Personal Care Attendant Quality

Home Care Workforce Council

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# Personal Care Attendant Quality Home Care Workforce Council

Council Meeting

General Session

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|  | August 10, 2021 | 2:00-3:30 p.m. | Zoom Conference Call |

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| coUNCIL members in attendance | Lauren Peters, Karen Shack, Christopher Hoeh, Kristen McCosh, Cindy Purcell, Tim Kunzier, Joe Tringali |
| Council members not in attendance | Ann Ackil |
|  Staff attending | Michelle Byrd |
|  chair | Lauren Peters |
| Note taker | Michelle Byrd |
| agenda setting | No issues were added to previously-issued agenda |

Lauren Peters called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

1. **Council organizational matters**

Review and approval of the minutes from the August 10, 2021 Council meeting

Cindy Purcell made a motion to approve the August 10th minutes. Karen Shack seconded the motion and the minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

1. **Executive Director’s Report**

Update on Advancing Racial Justice and Equity in the PCA Program

Lauren provided an update on the statement of work and will provide additional information at the next Council meeting.

American Rescue Plan Funding update and discussion

* Round One funding of $500 million includes investment in current program initiatives
* $100 million will provide investment in pay enhancements to home care workers including a 10% pay increase for the period of July1-December 31, 2021
* Round Two of $44 million will target initiatives underway
* Round Three will support the PCA program focusing on family supports, workforce development, delivery of care and partnerships with hospitals

Council members are encouraged to attend public stakeholder forums and time will be designated at upcoming Council meetings to provide feedback and share thoughts on funding of PCA program supports.

Chris Hoeh asked what the goal was in Round 1 funding to increase PCA hourly rate and expressed concern how this would impact the recruitment of PCAs when the increase ends December 31, 2021. Lauren noted that the funding provided immediate stabilization for all homebased providers during the pandemic by increasing wages by 10% and will continue to the end of the year. The Union also noted concerns that the wage increase may impact workers eligibility for Section 8 and SNAP benefits. Lauren noted that the current 10% increase is a workforce investment, and that Round 3 funding will be utilized for continued support. She added the increase cannot be used as bonus pay because the allocation of funds are under the purview of MassHealth, not the Council. The Council can provide input of the best strategies for using funding to support worker recruitment and retention efforts. Chris agreed the Council should focus on R&R efforts and Lauren encouraged the Council to submit longer-term proposals to fund support for workers. Karen Shack recommended using funding to focus on required and preferred training efforts for PCAs.

Sherri Hannigan reminded Council members that the ARPA funding opportunity is time-limited. Karen asked who is the decision maker for family members becoming PCAs?Sherri Hannigan stated that federal rules disallow legally responsible family members providing care as PCAs. Kristen McCosh asked if the Council could advocate to have family members as PCAs. Lauren stated that the approach of having the Council advocate for the removal of this restriction is problematic.

Budget Report

Report was provided to Council members.

1. **PCA Program Update**
2. Recruitment and Retention Update

Lisa Marschke updates on current Recruitment and Retention efforts.

* New training videos on the Mass PCA Directory are now available. The videos can be viewed at [www.MassPCADirectory.org](http://www.MassPCADirectory.org). Registered consumers on the site will receive a targeted email informing them of the available videos. The emails will be sent under banner of the Council’s electronic newsletter.
* PCA outreach efforts continue with DYS Community Program, the New England Healthcare Hub, the Mass. Workforce Association, MassHire Job Fair as well as higher educational schools including UMass Dartmouth and Fitchburg State University.
* Stakeholder Engagement efforts include on-going support to PCM skills trainers as well as encouraging increased Directory access for agency staff to assist consumers in search efforts.

Chris Hoeh asked if metrics are available on how many consumers are using the directory and the rate of job placements based on directory use. Lisa will share data with Council members.

1. MassHealth Report
	* Update on EVV implementation

Lauren provided an update on bargaining with the Union over EVV implementation and requirements. Areas for discussion include wages, hours and working conditions for PCAs. A memorandum of understanding will be finalized with the Union. One area of agreement is the creation of a sub-committee to monitor EVV implementation and roll-out. The subcommittee will meet early September and reports on their work will be submitted. The committee will consist of 2 union members, a minimum of 2 Council members as well as others as needed. Lauren will email members requesting volunteers and the group will address issues including a voucher program for PCAs to buy equipment, hardships and costs related to EVV for PCA workers, feasibility of a help line to address user problems and use of scheduled meetings for workers feed-back to MassHealth regarding EVV.

Jarred Damico announced bi-weekly stakeholder engagement meetings will be held between MassHealth, Tempus Unlimited and the software contractor to address EVV development and roll-out. Stakeholders will address training strategies and design for PCAs, consumers and PCM agency staff. A letter is being sent to consumers announcing the selection of Tempus Unlimited as the new Fiscal Intermediary for MassHealth PCA program.

Chris asked if a MassHealth mandate for Covid vaccination is planned. Lauren explained that the State can mandate healthcare worker vaccines even if the Commonwealth is not the direct employer. Chris noted that consumers as direct employers of workers can choose not to enforce the requirement. Lauren stated there is no mandate at this time.

With no other agenda items for discussion, Lauren thanked participants. Chris Hoe made a motion to adjourn, Cindy Purcell seconded the motion, and the meeting adjourned the meeting at 3:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Byrd