Personal Care Attendant Quality

Home Care Workforce Council

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# Personal Care Attendant Quality Home Care Workforce Council

Council Meeting

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|  | February 11, 2025 | 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM PM | Zoom Meeting |

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| coUNCIL members in attendance | Justin Graceffa, Chris Hoeh, Kiame Mahaniah, Kristen McCosh, Tamara Huntley, Tom Hooper, Cindy Purcell |
| Council members not in attendance | Dianna Hu |
| Council staff attending | Jocelyn Gordon |
|  chair | Kiame Mahaniah |
| Note taker | Leanne Burke |

1. **Council Organizational Matters**
2. **Review and approval of minutes from December 6, 2025 meeting [VOTE]** : Kiame called meeting to order and asked for motion to approve the minutes from the December 6, 2024 meeting. Motion made (Chris) , seconded Justin). Roll call conducted, with all members voting to approve the minutes.
3. **Workgroup Status Reports and Discussion**
* IAE Implementation Council: Justin provided status report on the IAE Implementation Council, mentioning recommendations and upcoming meetings. Chris discussed concerns about a proposal to create an entity outside the community-based system, highlighting budget constraints and the need for collaboration, and emphasized the importance of the administration working with existing systems and not creating new costs.
* PCA Program Workgroup: Kristin provided update on the PCA work group meetings, focusing on budget constraints and making the program sustainable. Potential cost-saving measures discussed, including lowering the overtime cap, adjusting meal prep, and eliminating paperwork as a billable task. Kristin also emphasized the importance of not cutting services or hours and the need for further input from the group.
	+ Discussion on Overtime Cap and Other Cost-Saving Measure
	+ Kristen explains the history of the overtime cap and the potential for lowering it to 55 or 60 hours. A member questions the savings from these measures and the potential impact on PCAs. A member expresses concerns about the effectiveness of these measures if they don't save a significant amount of money. Kristin clarified that priority has been to not cut services or hours.
* **Complex Work Group Care and Consumer Employer Mistreatment Work Group Update.** Justin provides an update on the complex care work group, noting that the first meeting is scheduled for the 26th. A member mentioned the need for further discussion and input on the work group's goals and direction.
* **Workgroup on Strategies to prevent consumer employer mistreatment:** Justin outlined plans for a meeting to discuss this issue. Members emphasize the importance of contextualizing the group's focus and inviting additional input to come up with solutions.
1. **MassHealth (MH) PCA Program Updates**
2. **EVV Data**

MH shared EVV wave 5 data (completed January 5, 2025), including the number of consumers and PCAs using EVV, and the percentage of time sheets submitted on paper. Explanation provided of the challenges faced by consumers and PCAs in using EVV, including technical issues and the need for training. Wave 6 mailings have begun. No data yet available.

* 3155 tablets have been distributed to consumers.
* 4261 mobile devices have gone out to PCAs.
* 2089 individuals reached EVV start date, 20% of time sheets received during last pay period in December were paper.
* Slide of PCA compliance presented.
* 1538 PCAs not submitting time sheets in wave 5: **What does it mean when a PCA is not submitting Timesheet**s? MH-Probably Not working. SH added that there are circumstances when timesheets are submitted in “bulk”. This is a problem with the program and MH is working on a Employer Law related FAQ that will be submitted to the Council for feedback. Union stated that many new PCAs do not initially receive training they need to submit the time sheet.
* **What is the number of CE that have been removed from the program for Non-compliance?** Less than 20 Question raised as to providing a list of those who have been removed from Program—What was the reason? Is English is their first language? What are the reasons? MH agreed to take that back and have the discussion at another time.
* PCAs that have been sanctioned for non-compliance? None. MH responded that it has been focused on the Consumer.
* Goal is to get everyone required to use EVV on EVV. MH has exemptions for: safety, victims of domestic violence or stalking, people with restraining orders in place and live in exemptions. 30% of population will be exempt. 70% will eventually be using it.
1. **EVV Issues Identified By The Council And Consumer Employers:**

**EVV Training:**

Regarding training CEs, many consumers are struggling with the online training.

* Many CEs have limited internet access so online training not easily accessible.
* Many CEs have no experience with online training, so they don't find it useful, or it is challenging to navigate (for example d/t issues w/ visual acuity or fine motor coordination). **MH response:** There is in person and live virtual training both available for CE.
* Many CEs prefer in-person training –CEs attend and in western MA we see consumers who come to the PCM EVV staff/drop-in hours for the first few payrolls because they want the hands-on support and verification that they are doing it correctly. Concern raised that this likely be something that consumers will continue to need long after the EVV funds to PCMs have been fully utilized**. MH Response:** This in-person training will continue to be available once EVV rollout is complete.

