ECONOMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2022

Co-Chairs- Trish Baker, Davidson County

Angie Karchmer, Gaston County

Willie Smith, Gates County

Catherine Lytch, Brunswick County

*Please note the Committee Meeting time change for the current fiscal year*

*9:45 am – 11:45 am*

**DHB** Gina Hamilton

* Status of Waiver and PHE – expected to be continued through January and CMS still promising to give the state a 60-day notice before ending PHE. Counties should continue to follow all PHE guidelines.
* Auto Newborn Update – Auto Newborn program is going well. Thirty hospitals are enrolled. If you know of any hospitals or birthing centers who would be interested in participating in the program please have them contact Randy Smith or your Readiness Liaison.
* Health Choice to Medicaid (MIC 1) – NC will be merging NC Health Choice into Medicaid. The merger will occur by April 2023. If NC Fast is ready to make the change prior to April, then the transition will be sooner. Guidance will be forthcoming regarding individuals who fall into the 196%- 200% of federal poverty level category.
* Hawkins Court Order Update – The recertification policy is close to being finalized. As part of the court order, there was a May 2022 DCDL issued. The letter included the instructions for linking and delinking epass accounts. All county staff need to complete training. The state will send out a report regarding who has completed the training. This training will also become part of the certification process. As a reminder, this is part of the court order and counties need to ensure all staff have completed the training. A letter was issued on August 22, 2022 regarding form 20020. The letter provides guidance regarding when the form needs to be sent to recipients. Please note, that the form must be signed. The letter states that the change is immediate. The committee requests further clarification from the state regarding the implementation date to assist if cases are pulled for an audit.
* 0822 Administrative letter – amending letter to provide requirements for incapacitation authorization. The letter should be posted on 9/8/2022.
* AVS working on a change to make it clear how long workers need to wait before requesting information. Making the change to 7 days. Letter will be forthcoming.
* Telephonic Signature – the pilot has begun, and it is going well. Will be adding an additional 30 counties and hoping to onboard all counties by the end of the year. Ensure staff complete training and county participate in touchpoint calls.

**DAAS**  Valerie Williams

* Special Assistance update: SA parity Session Law 2022-74 HB 103 will raise the rates annually, the implementation date moved to January 2023. This will increase the rate for all SA programs and will be adjusted annually in January to coincide with the COLA. If there is not a COLA, then the rate will not increase. Working with NC Fast to have this ready in January 2023.
* Introduced new Administrator for SA – Tom Grekko

**DCDEE** Elizabeth Everette

* Initial allocations – the budget office is finalizing initial allocations and DCDEE hopes to have a final funding authorization available within the next 2 weeks.  As a state, we are at 81.64% spending coefficient for NSS after June services paid in July.   Counties should continue to add children and work their waiting lists if they have one.  DCDEE is not advising counties to start a waiting list at this time.
* Waiting list changes in NC FAST – There are several change requests with NC FAST to correct waiting list reports and functionality in NC FAST.  All of the changes should be released within the next 3 months and counties will begin to see changes to the reports.  DCDEE and NCF have already corrected some of the issues including duplicates on the reports and county workers not being able to remove children per the job aid instructions.  If anyone continues to have issues after the changes are released, DCDEE asks that they communicate that directly to Elizabeth or their TA Consultant.
* Market rates – this year’s budget bill directed DCDEE to implement rates recommended in the 2018 Market Rate Study.  DCDEE has been working with NC FAST to implement the new rates in the system and it is planned for late September.  There will be more information forthcoming as this is finalized with the development team.  DCDEE will communicate the details via DCDL/Administrative Letters and will communicate to providers as well.

**FNS** - Jequita Hicks

* Public Health Emergency
  + Still no update on PHE end date. Currently expires on October 13th. Because we did not receive a 60-day notice on August 15th, it is largely expected that the public health emergency will be extended another three months to December 13th. We will share more information as soon as we hear from our federal partners.
* Waivers
  + All waivers approved thru September 30, 2022.
  + Waiver extension request for all waivers was submitted to USDA on September 2, 2022. We are waiting for a response from USDA.
  + Emergency Allotments approved thru September 30, 2022, Will continue to be requested monthly.
    - Timing of EA issuance – as a reminder, these EA benefits will be staggered over 7-10 days from the 22nd of September.
* Tools and training to assist workers after waivers end are being developed. We have convened a training workgroup with state and county representatives, and we’ve established a timeline of 60-90 days before waivers end to roll out training specific to each waiver ending to allow county staff to focus on what is changing. This will also include some resources for Program Integrity to assist in determining claims.
* Counties are reminded that Level 1 FNS training is available and was updated when the FNS manual was updated in the winter. We want to thank the counties participating in that workgroup for their help in establishing priorities and needs based on what is happening at the county level.
* Policy Updates
  + Base Period Income: The policy was sent to counties on August 17, 2022
* Policy was updated to change the base period from the month prior to the date of application to 30 days prior to the date of application.
* Ex: Date of application is September 7, 2022. Income should be requested from August 8th until September 6th, 2022. Base period changes also apply to recertifications.
* COLA Mass Change and Expungement Changes: Be on the lookout for upcoming policy communications about the COLA adjustment and about changes to the expungement policy for FNS.
* COLA mass change occurs yearly to update gross income limits, shelter deductions, resource limits, and allotments amounts.
* SUA/BUA/TUA and SNAP updates are also included in the COLA Mass Change notice as well.
* P-EBT
* Catch-up batches for summer P-EBT are scheduled for early October for students that were not captured in the initial issuances.
* Continue to use the special conditions document that was sent to counties on August 15, 2022, via listserv for any call or questions received from households.
* Program Integrity
* Change notice was sent out to local agencies on August 31, 2022.
* Policy Sections 825 and 830 were updated to reflect updated contact information for the PI consultant, reference the new Division of child and Family Well-Being throughout the manual sections and update policy related to EBT recipient and retailer fraud.
* Additional Program Integrity policy updates are forthcoming. Change notices will be sent once changes are complete.

**LIWHAP, LIEAP, & CIP**

* State is working on getting Portal updated so that counties will not need to issue vendor checks in the future.
* Working on supplemental ARPA payment. Looking at policy to determine which groups will qualify for an extra payment. This will be the first test check run in which the state will send the payment directly. Counties will need to ensure account and provider information is correct. Counties may still have to issue payments to small vendors such as wood providers.
* Vendor Portal – moving forward with vendor portal. More information will be forthcoming.

Child Support, NC FAST, and Managed Care were unavailable. The committee chairs will request updates at the October meeting scheduled for Oct 12, 2022 at 9:45 am.