



Department of  
Mental Health

John R. Kasich, Governor  
Tracy J. Plouck, Director

March 26, 2013

To: Behavioral Health Stakeholders

From: Tracy J. Plouck, Director

Re: Update on Medicaid Health Homes for Ohioans with Serious & Persistent Mental Illness

I want to take this opportunity to provide you with an update on our efforts related to Health Home implementation. This has been – and continues to be – a significant priority of the Governor’s Office of Health Transformation, and we are eager to realize our goal of statewide availability of Health Homes for qualifying Ohioans. There have been many lessons learned from Phase I implementation and much effort has been invested in preparing for the phase-in of Health Homes statewide. We all share a common goal of implementing Health Homes that achieve improved outcomes for consumers and that are sustainable in the long term.

I am extremely appreciative of the work of the providers and stakeholder associations in support of this initiative. We were aware of – and supportive of – the communication that was sent by the Ohio Council to its members on March 19, 2013; in fact, we were preparing to send a similar update to the field formally communicating a number of the items included in the Ohio Council message. However, very recently we were made aware of timeframes associated with various components of the Health Home work plan that requires an adjustment to the Phase II implementation date. Specifically, the target date of July 1, 2013, which was articulated in a memo sent to the field on January 30, 2013 from Director McCarthy and me, will be shifted to October 1, 2013.

As I have stated publicly on many occasions, the development of Health Homes is a key component of Ohio’s health transformation efforts. Having talked with Director McCarthy as recently as yesterday, I can affirm that both of our departments are committed to the statewide success of this Medicaid state plan service. With that said, we are accountable to assure that there is a sustainable Health Home infrastructure moving forward, both for existing Health Home providers and for those that will seek Health Home status after October 1, 2013.

This delay in implementation should not be viewed as a sign that Health Homes are no longer being considered a critical component in the effort to integrate behavioral health care and physical health care. Health Homes are an important initiative that will be built upon in the years to come. Our department is moving forward with the activities to support the training and technical assistance needs and certification of Health Home applicants that were highlighted in the January 30 communication and we will provide regular, on-going updates to the field related to implementation activities.

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ODMH is making adjustments to the Medicaid Health Home provider application and application process. The application is being reformatted to provide specific references from the Medicaid state plan and the ODMH Health Home rule as a mechanism to offer guidance on expectations for providers that desire to become certified to provide the Medicaid Health Home Service for Medicaid beneficiaries with SPMI. We will be collecting additional information from applicants in an effort to assure Health Home service readiness prior to implementation. By mid-April, ODMH anticipates making the revised application available and will offer a series of webinars to provide additional training and guidance on different sections of the application and application process.

ODMH is currently working with the Office of Medical Assistance on a number of operational changes that will improve the Health Home statewide implementation process for October 1. These changes include: developing a phase-in approach to implementation; establishing parameters prioritizing enrollment into Health Homes within the eligible SPMI, SMI, and SED population to assure consistency with the phase-in; and re-engineering the data sharing process between the state and providers, including providing information on the front-end of the provider certification process to give providers a better understanding of consumer utilization and to assist providers with Health Home implementation and revising the rate structure. As additional information and details are developed, we will communicate with the field.

Finally, I would like to encourage providers who are interested in becoming certified to deliver Health Home services to take advantage of the training and technical assistance resources being made available by ODMH through the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, the Center for Evidence Based Practices from Case Western Reserve University, and the learning collaboratives that are being formed regionally. There are many opportunities over the next few months for providers to obtain additional information and training on behavioral and physical health care integration, select evidence based practices and participate on technical assistance coaching calls in preparation for October 1 statewide implementation. Providers can also participate in these activities in preparation for certification or as they are completing the certification application.

I understand that this revised implementation date is not the ideal, and I appreciate your on-going cooperation and partnership as we look toward October statewide implementation. If you have any questions related to this memo or Health Home implementation in general, please contact Angie Bergefurd in the Office of Health Integration at [healthhomes@mh.ohio.gov](mailto:healthhomes@mh.ohio.gov).

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