**Tempus Issues:**

* CEs are finding wait times and getting through the punch menu is a challenge particularly for consumers with more significant disabilities. Not just with Tempus but across the board. **MH Response**: EVV team said that they tested and found no issues or delays for their testers with getting the punch menus. They will ask Tempus to use voice prompting for the device to help people use it
* We heard that in wave 5 a few consumers did not receive the start packet.  **MH Response:** EVV team shared that mail a start package to every individual in the wave. There are Indivs who do not receive the packets due to a bad address. If an individual does not receive a packet, Tempus is always able to send one if they are told about it.
* CEs expressed frustration with the technical language used by call center staff –it is confusing to many and oftentimes they need help “translating.”
* CEs are being given conflicting information. For example, regarding a change in email address, CEs have been told that they must write and sign a note with the updated email then fax to Tempus. Tempus told a second CE that they could just call-in email changes. And the second CE spoke to a Tempus Trainer and learned that Tempus often trains people on a specific aspect of EVV so if someone gets moved to a different role they may not have accurate information.  **MH Response:** The EVV Team is working to develop consistency in the training across Tempus and the PCMs including shared content and use of Plain Language. New internal training materials are in the process of being developed in addition Knowledge Base (AI software) will be implemented at Tempus within EVV-the content will be prioritized first for loading into the system.

**Admin Proxy/Surrogate Concerns:**

* Many consumers who were fully capable of managing their program with paper timesheets find this more challenging with EVV and now need help to make EVV work-like an admin proxy to sustain with EVV. This scares consumers as they are giving up some of their autonomy in their program and brings up fears of things being done incorrectly and losing their program. **MH Response:** EVV is a requirement for MH and surrogates and admin proxies need to be viewed not as a resource that diminishes autonomy and the ability to self-direct but as help navigating the technology. Getting that perspective out there will protect the program and preserve the benefits.
* Finding admin proxies and surrogates is a struggle. We have heard   from consumers who have friends or family who refuse to take on this role as it is volunteer and with inflation people feel that they can't afford to volunteer time. **MH Response:** MH did not have a response to this issue but did say that they were discussing it internally.

**Technical issues:**

* It was shared with the Council that IOS phones must be upgraded to get the app; and if you don't have the update, you can't even see the Tempus website.  Many CEs require help to upgrade their phones.  Many CEs don’t know that the upgrade is required. **MH Response:** EVV team is working with Tempus to create a guide/documentation that addresses this issue and will help CE navigate this challenge.
* People who have visual impairments struggle with utilizing the app with assistive technology. Many need someone to assist rather than being able to use themselves. **MH Response:** MH stated that such people may require an admin proxy. An admin proxy’s role is to support a CE in use of EVV. Such support does not diminish the CE’s ability to self-direct.
* When consumers have multiple PCAs the app doesn't total the hours for all PCAs for the week/pay period making it difficult for consumers to be sure that they are staying within their hours. **MH Response:** EVV team states that there is no easy place to calculate and display totals and hours in the app. These are usually displayed in the portal. They will research and see if there is some additional information, they can include in the app. MH will let us know later what they find.
* Multi-Factor Authentication: consumers struggle with this process, understanding what it is and remembering their PIN. **MH Response:** Updated materials are being prepared to help CE set up and use multi factor authentication, but Geri did not know anything more. They will be happy to share that when they have more information.
* Consumers struggle with remembering emails and passwords. The Council has heard that PCMs are trying to teach CEs techniques to retain the information (e.g. keep logs etc..) -- it will be a continual issue. **MH Response:** MH was no able to offer any other additional support in this area.
* Implementation presumes no Wi-Fi issues: In western part of the state there remain many Wi-Fi issues.  Example:  consumer in Sandisfield received a home visit from skills trainer.  The consumer has Wi-Fi, but the skills trainer was there for 2 hours trying to connect and wasn't able to do so. The CE got a new router/modem and the skills trainer had to go back. The Wi-Fi situation created significant additional work for skills trainer and frustration for the consumer. **MH Response:** EVV devices can store the CE’s information and when Wi-Fi is available, info is automatically uploaded. Not having access at one point does not deter a PCA or CE from uploading info. A CM responded by saying the issue isn’t Wi-Fi it is internet. Is there an exemption under consideration for CEs who do not have secure internet access? **MH Response:** It will not be an exemption. There is no way to determine whether it is truly someone’s actual circumstances. It cannot be easily verified. There are resources in the community for discount Wi-Fi services. We can’t share specifics. There is no plan for an exemption. MH suggested having an admin proxy help.
* **Live-ins**: CE that have a live in can receive an exemption for the live-in PCA but they are receiving strikes for the backup PCAs they use once or twice a year. It is a big lift for them to get on and maintain EVV for back up PCAs they only use 20 hours/year. **MH Response:** Back up PCAs will be required to use EVV even if it is 20 hours a year.

