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From: MCO3.0Feedback@la.gov
Sent: Monday, December 28, 2020 8:55 PM
To: MCO3.0Feedback
Subject: 2021 MCO RFP Online feedback submission notification

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The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) plans to release a Request for Proposals in Spring of 2021 for its Medicaid managed care contracts. You are invited to provide feedback on the areas of interest listed below. You may comment on one or all areas of interest. All comments will become public record and may be published at some point in the future.

Name of Individual or Organization	Nick Albares, Volunteers of America Southeast Louisiana
Email Address or Phone Number	nalbares@voasela.org
Organization Type	Provider organization
Other (please describe)	
Is your organization statewide or regional?	Regional
What regions does your organization represent based on the map below?	Region 1,Region 3,Region 9



Areas of Interest:

In developing the RFP, LDH has identified the following areas of interest that warrant further research and potential development:

- Behavioral health integration
- Child and maternal health outcome improvement
- Delivery system reform, Disaster planning and recovery
- Department of Justice settlement agreement requirements
- Fraud, waste, and abuse initiatives
- Health equity
- Increased MCO accountability

You may offer your input on these areas in the next section.

Instructions: Please offer input on any of the following areas of interest. You may provide input in as many areas as you wish, but you do not have to provide input on all of them for your feedback to be submitted.

Behavioral health integration - Louisiana Medicaid seeks to integrate financing models by contracting with MCOs that manage all physical and behavioral health services for Medicaid enrollees to decrease fragmentation of care, improve health outcomes, and reduce costs. Goals of integration include enhancing provider access to data, incentives, and tools to deliver integrated services and coordinate care across settings.

Please offer suggestions on how the MCOs can support key aspects of behavioral health and physical health integration and how they can improve integration of behavioral health and physical health care delivery for enrollees in this upcoming procurement. What specific network

development, care delivery, and care coordination services approaches should LDH consider to allow the MCOs to better meet enrollees' behavioral health needs?

Recognizing the importance of behavioral health care in a person's overall health, Louisiana Medicaid should encourage MCOs to integrate behavioral health care with physical health. In particular, Louisiana Medicaid should encourage MCOs to enter into value-based arrangements whereby MCOs share savings with behavioral health providers who meet specific metrics related to decreasing high-cost health care utilization like the Emergency Department.

Child and maternal health outcome improvement – Louisiana Medicaid provides health insurance for more than half of all pregnancies and more than three-quarters of all children in the State. The aim of the Medicaid managed care program is to improve child and maternal health outcomes.

Please offer suggestions on the key aspects of child and maternal health outcome improvement and what strategies could be used to address these aspects. (Some possible topics may include coordination and transition of care, how to increase patient engagement, how to care for special populations for both mothers and children, and suggestions for mitigating trauma and adverse social determinants of health.)

Delivery system reform – In the last couple of years Louisiana has instituted a number of reforms related to payment models and provider network structures that will improve quality of care for Medicaid managed care enrollees. These reforms include instituting incentives such as Value Based Payments, and other incentives for quality care.

Please offer suggestions on the best way to promote adoption of new payment methodologies that reward providers for the value they create as opposed to the fee-for-service methodology that rewards solely on the basis of volume of services.

Behavioral health strategies Recognizing the importance of behavioral health care in a person's overall health, Louisiana Medicaid should encourage MCOs to integrate behavioral health care with physical health. In particular, Louisiana Medicaid should encourage MCOs to enter into value-based arrangements whereby MCOs share savings with behavioral health providers who meet specific metrics related to decreasing high-cost health care utilization like the Emergency Department. Community Health Worker population health strategies Patients with multiple complex clinical and social needs can be difficult to manage at scale. Partnering with community-based non-profit organizations through a community health worker initiative is one sustainable approach to supporting complex patients. These programs offer substantial return on investment when implemented effectively. For populations with unmet social needs, CHWs present a lower-cost alternative to RN care managers to support at-risk patients. CHWs specialize in developing strong relationships with patients and can work to address patients' social determinants of health and drive chronic disease self-management. Louisiana Medicaid should encourage MCOs to pursue payment models that encourage MCOs to partner with community-based non-profit CHW initiatives as an effective workforce to meet value-based payment incentives, especially those concerning the social determinants of health. There is strong evidence that CHWs are effective in improving health outcomes for underserved and underrepresented communities. Many factors contribute to people's health status but having access to care and using preventive services are critical to narrowing the health disparities gap. CHWs can help people overcome barriers to health coverage and care by connecting them to a range of health care and social services. In this way, community health workers serve as a bridge between community members and the services they need.

Disaster planning and recovery – Disasters are a part of life in Louisiana, 2020 has proven that. Whether disease or weather-related, disasters present a serious risk to Louisiana Medicaid beneficiaries – who may be heavily impacted by public health emergencies such as COVID-19, or by tropical storms and hurricanes. In the event of such disasters, MCOs play a crucial role in meeting the health care needs of Medicaid managed care enrollees.

Please offer suggestions as to what barriers to care enrollees and providers encounter during disaster events, and what specific measures can MCOs take in the care planning process to mitigate these barriers.

