

#113 URGENT UPDATE: NEED YOUR HELP ON NOW/COMP WAIVERS- proposed rates

Dearest Advocates:

Below is the advocacy alert I distributed two days ago. We really need to unite our voices on this issue! Thank you so much for those that have taken the time to speak up on the proposed rate changes for home and community based waivers – NOW and COMP.

I have been told that the following people with the State need to hear from us as well. Please consider sending your email to not only the “general email” garates@burnshealthpolicy.com but also to the following e-mails:

donald.cole@rttassociates.com; bdrollins@dhr.state.ga.us ; jdubberly@dch.ga.gov; FESHELP@dhr.state.ga.us; dmeador@dhr.state.ga.us; desjohnson@dhr.state.ga.us;

*I have been asked for more details of this advocacy effort. **Bottomline:** families were told back in 2008 when the State implemented the new waivers, that we would be a part of this cost/rate study (due to our concerns with the rates back then) **AND THIS DID NOT HAPPEN**- in particular with the self directed families. If we are to be considered a “stakeholder” in the process and valued, we must be communicated what is going on and have input into the process!*

Specifically, look at Page 2 of the GA Division of Developmental Disabilities Draft Rate Models dated 2-25-11, page 2. (NOTE: All documents are posted on: <http://www.heidijmoore.com/newsletter/index.asp>) They are proposing the following reductions: Community Access Individual (which a lot of our families who are self directed have issues with finding providers that will accept the low rate now and they are looking to reduce by 4% again), Behavioral Supports Consultation (reduction of 11.9% - try to find a provider now due to their difficult requirements to bill under this category).

Also there is the issue of implementing a “tier SIS (Support Intensity Scale)” for services based on level of need to a rate. In theory, I agree with this approach but once again the issue is how do they determine this number? The State has never been open about how these numbers are determined/developed and I assume this is just another way to reduce budgets for families, without saying this directly. Also – how will they handle children under the age of 16 yrs of age that have these waivers? I refuse to take a cut in our budget, without understand how these numbers are determined and if there is a FAIR PROCESS to dispute them!

How does this continue to be more flexible and helping us to individualize our services when we continue to have issues with finding providers/vendors that will accept those rates?

If you have already written your email, please consider sending it again to the e-mails above. If you have not written your email of concern, please do so....we need to be heard for individuals with disabilities may suffer by not getting the services they need!

On a positive note: There are some good rates proposed: Community Living Support (increase of 18.7%), Respite overnight (increase of 98.%- this is a long time over due- who is going to watch our children overnight for \$98/day?),etc.

I am concerned that it was determined to “hold harmless” the support coordinator rate of \$149.88 when the study company had determined a reduction. How can this be when all areas were evaluated and adjusted?

*There are many other service categories that I did not speak on in this email due to lack of experience, but you are the **expert** and need to research those areas as well.*

PLEASE GET INVOLVED if you have the NOW or COMP waiver. Your individual with disabilities depends on you to speak up for them. Thank you. PLEASE NOTE: Comments are due this Friday, April 1, 2011!

On a personal note, my son, Jacob, had chemotherapy yesterday is not doing well with side effects today. If I do not respond to your emails, please understand. I’m trying to continue advocacy efforts when time allows but I must put Jacob first during these difficult times.

I do request that you copy me on your emails, so I can continue to see the concerns and be able to effectively communicate those to the appropriate individuals.

United – We Will Make A Difference!

Heidi J. Moore

(Proud Mother to Jacob - 11 years old with Down syndrome & Leukemia and Jared - 9 years old)

Sorry for the late notice. I just found out about proposed rate CHANGES based on a study done by Burns & Associates for NOW/COMP disability waivers. Based on the presentation material, I have quickly reviewed...there are some positives and negatives to this proposed plan BUT there are some fundamental issues I have as parent whose child has a waiver:

Are families even considered a “stakeholders” in the process? Are families concerns taken into account in this process? **Families who are self directed seemed to have been left out of the ENTIRE PROCESS!**

Based on this study, it looks like they **ONLY** took providers input into account and **NOT** families who are self directed with the NOW/COMP waiver. Unfortunately, many of the proposed changes are a reduction to the rates we currently have and we can't find providers for those services now (i.e. behavioral consultation, community access, etc).

