

## Medicaid Policy Center — Year in Review

During our first year, the Quality Institute's Medicaid Policy Center (MPC) made significant progress in the effort to increase health care quality and access for New Jersey residents insured by Medicaid. MPC is moving recommendations from [\*Medicaid 2.0 – Blueprint for the Future\*](#) (*Blueprint*) into focused project work. Multiple *Blueprint* recommendations now form the basis of new laws passed by the state legislature and signed by Governor Phil Murphy. State health leaders have requested that the MPC now assist the state in the complex work of turning these laws into real-world policies that will make a difference in the lives of Medicaid recipients.

At the MPC, our goal is to serve as a partner and resource to the New Jersey Department of Medical Assistance and Health Services (DMAHS) and to work collaboratively toward our shared goals. Through strategic planning and quarterly meetings, the MPC has been able to identify focused areas of work and complete independent research and data analysis to move DMAHS priorities forward. The MPC also has become an established resource for community organizations, providers, payors, and the state legislature, providing unbiased information and expertise.

Below is a brief summary of our work and accomplishments of the MPC in our first year:

### Maternal and Child Health

Much of our focus has been on advancing maternal and child health initiatives spurred by the *Blueprint*. The following legislation has been signed into law and specifically impacts Medicaid recipients:

- [P.L. 2019, c.87](#). Prohibits health benefits coverage for certain non-medically indicated early elective deliveries under Medicaid program, State Health Benefits Program (SHBP), and School Employees Health Benefits Program (SEHBP).
- [P.L. 2015, c. 150](#). Medicaid coverage, pending federal approval, extended from 60 to 180 days after birth for women who would otherwise lose their coverage.
- [P.L.2019, c.85](#). Medicaid coverage of doulas.
- [P.L.2019, c.86](#). Creates a Medicaid perinatal episode of care pilot program.
- [P.L. 2019, c.88](#). Requires use of a uniform Perinatal Risk Assessment form by certain Medicaid health care providers and Managed Care Organizations.
- [P.L. 2019, c.237](#). Requires Medicaid coverage for group prenatal care services under certain circumstances.

Each of these laws will bring significant positive supports to women most at risk of maternal morbidity and mortality. These interventions offer early identification of needed social supports through the Perinatal Risk Assessment (PRA) and aid in a woman's pregnancy experience using community doulas and Centering Pregnancy group prenatal care. Additionally, the new maternity laws eliminate payment for deliveries before the 39<sup>th</sup> week of gestation that are not linked to medical necessity. The laws also extend Medicaid coverage to a full six-months in the post-partum period.

### **Maternity Episode of Care (EOC)**

One of the new laws establishes a perinatal episode of care pilot that will change how Medicaid pays for births in ways that reward the providers who follow best practices and achieve good outcomes. In order to establish the recommendations and detailed requirements of the episode of care, the MPC was named the convening organization by the state's Medicaid program and leads a team of thirty experts from around the state to create the Episode of Care.

### **Medicaid Regional Health Hubs**

The *Blueprint* recommended that the State evolve the Medicaid ACO Demonstration Project to create a program that better reflected the innovative work that the three State-certified and non-certified ACOs were doing, while continuing to support that work, with funding and data sharing, within the Medicaid program. The MPC, working closely with the Medicaid ACOs and non-certified ACOs, released a road map outlining the path forward to change the Medicaid ACOs to Regional Health Hubs (RHHs). Regional Health Hubs analyze regional health data, convene local health care entities, social service entities, local government partners, and other local non-profit partners; as well as develop strategic plans for innovation in care management and social service delivery within their designated communities. The Hubs strengthen the link between the health care system and social service system for their clients and the community. As part of the FY2020 Appropriations Act, the state will fund and share data with the three established hubs in Camden, Trenton, and Newark, and with a new hub in Patterson. We will continue to offer support to the Hubs as they work to secure legislation in the upcoming year to ensure more permanent funding and data sharing beyond a one-year cycle.

### **Eligibility Determination**

In August 2019, P.L.2019, c.246 was enacted, requiring certain improvements to the eligibility determination system for Medicaid and NJ FamilyCare. The bill was modeled on the *Blueprint* recommendations to improve the intake system for Medicaid. One key provision of the law is that performance of the entities conducting eligibility determination be measured. The law designs a system of rewards and penalties based on performance. Timely and accurate eligibility processing is necessary to ensure access to care — providers cannot be paid and will not provide services

without verification of eligibility. The MPC will support the implementation of the legislation and will help in communicating the positive impact of the law among stakeholders on a county and local level.

### **Reports and Resources**

The MPC created a number of written reports in the last year, all with the aim to educate and improve understanding of significant topics impacting Medicaid. These reports are available to the public on the MPC website and serve as a helpful resource to Quality Institute members.

Written reports include:

- [Medicaid 2.0 Impact Report](#)
- [New Jersey Governor's Full Year 2020 Budget Analysis](#)
- [Presidential Full Year 2020 Budget Analysis](#)
- [Road Map to Redesign New Jersey Medicaid ACOs to form Regional Health Hubs](#)
- [Medicaid Eligibility Trend Report](#)
- Full Year 2020 Appropriations Act Analysis

In addition to offering access to our written reports, our newly-redesigned [website](#) offers rotating facts about the State's Medicaid program, as well as monthly updates about the number of Medicaid beneficiaries by county.

In order to think beyond the lens of New Jersey, the MPC also relies upon its [Medicaid Policy Center Advisory Committee](#), which is comprised of nationally recognized experts and innovators in health care.

### **What's Happening in 2020**

As the MPC moves into its second year, the focus will be on continuing to partner with state Medicaid leaders and provide valuable expertise and assistance with projects and initiatives that better serve the approximately 1.7 million recipients of Medicaid in the state. In addition to focusing on maternal health initiatives, we also will work to improve the health of children. Specifically, we are exploring opportunities around school-based health screening and services, the impact of adverse childhood experiences, and the integration of behavioral and physical health. We also will continue to seek sustainable and ongoing sources of funding to carry forward the work of the MPC for many years to come.

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