



Institute for Human Development

Northern Arizona University

Results from Service Provider Forums

Objective presented to Providers:

To hear from providers about what is working for you and your agency and to gather input on how the Division can improve its service delivery system for Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS).



Background

- NAU's Institute for Human Development partnered with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) to facilitate ten provider forums, across Arizona, to solicit feedback from providers of long term services and supports (LTSS) related to services provided to persons with developmental disabilities.
- All ten provider forums were held between April 3, 2019 and May 21, 2019.
- Feedback obtained was analyzed by IHD personnel.



Information about Forums

Location	Date	Number of Attendees
Tucson	4/3/19	35
Yuma	4/9/19	8
Sunnyslope	4/15/19	20
Prescott	4/23/19	15
Mesa	4/24/19	26
West Phoenix	4/25/19	13
Flagstaff	4/30/19	19
Central Phoenix	5/8/19	12 in person; 37 via WebEx
Chandler	5/14/19	46
Surprise	5/21/19	21

Methodology

- Facilitators were assigned by IHD's Executive Director based upon availability, interest, and qualifications.
- IHD and DDD developed a PPT presentation and script to guide all forum discussions.
- IHD personnel developed and provided facilitator training, combining general information regarding the role of neutral feedback solicitation with program-specific information.
 - Seven facilitators attended the recorded training on April 1, 2019 (either in person or by Zoom teleconferencing system) (Note - two facilitators led two sessions each)
 - One facilitator viewed the training session at a later date (prior to their assigned facilitation date).

Feedback Solicitation Methodology

- All provider feedback forums were recorded by IHD staff and professionally transcribed.
- Feedback was gathered from attendees using the following four means. This allowed for flexibility and increased comfort with responding.
 1. Verbal/in-person feedback
 2. Verbal feedback solicited and recorded contemporaneously by the facilitator during the meeting on large sheets of paper (which were made digital using data entry)
 3. Note cards were provided to meeting attendees at the beginning of every session to record any written feedback (cards were collected, converted to electronic text, and included in the data analysis)
 4. An IHD email address and a DDD email address were provided to all forum attendees, for use in the provision of written feedback, which was welcomed after each session.

Feedback Analysis Methodology

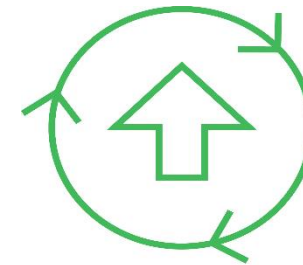
- Feedback data were scrubbed of all personally identifiable information and then analyzed by various IHD staff:
 - Trained Graduate Assistants experienced with qualitative analysis
 - Results vetted and overseen by IHD Executive Director
- Feedback data were categorized, coded, and synthesized into themes.
- Both traditional qualitative content analysis and industry-approved qualitative analysis software were used to analyze and interpret the results.

Cumulative Responses, by Question, for all 10 Forums

- What is going well with DDD LTSS?
 - **77** total responses
- What needs to be improved with DDD LTSS?
 - **205** total responses
- What are the solutions for improvement?
 - **130** total responses
- Thoughts on alternate service delivery model
 - **208** total responses
- Thoughts on Governor Ducey's executive order
 - **75** total responses



What is Going Well
with DDD LTSS?



IMPROVEMENT

What Needs to be
Improved?

Summary of Results

Themes: What is Going Well with DDD LTSS

- Options/choices available to members
 - Noted in 5 provider forums
 - Tucson, Prescott, Mesa, West Phoenix, and Flagstaff
 - 13 distinct references to the variety of options available
 - "... families have a lot of options in terms of which agency they select. There really are a lot of agencies available to families."
 - "The current plan that we have that was built by advocates and families and providers, what we enjoy right now is an amazing system of service delivery that offers flexibility. It allows choice."

Themes: What is Going Well (continued)

- Person-centered Planning system
 - Noted in 3 provider forums
 - Yuma, Prescott, and Central Phoenix
 - 6 distinct references to person-centered planning
 - “The current system of service delivery is flexible, it’s person-centered.”
 - “...in my opinion, what is going well, it [the current LTSS system] gives person centered choices, family centered choices, and also gives the members choices whether they will get services in the home, or with DTA, or group home as they desire.”

