was being considered by some states and agreed with Glenn about his concerns. Christine discussed about the importance of training and properly onboarding social workers so they are better equipped to do their job. Not all counties have funds to have a QA & Training Department and feel the state needs to assist with other trainings and not just Pre-Service.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Christine M. Dowdell Johnston County DSS Director