

Position Statement

2020

MnCHOICES: Sunset of County Cost Share and Process Efficiencies

Proposal

Issue:

In 2017 the MN Legislature booked savings of \$19.3 million in FY '18-'19 and \$22.3 million in FY '20-'21 through a cost shift to Counties. As a result, counties were paying 15.7% of the non-federal share of MnCHOICES costs previously which increased to 18.1% in July 2019. This unplanned fiscal shift to the tax burden of counties has caused disruption in the planned implementation of MnCHOICES. 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 the Counties and DHS are working together towards finding some reduction in the time to administer the MnCHOICES process, it is not known if the efficiencies found will be enough to offset overall cost increases of the program related to staffing needs. For example, in 2017, counties were notified that Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) would no longer be responsible for assessing their members for personal care assistance (PCA) and home care nursing (HCN). These assessments become the responsibility of the counties effective January 1, 2019. This shifts an approximate 4,000 assessments to the counties that were previously the responsibility of MCOs.

Implementation Strategy:

Association will seek legislative action that will require DHS to;

- 1) "Sunset" The county cost share.
- 2) Require the Commissioner to:
 - Identify the redesign of MnCHOICES 2.0 timeline as a DHS priority.
 - *Increase efficiencies and improve the experience for the person being assessed as well as the assessor.
- 3) Remove Rule 185 Case Management eligibility from the MnCHOICES process.
- 4) Develop a reassessment administrative option for Lead Agencies to validate ongoing eligibility for current Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) by review of case management documents and non-face to face contact when there is no change in service need for the person.

Elimination of the cost shift will allow MN Counties to maintain the staff and system supports needed to meet the scope of the mandated assessment services. Reduction in assessment and reassessment time frames should reduce future increased costs to the state.

* Reference: DHS Legislative Report MnCHOICES Random Moment Time Study Evaluation; DHS-7816A, 01-19, I. Executive Summary Conclusions.

Systemic Priority Alignment (check all that apply and explain why)

- Equity Service Integration Fiscal Framework

Comments:

Fiscal Framework—MnCHOICES implementation plans have been based upon the State fully sharing costs of this administrative function with the Federal government. The 2017 legislative action for a County cost share was an unplanned fiscal shift to the counties who were already incurring additional costs due to the need to hire more assessors to complete the assessment. MnCHOICES 2.0 redesign, planned for the second half of 2019, was intended to incorporate the suggestions identified by lead agencies to make the process more responsive to people being assessed and more efficient for those conducting the assessment. The estimated two year delay in utilizing this new version continues to place a burden on counties who need to hire additional staff to meet the demands of completely the lengthy assessment. The DHS Legislative Report MnCHOICES Random Moment Time Study Evaluation; DHS-7816A, 01-19, Executive Summary identified multiple programmatic inefficiencies, the need to improve the experience thus resulting in administrative cost shifts to the Counties.

Operational Priority Alignment (check all that apply and explain why)

- Behavioral Health Case Management Child Well Being Community Based Settings & Services
- Health Care Housing & Transportation Modernization Self Sufficiency

Comments:

Rationale/Background:

Counties have been invested in identifying sustainable methodologies for providing state mandated services through the local entity. Recent legislative funding change has created barriers to creating and maintaining appropriate staffing compliments to fully implement the MnCHOICES assessment and reassessment process that is sustainable at a local level going forward.

It had been anticipated that “efficiencies” identified in the MnCHOICES 2.0 operational process would allow for the accommodation of the new county cost share for this service. This appears to be unlikely due to the delay in implementation and the funding methodology needed to maintain current staff compliment to meet current assessment/reassessment demands.

State and Counties have been actively involved in identifying ways to address the efficiency issue but it is anticipated by counties that significant changes in the MnCHOICES process, eligible populations or a reduction/elimination in the actual cost share will need to occur to make the service sustainable for a majority of counties. Barring the State taking responsibility for their system by being responsible for its costs, the concern remains that efficiencies found will either not be sufficient or will not be acceptable to DHS to control costs, and there will be future attempts to shift more costs to the counties as they continue to increase.

Additional Information:



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Approved on: