

## Behavioral Health Provider Rate Workgroup Meeting Minutes

March 23, 2022

11:00 PM (MST) – 2:00 PM (MST)

### 1. Welcome

- Jackie Jandt with DPHHS welcomed attendees to the meeting
- Coy Jones with Guidehouse presented the agenda for the meeting and began facilitating

### 2. Update on Survey Submissions

Guidehouse presented an update on the Survey Submissions.

- Attendee: Have occupational therapists (OTs) who have their start in mental health been included in this?
  - GH: In terms of individual providers of OT, we are not surveying the entire range of OTs who would be working with Medicaid generally. We do have some waiver OT services included in the broader scope, so you will see in the data OT wages. One of the major issues for this type of service scope, is rates for OT/PT/SLP usually have to be thought about in coordination with general Medicaid rates on a state plan, because what is offered on the waiver is usually in addition to what is reimbursed by Medicaid. So we are only looking at those rates as they pertain to waiver services. We will be looking at if these therapy roles need to have a different waiver rate than the general Medicaid rate.
- Attendee: You mention "expecting additional submissions that represent an additional 20%". What happens if you don't get the data you are expecting? How long will these providers have to get the information to you?
  - GH: We have very good response rates for BH. I'm not concerned that it won't be representative, even if we don't get the additional providers. We are looking at maybe one more week before we finalize and move on. When we meet again in April we will be able to give you updated numbers on the response rates so you know where things landed.

### 3. Wage Analysis

Guidehouse presented on the Wage Analysis.

- Attendee: This is an important component of any rate setting effort to consider how we can prepare for years to come and not just what we did prior.

- GH: That's a great reminder. It's one thing to identify what recent costs you're incurring on average, but we want to understand what a competitive rate is to help sustain staff and what is the shelf life of that rate. The wage definitely won't stand as it is, we have to think about how these actuals are adjusted once we consider overtime and other shift differentials that push this typical wage upward. We also have to think about inflation, where will the economy and labor force go, and also addressing work force issues that were evident even before the pandemic began. We can't say exactly what that number is, but we do need to account for it. You bring up a great point that we need to consider what is sustainable, right now we are just discussing what is historical.
- Attendee: I absolutely agree with Matt that these wages are not ok going forward into 2022.
  - GH: We are not stating these as wage assumptions, these are just what were reported to us. We still need to compare these wages to the Bureau of Labor Statistics data to compare to the broader market, and potentially make adjustments to remain competitive within the state.
- Attendee: There are complexities with kids' services, especially when working with families, multiple homes, guardians that are complex and require a specific skillset. Provider rates may not differ that much so we need to figure out how to pay accordingly within rates that have existed.
  - GH: That's a great point.
- Attendee: Could this also be because of turnover you are seeing the lower wage for newer employees
  - GH: That's a good question that we would want to pursue – what is driving some of these changes? Are staff staying on and they are getting higher wages because of promotions, or due to high turnover but the market is changing so new staff are making more?

#### **4. Wage Trends**

Guidehouse presented on Wage Trends.

#### **5. Benefits Reporting**

Guidehouse presented on Benefits Reporting.

- Attendee: Our take-up rate would increase as wages increase because many staff are eligible for Medicaid
  - GH: No additional comment, that is an important factor to consider.

#### **6. Peer State Comparisons: Representative Service Rates**

Guidehouse presented on the Peer State Rate Comparison.

- Attendee: Are all of those states certified peer support specialists?
  - GH: Yes, they are. We tried to keep them as close as possible to the services in Montana.

## **7. Public Comment**

Guidehouse provided an opportunity for members from the general public to speak i.e., non-workgroup or non-steering committee members.

- Public Attendee: Will you have copies of the slides?
  - Jackie: I can send you copies. We haven't been posting them on the website due to ADA compliance.

**8. Next meeting of Behavioral Health workgroup will be held in-person with a virtual option. The meeting will be Tuesday, April 19, 2022 from 1-4pm MST in room number 152 of the Capital Building in Helena, MT.**

## **9. Adjournment @ 2:00 PM (MST)**

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