Financial Alignment Initiative and the Ombudsman Program

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Duals Demonstration Ombudsman
Technical Assistance Program
What is the Financial Alignment Initiative?

- Partnership between Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and select states to improve care for dual eligible individuals and better align the financing of Medicare and Medicaid

- Two models:
  - Capitated Model
  - Managed Fee for Service Model
State Demonstration Approval Process

• To participate a State had to submit a proposal outlining its proposed approach in 2012 (26 states).

• CMS evaluated each proposal to determine whether it has met the CMS standards and conditions.

• Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place once a State proposal has met certain standards and conditions.

• For States pursuing Capitated Model, States must work with CMS to select qualified health plans that will result in a Three Way Contract.
Signed MOUs - Status

**Capitated Model**
California, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia

**Managed Fee for Service**
Colorado, Washington

**Alternative Model**
Minnesota
Support for Ombudsman Programs

- CMS provides funding to support the creation and/or expansion of ombudsman programs for beneficiaries of the Financial Alignment Initiative
- Ensure that the beneficiaries of these models have access to person-centered assistance
- Inform States, Plans, CMS, and other stakeholders regarding beneficiary experience with Plans and make systemic recommendations
Activities of an Ombudsman Program

• Empower beneficiaries and support them in resolving problems they have with their health care, behavioral health care, and long term services and supports
• Investigate and resolve beneficiary problems with Plans
• Provide systems-level analysis and recommendations
Ombudsman Characteristics

- Credibility with beneficiaries
- Free of conflict of interest
- Knowledgeable in the areas relevant to beneficiary service
- Confidential
- Protect individuals from retaliation
- Skilled in negotiation
Ombudsman Program Requirements

- Free of charge to beneficiaries
- Accessible by phone, web, and email
- Ability to provide in-person access when necessary
- Ability to provide culturally and linguistically competent services
- Compliance with HIPAA Privacy Rule and other relevant privacy laws and regulations
Duals Demo Ombudsman TA Program

- Interagency Agreement between CMS and the Administration for Community Living (ACL)
- ACL provides technical assistance to states developing ombudsman programs under the Financial Alignment Initiative
- 12 demonstration ombudsman programs
Operational Models for Ombudsman Programs

• States have flexibility in developing their demonstration ombudsman program.
  – States leveraging LTC Ombuds Program -IL, OH, SC, VA
  – States using contracted organizations - CA, CO, MA, NY, RI, MI
  – States using existing ombuds programs - TX, WA (e.g. Texas Health and Human Services Office of the Ombudsman)

• Regardless of model, all programs receiving federal funding must meet requirements in the CMS Funding Opportunity Announcement.
Duals Demonstration Ombudsman Data

- From 2014 to 2015 five operational programs
  - Served 21,122 beneficiaries
  - Identified benefit/access and enrollment/disenrollment as the most commonly reported complaint categories
  - Reached more than 31,000 individuals through outreach and educational events.
Examples of Ombudsman Practices

• Massachusetts produced a series of “Know Your Rights” videos in various languages.
• Massachusetts also trained health plan staff on disability awareness and cultural competence.
• New York created a Guide Me Tool on their website to help individuals with LTSS needs select health insurance.
• Ohio worked with demonstration plans to create magnets with the Ombudsman contact information for beneficiaries.
Unsolved problems?

MyCare Ohio Ombudsman Organization can help

Call Monday – Friday,
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
1-800-542-1874
(This call is free)

Aetna Member Services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:
1-855-364-0974 (TTY:711)  (This call is free)
For More Information

• Office of Duals Demonstration Ombudsman Technical Assistance Program
  U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Community Living
  Washington DC 20201

Website:
http://acl.gov/Programs/CDAP/ODDTAP/index.aspx
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