

Contact our Policy Makers about Conflict Free Case Management Changes in NYS

Background: New York State (NYS) does not currently comply with federal rules regarding “conflict free case management,” which means the same organization should not deliver both Medicaid Service Coordination (MSC) and Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) to the same person. By October 1, 2016, NYS has to submit a plan to the federal government that will bring the State into compliance. While it is unclear how and when NYS will come into compliance, numerous options have been rumored and discussed including NYS moving to a new system of service coordination which will alter the relationship of Medicaid Service Coordinators (MSCs) and the agencies that employ them. This means that families are left with an unclear message about the timing, scope, and nature of these impending changes but in the end **“it is very likely that individuals and families will have to change either their MSC provider agency or their HCBS waiver provider agency” in situations where they are currently the same provider agency. This federal requirement is in effect removing/limiting choice for individuals and families.**

Policy makers must understand the strong bond between service coordinators and families and the degree to which these ties must be protected and preserved. Whether new organizations need to be formed or any other system change needs to take place to satisfy federal rules, it is critical that families let policy makers know that they will not have their right to choose diminished. Families must be allowed to choose their MSC provider agency as well as their HCBS provider agency. Please use the sample below as a model for you to express your concerns about the proposed changes:

Dear [NAME]:

Medicaid Service Coordination is one of the most critical services to ensure access to services for myself and my family. While we understand that policy changes have not been finalized to meet the federal “conflict free” case management requirement, I am writing to seek your support and intervention to ensure that any changes to the current system don’t remove or limit my ability to choose my provider of service coordination or my provider of waiver services.

In addition to ensuring my ability to choose my provider of service coordination and waiver services, I also want to be assured that my choice of providers and access to services are not threatened by a policy decision that is detached from the real world implications that the policy will have. New York State and the Federal government need to put individuals and families ahead of bureaucratic rules that likely will cause more harm than good. We need to ensure that any contemplated transition to a revised relationship between families, individuals, waiver service providers and providers of service coordination is fully understood by all – service recipients, families, policy makers and providers.

Our Medicaid Service Coordinators currently have many responsibilities and provide services well beyond those for which they are reimbursed – they are a caring, competent group of people supporting almost 90,000 people statewide and I do not want to see the Service Coordination system weakened or broken by poor public policy. Please work with our providers and families to honor our right to choose – to choose our providers of service coordination, to choose from whom we get waiver services, and to choose when WE want to make changes to either.

We are counting on you to help make sure contemplated public policy changes on conflict free case management don’t limit the options people with disabilities and their families have.

Thank you,