

The Issue

The DODD proposed budget for FYs 2012 -2013 recommends encouraging a 3% voluntary reduction of services to help prevent the annual “cost creep” of 1.5% historically experienced. The goal of the voluntary reduction is NOT to reduce utilization for every individual in every circumstance, nor to change every ISP.

Good Stewardship

The broader philosophy of the department continues to put emphasis on being good stewards and increasing independence—use our resources well and having the least amount of harm we can in doing so. It is vital to the financial health of the system that we contain costs where appropriate, so that we ensure long-term services and support. The voluntary reduction of utilization recommendation is an alternative to cutting provider rates.

In support of making voluntary reduction possible, DODD has several initiatives to help the DD community increase efficiencies and “utilize more for less.”:

- Adult Foster Care Model: people like it and we are encouraging providers to look at providing this
- Share service when possible
- Adding our three new services in the Individual Options Waiver: Remote Monitoring, Adult Family Living and expanded Respite Program
- ~~SELF Waiver: capped for cost but will provide flexibility~~
- ~~Combine and share provider services in the community when possible~~
- Explore ways of increasing utilization of natural supports

Meeting with Family Advocates

Communicating the Goals and Values of Voluntary Reduction

Director Martin met with representatives of family advocate organizations to discuss these goals and how best to communicate to families and individuals. The communication goal is to encourage people to consider ways they can do more with less. The communication challenges are to ensure everyone understands the long-term value behind utilizing more for less, and to avoid misperceptions that everyone should expect an across the board reduction.

Key Elements of Effective Communication with Families

The discussion raises several points about the best methods and messages to reach families effectively. These elements centered on language, DODD visibility/accessibility, multiple methods of distribution/ educating SSAs.

The advocacy representatives made one primary recommendation for communicating with families. In addition, they offered several secondary suggestions for further review and consideration.

Primary Recommendation

Conduct Town Hall meetings in various parts of the state during the month of June. The group stressed that the importance of the meetings being hosted by local organizations, as similar events have been successful in the past.

Secondary Considerations

- Educational and awareness communication should emphasize plain, personal and common language, not budget and policy terminology.
- Additional channels should be considered beyond the department newsletter and Web site. Examples raised included Town Hall meetings, e-news updates, and video.
- Consider effective ways to communicate/educate SSAs directly or frequently