**Additional issues raised at meeting:**

* PCA signs out a minute late-instead of 3:00 at 3:01, then they get paid till 3:15. Over the course of a year that adds up. CE needs to correct for all of these which is complicated and difficult.

**MH Response:** MH is required to pay for all time worked. MH pay for PCA services in 15-minute units. The only way they could change the way the system worked would be to build time in smaller units. They can’t do that because the MMIS system cannot absorb any more claims due to coding and system space limitations. CE and PCAs need to work together to either check out a minute early, change the time with the permission of the PCA. But changes will get the CE “dinged” after a certain number of changes made. MH understands that they have this issue. Their ability to hone in on a CE making many changes is limited at this time.

* A council member raised the additional following concerns:
* Regarding the onboarding process and delays in receiving devices, affecting the ability to use new PCAs.
* As well discusses issues with night hours being recorded as double, leading to confusion and potential overpayment. Suggestion made for a flag to remind CEs of this issue.
* A member of the public asked about the compliance of the EVV app with digital accessibility standards—including being compatible with screen readers. **MH Response:** MH was unable to confirm but was going to take the question back.
* Council member shared a personal experience with a PCA encountering ads on the EVV app, questioning the source of the ad. **MH Response:** Not sure if this is an app issue or issue with the phone and suggested a call to Tempus EVV hotline. Council member raised the issue that it is annoying to have to watch an add before being able to use app. Question raised about who is being paid for the access to run the advertisement? **MH Response:** Requested specific information from Council Member
1. **New Hire Orientation (NHO) Update**

Geri discusses the new hire orientation (NHO) and the monthly numbers of PCAs who have not completed NHO as of February 1st was 19,838. She also explained the efforts made by MH working with SEIU to communicate with PCAs to complete NHO, including consumer notice in payroll packages. She stated that new PCAs are more compliant with completing NHO compared to long-term PCAs. Tempus will do another round in February. New PCAs are doing better than those PCAs who were in the program with regard to NHO.

1. **Seniority Rate and PC ID Card Update**
* Geri provides an update on the seniority rate letters, which have been mailed out, and the second notice is in development. She also mentions that Tempus has not received any requests for review of PCA hours, and MassHealth has not received any return mail.
* Union raised concerns about the confusion caused among PCAs by a letter sent to all consumer employers, which led to an influx of calls from PCAs who had already completed NHO. She also expressed concern about the accuracy of Tempus data regarding NHO completion and the impact incorrect Tempus data could have on PCA wages.
* Geri acknowledged the need to look closely at the data to determine if there is an issue and to work with Tempest to resolve it.
* Chris suggested using pay stubs and the ledger to clearly indicate which PCAs need to complete NHO to avoid confusion. MH said it would investigate this suggestion.
* Union proposed using the EVV system as a communication tool to remind PCAs to complete NHO. MH noted that the current EVV system does not have this functionality but is open to considering it in the future.
* MH added that when addresses are incorrect and opt out of Everbridge, there is no way to communicate with them.
1. **PC ID Card Procurement and Core Story Implementation Project**
* Geri provided an update on the PC ID card procurement, which was posted on December 19, 2024, with a deadline for question submission on January 17, 2024. There were no questions received. Bid opening on February 17, 2025.
1. **CORI/SORI Implementation Project**
* MH stated thatthe CORI Implementation Project involves developing communications and a guidebook for consumer employers to navigate the process.
* She mentioned that the project is delayed until March 2025 due to the complexity of the requirements from the agency overseeing queries. Geri highlighted the importance of the guidebook, which will include instructions, sample documents, and visual aids to help consumer employers.

The meeting concluded with a formal vote to adjourn, and the council members expressed their thanks and appreciation for the updates and discussions. Chris asked for a motion to conclude the meeting, Chris motioned, and Justin seconded the motion. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Leanne Burke