

Newsletter #58 Medicaid Updates (NSE – NOW Waiver) – VERY IMPORTANT INFO

Dearest Advocates:

I know there has been a lot of information and questions going around regarding the implementation of the NOW and COMP waivers on November 1, 2008. Unfortunately, things have been changing so quickly, I felt uncomfortable with sending out any additional information until this point.

I must stress to you that the information I have presented in this e-mail is from my research and discussing this information with a lot of families, providers, disability organizations, as well as, the Office of DD. I am NOT giving you any legal advice. If you want legal advice, please contact an attorney. My goal is to give you the most up to date information that has been confirmed by multiple sources so you can make **INFORMED** decisions about your child's waiver. Please try to keep your questions to a minimum at this time due to the amount of time I am spending just working on the global issues to keep everyone informed.

This UPDATE is for NSE – NOW WAIVERS ONLY:

I just got confirmation today that **ALL** families that have Natural Support Enhancement (NSE) services under the old MRWP waiver you are going to be contacted **this Friday or Saturday** regarding your child's new NOW waiver from your Support Coordinator (SC). The SC will be letting you know exactly how much money is in your new Prior Authorization (PA) dated 11-1-08. Think of your PA as your budget. This is how your providers and/or Acumen (if self directed) are able to bill Medicaid for services you receive under the waiver.

What you must be **VERY** careful of is that the PA categories of service need to match what goals and services you have in your current Individual Support Plan (ISP). If you do not have a service code for that service, your provider and/or Acumen will **NOT** be able to bill for the service effective Saturday, November 1, 2008! **This is CRITICAL you understand this.**

Under the old PA system, you had one code to bill your NSE services. Under the new PA you have the following codes that possibly could be billed for service (this is what DHR calls "unbundling"):

The "CROSSWALK" from MRWP-NSE Services to NOW Services are as follows:

OLD Natural Support Enhancement Services (T2025 U4) is now broken out to:

Community Living Supports Services 15 minute (T2025 U5)

Community Living Supports Services Daily (T2025 U6)

Community Access Group Services (T2025 HQ)

Community Access Individual Services (T2025 UB)

Respite Services – 15 minutes (S5150)

Respite Services – Overnight (S5151)

Natural Support Training Services (T2025 UD)

Behavioral Supports Consultation (H2019)

I will be posting the “crosswalk” to all the NOW/COMP services on my website very soon. Also, many families receive additional codes like Specialized Medical Supplies (SMS) for diapers and wipes, etc.

Every PA will be different based on the goals and services approved in your ISP. I will not get into detail on all the different ways in which you can receive services. This is what you need to discuss with your SC ASAP after you receive notice as to what your PA reflects in the way of codes of service, \$\$, rates, etc.

I **STRONGLY** recommend you look at the manuals for the COMP and NOW Waivers. They can be found at the Georgia Health Partnership website <https://www.ghp.georgia.gov/wps/portal> , click on the provider information tab, then click to view the full list of Medicaid provider manuals. You will see the COMP and NOW manuals posted.

As many of you are aware, there are many caps on units and maximum amount spent per year per category. Example: Behavioral Supports Consultation has a cap of \$ 2,450/yr. **YOU** need to read the manual in order to understand the caps, rates, etc issues. **YOU** must be an informed parent during this transition in order to make sure your child receives their necessary supports.

Some of things you have to keep in mind when evaluating your PA are the following:

What new category of service can my current service fit into?

Where is the service being provided? Home? Community?

Is the service provided to an individual or group?

Who is going to be providing the service?

As recently as yesterday, I was told by the Office of DD that if you have a PA that does not match your need for service you need to contact your provider or SC immediately to let them know and what changes you wish to see in the revised PA. Your provider

should be able to contact the Regional office directly and work with the Operations Analyst (OA) on the changes. If you are self directed, you will need to work with your SC to make those changes. This is a short term transition process to changing PAs. In the future, all PA changes will need to go through your SC.

In addition, below is a list of “Limitations on Services in the NOW and COMP Waivers” for your review. **Medicaid WILL NOT PAY FOR THESE SERVICES.** Please note: I have already gotten a ton of e-mails on the ABA therapy. Based on my understanding right now, the NOW waiver will pay for ABA therapy but it must be in the home or community setting. They will NOT pay for ABA in the school setting any longer. Please verify this with your SC. These community and home based waivers were never intended to replace the Dept. of Education’s responsibility to provide services in the educational setting.

Once again, I realize that not everyone will be as impacted by this transition over to the new waivers but I am aware that many of us will. I will continue to work with Office of DD and other organizations to get the answers we need in order to make informed decisions. Keep you posted in the days/hours to come.

In addition, Greg Kirk had a radio show today that talked about the changes to the NOW/COMP and how they are impacting families and providers. Below is where you can find out more and become more informed and see someone else’s perspective on the changes.

I hope you find this information helpful but please confirm with your SC the information I provided to you in this email. . So many things are happening right now with the go live date this weekend; we must all take responsibility to make sure we have the latest information to make informed decisions.

Also- please remember if you want to be added to my newsletter distribution list, you must go to my website and input your e-mail address. My distribution is growing very quickly in the last few weeks and this is the only way I can manage the volume of requests. Thanks for understanding.

United... We Will Make A Difference!

Sincerely,

Heidi

(Proud Mother to Jacob - 8 yrs old with Down syndrome and Jared - 7 yrs old)

“Help the Children Now, So They Can Help Themselves Later!”

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Limitations on Services in the NOW and COMP Waivers

State Medicaid has issued policy that the following are not covered:

Supplies

- 1) Environmental control items (e.g., air conditioners, dehumidifiers, air filters or purifiers).
- 2) Comfort or convenience items.
- 3) Physical fitness items (e.g., exercise cycle, exercise treadmill).
- 4) Supplies considered experimental.
- 5) Experimental medicines, practices, or treatments.
- 6) Infant and child car seats.
- 7) Blood pressure monitors and weight scales.
- 8) Computer supplies (printers, cartridges, speakers and other supplies).
- 9) Cell phones and minutes.
- 10) Ancillary supplies for the proper functioning of non-approved devices or equipment.
- 11) Supplies for education and related services for children (i.e., private schools, Applied Behavior Analysis provided in the school, home-schooling, tutors).
- 12) Vitamins, herbal supplements, nutritional oils, and other non-nutritional supplements.

Equipment

- 1) Environmental control equipment (e.g., air conditioners, dehumidifiers, air filters or purifiers).
- 2) Comfort or convenience equipment (e.g., vibrating beds, over-the-bed trays, chair lifts).

- 3) Institutional-type equipment (e.g., cardiac or breathing monitors).
- 4) Equipment designed specifically for use by a physician and trained medical personnel (e.g., EKG monitor, oscillating bed and laboratory testing equipment).
- 5) Physical fitness equipment (e.g., exercise cycle, exercise treadmill).
- 6) Furnishing-type equipment (e.g., infant cribs).
- 7) Home security items, (e.g., alarm systems, burglar bars, security cameras, personal emergency response systems and deadbolt locks).
- 8) Elevators, chair lifts, and indoor ceiling lift systems.
- 9) Equipment considered experimental or under investigation by the Public Health Service.
- 10) Equipment associated with experimental medical practices or treatments.
- 11) Infant and child car seats.
- 12) Blood pressure monitors and weight scales.
- 13) Computers, such as desktop and personal computers.
- 14) Cell phones and minutes.
- 15) Hot tubs, spas, and whirlpool tubs.
- 16) Items that add value to a property, such as a fence.
- 17) Equipment commonly used for recreational purposes, including but not limited to bicycles, trampolines, swimming pools, swing sets, slides, stereos, radios, televisions, and MP3 players.
- 18) Equipment for education and related services by children for whom the Department of Education has primary responsibility (i.e., private schools, ABA in school, home-schooling, tutors).
- 19) Equipment replacement or repair that is necessitated by participant neglect, wrongful disposition, intentional misuse or abuse. Equipment will not be replaced due to the participant's negligence and/or abuse (e.g., a wheelchair left outside). Equipment will not be replaced before its normal life expectancy has been attained

unless supporting medical documentation of change in the physical or developmental condition of the participant.

20) Extended warranties and/or maintenance agreement.

Other Services

- 1) Educational services for children, including private school tuition, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) provided in the school, school supplies, and tutors.
- 2) Admission fees, Memberships, Subscriptions, Donations, or related items (including YMCA memberships, tickets to movies, sports events, or other recreational/leisure events).
- 3) Out of state camps.
- 4) Registration Fees, including in-state summer camps, unless participant-directed services.

(Note: Depending on the needs of the individual, the following may be covered under participant-directed: in-state summer camp programs, peer discussion and support groups, cultural programs and events, physical fitness and weight reduction programs.)

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From Greg Kirk: Additional radio information on the NOW/COMP Waiver:

I have seen a lot of activity this week concerning the implementation of the NOW and Comp waivers. I spoke about them on the show today and you may want families to be aware of the content of the show and share the link so they can get information. Over the next few weeks I would like to make the show available to anyone wanting to chime in on who the transition of the waivers has affected them. The link for the show is <http://www.contacttalkradio.com/hosts/gregkirk.htm> today's show will be posted on the site later tonight and anyone can download and listen. Tell families the show is every Thursday from 10 -11 am and anyone can call in live to talk.