Themes: What, related to DDD LTSS, Needs to be Improved

- Financial concerns
 - Noted in all 10 provider forums
 - Tucson, Surprise, Yuma, Sunnyslope, Prescott, Mesa, West Phoenix, Central Phoenix, Flagstaff, and Chandler
 - 58 distinct references to various financial concerns
 - “It’s ludicrous what’s happening here. [Providers need] Proper funding, ultimately for the state of Arizona, if they properly fund DDD year after year after year, and bring back the rest of the 15% they took away in 2008 and 2009, maybe, just maybe, we would outperform any insurance company throughout the country or the world.”
 - 16 references to the need to increase provider reimbursement rates
 - “I would also want to just advocate for a provider and our rates. Because to hire direct care staff, ever since the minimum wage increase, that has put a significant strain on providers. And also just with the cost of living increase. So in order to keep agencies in business, I definitely would advocate that DDD – and I hope DDD advocates – for higher rates for our providers.”

Themes: What Needs to be Improved (continued)

- Communication between DDD and Providers
 - Noted in 9 provider forums
 - Tucson, Surprise, Yuma, Sunnyslope, Prescott, West Phoenix, Central Phoenix, Flagstaff, and Chandler
 - 33 distinct references to the issues with poor communication
 - 10 of these references were specific to communication issues with Support Coordinators, and the other 23 related to general communication with DDD.
 - “I think communication can always get better. Sometimes we have meetings that are changed and we never get an email or a call, and then they asked us why we missed it.”
 - “I would say maybe communication with some Support Coordinators [needs to be improved]. I have noticed even with families, there can be a lack of response and available resources.”
 - “So there needs to be better communication. You know, a month prior, ‘hey we’re upping our billing prices as of this date.’ Please make sure to give us time to update the rate book. Give us time to implement the prices into our system. Stuff like that helps providers a lot when we go to submit our billing.”

Themes: What Needs to be Improved (continued)

- Support Coordinator Turnover
 - Noted in 8 provider forums
 - Tucson, Surprise, Yuma, Sunnyslope, West Phoenix, Central Phoenix, Flagstaff, and Chandler
 - 8 distinct references to high turnover rates for support coordinators
 - "So there's been a lot of turnover, and I feel like [at] any time I could call five different Support Coordinators and get five different answers. And that's really challenging when we need a clear answer."
 - "I would say while there are really good support coordinators, there's high turnover in the support coordinator role, which leads to challenges on the provider side because there's not continuity across time, and then when we do have needs, sometimes we don't know the support coordinator's not there anymore, and so we spend a lot of time trying to track down the right person to get the needs met and addressed."

Themes: What Needs to be Improved (continued)

- Authorizations
 - Noted in 7 provider forums
 - Surprise, Prescott, Mesa, West Phoenix, Central Phoenix, Flagstaff, and Chandler
 - 11 distinct references to issues with authorizations
 - “A provider that’s been working for four years all of a sudden has to stop because we don’t know if we’re getting an authorization, and we’re being told if there’s no auth., do not provide the service.”
 - “...we’re not allowed to provide services in the absence of an authorization for service delivery, and routinely every provider ends up providing services in the absence of an auth. And there needs to be a system that gets those auths. loaded preemptively so that providers can follow the rules a little better, and get paid.”

Themes: What Needs to be Improved (continued)

- Issues with Monitoring Practices
 - Noted in 6 provider forums
 - Tucson, Surprise, Sunnyslope, Mesa, Central Phoenix, and Chandler
 - 14 distinct references to concerns about monitoring/oversight
 - “The monitors are a little bit heavy and hard, intimidating at times. We try to please DDD and do our best, but it causes some anxiety and some stress, and there’s not that unity of seeing our perspective and trying to resolve the issues. It’s just kind of, we have to put up and shut up. And we don’t get heard.”
 - “As far as the monitoring process, at least our agency, I understand that they would like to see you in action without it being planned, but they come and then they expect hours upon hours of your administrative time on very, very short notice.”

Themes: What Needs to be Improved (continued)

- Support Coordinator Training Concerns
 - Noted in 5 provider forums
 - Tucson, Surprise, Yuma, Mesa, and Central Phoenix
 - 8 distinct references to training for support coordinators
 - “In terms of training of support coordination, an area that again, becomes a repetitive challenge. And that is Support Coordinators who are coming to the ISP meeting without ever reading a progress report. Without ever reading the documentation that is being submitted. And my managers are coming back and saying, ‘oh, the Support Coordinator said they don’t have time to read it.’”
 - “...the newer support coordinators that haven’t received the training or the, you know, the experience, ...that’s when the communication falls short. [...] The old support coordinators, I can call them, they’ll answer. They reply quickly. The newer ones we have a lot more issues with. But I think it’s just because it’s a lack of experience and, you know, the training is different...”

