

Care Transitions December Peer Hour – Michigan Hospital Transitions

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: What is the Region IV Area Agency on Aging (AAA)'s plan for returning to face-to-face visits?

Answer: Region IV Area Agency on Aging provides services based on contracts with the State Division of Medicaid and the State Unit on Aging. The Governor of Michigan has established criteria for in-person services, during the COVID-19 Pandemic. We follow the guidance set forth by the Governor and the Division of Medicaid regarding allowable in-person services. We have developed a range of contingency plans that are constantly being adjusted based on the fluid nature of the COVID-19 Pandemic and coordination with the Health Departments on vaccination implementation.

Question: What is information, referral and assistance (IR&A)?

Answer: IR&A is a core function of the No Wrong Door (NWD) System. IR&A services are provided to beneficiaries that seek assistance to address their long-term care needs and determine their options to meet these needs. When a person or their caregiver seeks assistance from our ADRC, an initial assessment is conducted to determine their needs. Based on the needs assessment, the ADRC staff provides information to the beneficiary to educate them about their long-term care options. Each person has a range of long-term care options that are specific to their personal situation. Several factors must be considered when developing a plan to address someone's long-term care needs to include paid and non-paid resources available to the person. The development of a personalized plan that incorporates the preferences of the consumer results in a person-centered plan. This person-centered plan results in the submission of referrals for eligible services. Lastly, the ADRC staff provide navigation assistance to the person and caregiver to assist with securing necessary long-term care services. Therefore, IR&A is a group of functions that describe the activities that are performed by the ADRC to meet the needs of persons that seek assistance through the NWD System.

Question: What does an IR&A team do?

Answer: The IR&A team provides direct support to beneficiaries that are seeking long-term care options. The services begin with a needs assessment. Based on the needs assessment a person-centered plan is developed. The person-centered plan uses principles that sets priorities based on the preferences of the consumer. Next, referrals are made for services and assistance to meet the long-term care needs that are established in the person-centered plan. Lastly, assistance is provided to the beneficiary and/or caregiver to facilitate securing required long-term care services, based on the priorities established in the person-centered planning process.

Question: Does the Region IV AAA run into issues with participants using Zoom?

Answer: Yes. The Region IV AAA has noted that some persons that we serve have difficulty participating in Zoom activities. This is generally because of limited awareness on how to use current technology and devices. As a result, we have instituted a Zoom training program for any person that requires assistance and are beta testing varied IT devices in the home to increase participation. The Zoom training program is prominently located on our website, a Zoom 101 class is offered via our online Campus for Creative Aging and each of our care managers have been trained to assist persons with accessing our Zoom user training program. A link to our Zoom user training program can be found here: <https://areaagencyonaging.org/front-page/aaa-covid19-info/how-to-use-zoom/>

Question: The Region IV AAA seems like a State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) agency – how have you addressed potential conflict of interests with Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug (MA PD) plans?

Answer: Yes. The Region IV AAA is an area provider of SHIP services, called MMAP [Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program] in Michigan. While we have a division that serves in the capacity to provide consumer assistance with selecting health insurance plans and understanding their benefits, we also have separate departments that have contracts to provide case management and coordinate direct services for health plans. In order to ensure that there are no perceived or indirect conflicts of interest, we have established a significant firewall between all staff and management that operate the SHIP program from the care management departments that provide services under a contract with a health plan. Next, the staff that operate the SHIP program and the staff that provide case management or direct service coordination with a health plan are not reporting to the same supervisors or management in our organizational structure. The firewall structure requires that staff and management reside in completely separate management systems to ensure that no real or perceived conflicts of interest develop. Lastly, all staff are trained annually on conflicts of interest.