Note: several services have been proposed to be tiered based on consumers' Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) "levels". SIS levels are groupings of consumers with similar scores on various sections of the SIS. How is this going to be administered based on children under the age of 16 don't have SIS to begin with? Families have NEVER been told what their tier is and what it means. Clearer definition is needed before this is considered in the rate model.

There are some positive changes like an increase in the respite overnight rate which was extremely low to begin with!

BUT - This is not representative of **all** those families involved and impacted by this decision. It seems to not support individual needs and seems to be more "group" oriented based on providers only input into the process!

WE need to speak up NOW!

Comments need to be made to garates@burnshealthpolicy.com by April 1, 2011. The detailed presentations to Dept. to Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities Proposed Service Rates will be loaded on my website in the next few hours so you can see the details at <http://www.heidijmoore.com/newsletter/index.asp>

Once again, I'm sorry for the late notice. I just received this information TODAY myself. Once again, families are not being considered as a "stake holder" which is a concern I have to begin with...The process needs to CHANGE! Please take a moment to express your concerns if your child has the NOW/COMP waiver. Below is the "official letter" issues out but not to families!

BHDDAD Letter regarding rate issue for NOW/COMP Waivers:

Hello,

Since summer 2010, the Georgia Division of Developmental Disabilities has been reviewing the home and community based service rates paid to its providers. Our organization, Burns & Associates, Inc., has been assisting the Division in this process.

The process has included an August 2010 provider cost survey in which all providers were invited to participated. Based on providers' input through the survey as well as other independent research, proposed rates have been developed.

These proposed rates were released to those providers that participated in the provider cost survey during a February 23 presentation at the Division's regional office in Tucker. The following documents are now being made available for public review and comment:

- Overview Presentation of Proposed DDD Rates: the February 23 PowerPoint presentation, which provides an overview of the project, methodology and inputs used to develop the rates, and the resulting changes to the rates
- Detailed Models for Proposed DDD Rates (Feb 25 2011): the complete model and the specific factors used to determine each proposed rate
- DDD Provider Survey Results: summary of the provider cost survey as well as provider-by-provider responses to each survey question (identifying information, such as provider name, has been removed) It is B&A's intent to post these materials on our website, but technical difficulties presently prevent us from doing so. To allow providers to begin commenting now, we have attached these documents to this email. We will send another email when they have also been posted on our website.

You will note that several services have been proposed to be tiered based on consumers' Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) "levels". SIS levels are groupings of consumers with similar scores on various sections of the SIS. So that you may determine the impact of these proposed rates on your organization, we will be emailing each provider a list of the consumers who they serve and the SIS level for each. B&A expects to send those lists within the next week.

On behalf of the Division, we will be accepting comments from all interested stakeholders on the proposed rates through April 1, 2011. Comments should be addressed to garates@burnshealthpolicy.com. All comments are welcomed, but the more specific the comment, the more useful it will be. Any materials that support your position can be attached to your comment. We will be compiling the comments for the Division as well as assisting the Division in its evaluation as to whether any revision to the proposed rates should be made.

The Division will then hold another provider forum to discuss the comments received and any resulting changes, and to gather additional input. After considering stakeholder comments and making any necessary revisions to the proposed rates, the Division will finalize the rates and send them to the Department of Community Health for approval. An implementation date for the revised rates has not yet been established.

Thank you.

If you would like to receive Jacob Moore's updates or post a prayers, please go to:
<http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/prayforjacobmoore> or www.teamjacob.org. To make a donation in Jacob's honor for childhood cancer research, please go to:
<http://www.active.com/donate/jumpingforjacob>. To watch Jacob's Cancer Journey video:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=2GjPfmIZ76g

For disability information and previous newsletters, please go to www.heidijmoore.com .

"Help The Children Now, So They Can Help Themselves Later!"

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