DOJ settlement agreement requirements – In 2018, a Federal Department of Justice (DOJ) investigation found that the State of Louisiana (along with several other states) violated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by housing mentally ill individuals in nursing homes. Subsequently, LDH agreed to review and add services for Medicaid-eligible adults with a serious mental illness (SMI) in community-based settings under terms of an agreement to resolve the investigation. Care and service integration provided by MCOs will play a crucial part in meeting the terms of that agreement and further advancement of outcomes for this population.

Please offer suggestions for how care and services specific to the SMI-diagnosed population covered by the agreement could be developed to both avoid nursing facility placement and ensure community integration upon discharge from placement.

Fraud, waste, and abuse initiatives – Program integrity and compliance activities are meant to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent appropriately on delivering quality, necessary care and preventing fraud, waste, and abuse (FWA) in Medicaid programs. Prevention, detection, and recovery of FWA ensures resources are efficiently administered in the Medicaid managed care program. FWA initiatives are designed to strengthen the State’s Medicaid managed care program integrity and oversight capabilities.

Please offer suggestions for changes that could be made in the new MCO contract that will strengthen FWA prevention, detection, and recovery efforts.

Health equity – Health Equity is defined as a state where every person has the opportunity to attain his or her full health potential and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or other socially determined circumstances. Addressing health equity in the context of Medicaid Managed Care means focusing on improving population health by working to reduce identified disparities for Medicaid populations. Quality improvement and health equity approaches will inform and guide managed care in Louisiana. This will include identifying the key social determinants of health (SDOH) and related outcome measures such as baseline health outcome measures and targets for health improvement; measures of population health status and identification of sub-populations within the population; identification of key SDOH outcomes; and strategies for targeted interventions to reduce disparities and inequities. SDOH are the complex, integrated, and overlapping social structures and economic systems that are responsible for most health inequities. These social structures and economic systems include the social environment, physical environment, health services, and structural and societal factors.

Please offer suggestions for how LDH can require the MCOs to focus on addressing social determinants of health and other health disparities in Louisiana. How can LDH best hold the MCOs accountable for significantly improving health equity among Medicaid managed care enrollees?

Patients with multiple complex clinical and social needs can be difficult to manage at scale. Partnering with community-based non-profit organizations through a community health worker initiative is one sustainable approach to promoting health equity. CHW programs offer substantial return on investment when implemented effectively. For populations with unmet social needs, CHWs present a lower-cost alternative to RN care managers to support at-risk patients. CHWs specialize in developing strong relationships with patients and can work to address patients’ social determinants of health and drive chronic disease self-management. Louisiana Medicaid should encourage MCOs to pursue payment models that encourage MCOs to partner with community-based non-profit CHW initiatives as an effective workforce to meet value-based payment incentives, especially those concerning the social determinants of health. There is strong evidence that CHWs are effective in improving health outcomes for underserved and underrepresented communities. Many factors contribute to people’s health status but having access to care and using preventive services are critical to narrowing the health disparities gap. CHWs can help people overcome barriers to health coverage and care by connecting them to a range of health care and social services. In this way, community health workers serve as a bridge between community members and the services they need.

Increased MCO accountability – The MCO contracts specify the MCOs’ responsibilities with respect to the Medicaid managed care program. Holding the MCOs accountable for meeting the terms of the MCO contracts are important to the efficient operation of the Medicaid managed care program and ensure quality care is delivered to Medicaid managed care enrollees. While penalty provisions such as significant fines are included in the existing MCO contracts, LDH is interested in enhancing MCO accountability.

Please offer suggestions for how can LDH hold the MCOs accountable for statewide policy, operational, and financial priorities in the MCO contract.

Have feedback on an area not represented above? Please provide it below.



Volunteers of America Southeast Louisiana recommends that Louisiana Medicaid include the following areas of focus in the upcoming Request for Proposals for Managed Care Organizations:

- Behavioral health strategies that utilize value-based arrangements with providers to encourage better health and lower costs.
- Population health strategies that address social determinants of health by utilizing Community Health Workers (CHWs).

Behavioral health strategies

Recognizing the importance of behavioral health care in a person's overall health, Louisiana Medicaid should encourage MCOs to integrate behavioral health care with physical health. **In particular, Louisiana Medicaid should encourage MCOs to enter into value-based arrangements whereby MCOs share savings with behavioral health providers who meet specific metrics related to decreasing high-cost health care utilization like the Emergency Department.**

Community Health Worker population health strategies

Patients with multiple complex clinical and social needs can be difficult to manage at scale. **Partnering with community-based non-profit organizations through a community health worker initiative is one sustainable approach to supporting complex patients.** These programs offer substantial return on investment when implemented effectively. For populations with unmet social needs, CHWs present a lower-cost alternative to RN care managers to support at-risk patients.

CHWs specialize in developing strong relationships with patients and can work to address patients' social determinants of health and drive chronic disease self-management. **Louisiana Medicaid should encourage MCOs to pursue payment models that encourage MCOs to partner with community-based non-profit CHW initiatives as an effective workforce to meet value-based payment incentives, especially those concerning the social determinants of health.**

There is strong evidence that CHWs are effective in improving health outcomes for underserved and underrepresented communities. Many factors contribute to people's health status but having access to care and using preventive services are critical to narrowing the health disparities gap. CHWs can help people overcome barriers to health coverage and care by connecting them to a range of health care and social services. In this way, community health workers serve as a bridge between community members and the services they need.