

Position Statement

For 2024 Session

MACSSA has an organizational priority of “Strategic Position Development” with the goal of addressing challenges and leading innovation through thoughtful analysis that incorporates fiscal implications, systemic policy concerns, and legislative strategies in the development of policy and legislative positions.

MnCHOICES Cost Shift

Proposal

Issue:
MnCHOICES cost shift

This proposal is to engage with DHS and discover how they believe they are meeting their statutory obligations in 256B.0911 subd 32. If counties determine DHS hasn't met or won't meet their obligation, we propose a sunset of the county cost share and increase in subd 33 (c) state share from 81.9 percent.

Implementation:

Minnesota Statute 256B.0911

Subd. 32. **Administrative activity.**

(a) The commissioner shall:

- (1) streamline the processes, including timelines for when assessments need to be completed;
- (2) provide the services in this section; and
- (3) implement integrated solutions to automate the business processes to the extent necessary for support plan approval, reimbursement, program planning, evaluation, and policy development.

(b) The commissioner shall work with lead agencies responsible for conducting long-term care consultation services to:

- (1) modify the MnCHOICES application and assessment policies to create efficiencies while ensuring federal compliance with medical assistance and long-term services and supports eligibility criteria; and
- (2) develop a set of measurable benchmarks sufficient to demonstrate quarterly improvement in the average time per assessment and other mutually agreed upon measures of increasing efficiency.

(c) The commissioner shall collect data on the benchmarks developed under paragraph (b) and provide to the lead agencies an annual trend analysis of the data in order to demonstrate the commissioner's compliance with the requirements of this subdivision.

Subd. 33. **Payment for long-term care consultation services.**

(a) Payments for long-term care consultation services are available to the county or counties to cover staff salaries and expenses to provide the services described in subdivision 11. The county shall employ, or contract with other agencies to employ, within the limits of available funding, sufficient personnel to provide long-term care consultation

services while meeting the state's long-term care outcomes and objectives as defined in subdivision 1.

(b) The county is accountable for meeting local objectives as approved by the commissioner in the biennial home and community-based services quality assurance plan. The county must document its compliance with the local objectives on a form provided by the commissioner.

(c) The state shall pay 100 ~~84.9~~ percent of the nonfederal share as reimbursement to the counties.

Systemic Priority/Paradigm Trend Alignment (highlight all that apply and explain why)

- **Equity:** Promote racial equity and eliminate racial disparities in the human services system for all people across the state. *(systemic priority)*
- **Workforce:** Advocate for strategies to sustain and equip the workforce, and simplify work given the forecasted labor shortages. *(systemic priority/paradigm trend)*
- **Technology:** Collaboratively seek state investment in systems transformation and modernization which must include appropriate county collaboration, oversight, and guidance. *(systemic priority/paradigm trend)*
- **Governance/Partnerships:** Co-create state/county governance that results in clear accountability, appropriate allocation of resources, stabilized service delivery, and improved outcomes for people served. *(systemic priority/paradigm trend)*
- **Resident Service:** Adapt to individual needs to support real choices *(paradigm trend)*

Operational Priority (Committee) Alignment (highlight all that apply and explain why)

Adult Services	Children's Services	Healthcare	Policy
Behavioral Health	Equity	Modernization	Self-Sufficiency

Why: MnCHOICES is an important gateway to supports for older adults and people with disabilities. This proposal pushes us toward ensuring an efficient, financially sustainable system.

Rationale/Background:

In 2017, the Minnesota Legislature approved a savings to the Department of Human Services (DHS) of \$19.3 million in FY18-19 and \$22.3 million in FY20-21 through a cost shift to counties for the administrative cost of MnCHOICES. As a result, counties are paying 18.1% of the non-Federal share of MnCHOICES costs. Counties have had to identify ways of providing access to statutorily required MnCHOICES assessments without additional staffing due to the new financial liability of the county cost share. While counties and DHS continue working together towards finding efficiencies to reduce the amount of time to administer the MnCHOICES process, it continues to be unknown if the efficiencies found will be enough to offset overall cost increases of the program related to staffing needs.

Additionally, in 2019, DHS delayed the MnCHOICES Revision which was expected to deliver efficiencies. We are currently in Phase 2 of a four-phase rollout. Managed Care Organizations (MCO) began implementation with this release. The system currently has many workarounds and fixes needed. It's unclear what, if any, time efficiencies will be realized with the new system.

While improvement to the MnCHOICES assessment process will increase efficiencies, a primary goal is an improved experience for the person receiving the assessment and increased equitable outcomes and access to services.

High-level, one paragraph description of the issue and its importance:

Barring the state taking responsibility for its system by being responsible for its costs, the concern remains that efficiencies found will not be sufficient, and there will be future attempts to shift more costs to the counties as costs continue to increase. Counties understand the assessment itself is one part of a broader system required to access a waiver program. This does not diminish the requirement for the State to adequately address any and all of those issues. A siloed approach to MA eligibility, SMRT certification and MnCHOICES/waiver policy doesn't serve the people who use these supports well. The State needs to work across division and department lines to fulfill their obligations. If time efficiencies aren't delivered, counties should be fully funded for MnCHOICES assessments.



Submitted by: Louella Kaufer, Barb Dietz, Janet Bolander

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