Themes: What Needs to be Improved (continued)

- Vendor Call Process
 - Noted in 5 provider forums
 - Sunnyslope, Mesa, West Phoenix, Flagstaff, and Chandler
 - 7 distinct references to concerns with the vendor call process
 - “What I’d like to see improved with them is a lot of coordinators are not providing almost any information. You get date of birth, age, male or female, and what service they’re looking for. You may not get the cross roads, you may not get anything about them, and yet you’re being asked to make a determination.”
 - “...there needs to be an ability [with the Vendor Call system] to find out more information about the member before we commit to be able to [work with them] [...] And even to talk with them to see if it’s going to match up personality-wise and schedule-wise.”



What are the Solutions for Improvement?

Summary of Results

Themes: Solutions for Improvement

- Increased Funding
 - Noted in 6 provider forums
 - Tucson, Sunnyslope, West Phoenix, Central Phoenix, Flagstaff, and Chandler
 - 13 distinct references to increased funding as a solution to current problems
 - “...restoring the funding back to at least the 2008 levels, because the provider issue here in Flagstaff, with the minimum wage issue, is very significant, and it’s impacting our community a great deal.”
 - “We’re facing a crisis unless there is adequate funding provided for services recognizing how serious the problem is, particularly in the Phoenix area.”
 - “...we need to do something that provides funding to agencies to ensure quality care is being delivered.”
 - “The funding issue really needs to be looked at as well, because that’s a part of the overall quality of the service. That I think is a big component to what needs to be improved.”

Themes: Solutions for Improvement (continued)

- Family Education
 - Noted in 5 provider forums
 - Sunnyslope, Mesa, West Phoenix, Flagstaff, and Chandler
 - 10 distinct references to the need to educate families
 - “My real concern is that nobody’s educating families. DDD’s not educating families. They’re coming to these forums and unless there are people there to ask insightful questions, and to cause people to think differently, the questions you guys are asking are not adequate to lay a proper foundation for families to make an informed and educated comment in the stakeholder groups. And I think it’s problematic.”

Themes: Solutions for Improvement (continued)

- Provider Involvement in Decision-Making
 - Noted in 5 provider forums
 - Tucson, Mesa, Flagstaff, Central Phoenix, and Chandler
 - 10 distinct references to involving providers in the decision-making process
 - “Include providers in decision making for services needed and provided.”
 - “So at least to whatever extent possible, ask for input before decisions are made that impact us [providers].”
 - “...we still come across so many time[s] where nobody can make a decision because the right people aren’t there.”



Thoughts on Alternate Service Delivery Models - Summary of Results

Themes: Alternate Service Delivery Model

- Billing Concerns
 - Noted in 6 of the 10 provider forums
 - Sunnyslope, Prescott, Mesa, West Phoenix, Flagstaff, and Chandler
 - 12 distinct references to concerns with changes to billing procedures under alternate service delivery model.
 - “Their [MCOs] billing is terrible and challenging, and payment is terrible and challenging. It concerns me greatly. And I don’t think families understand how things could be under the MCO model.”
 - “...right now we have one entity that we bill, which is DDD...we could possibly [under the alternate model] be billing DDD, maybe three separate MCOs. From an admin point of view that is a nightmare to figure out, you know, oh, these members are United Health, these members are Mercy Care, these members are DDD. And just to keep track of that is horrible.”

Themes: Alternate Service Delivery Model (continued)

- Concerns with a strict Medical Model that MCOs operate under (as opposed to the Independence/Social/Blended Model currently in operation in Arizona)
 - Noted in 6 provider forums
 - Tucson, Yuma, Sunnyslope, Mesa, West Phoenix, and Flagstaff
 - 11 distinct negative references to the medical model (Outlier: one service provider stated that therapists will be paid more under the alternate model)
 - “MCOs operate on a medical model. I don’t think they understand the services and supports that we offer for long-term services. They are not very responsive when you come to them and talk about a member needing more services and supports.”
 - “I think one of the best things that Arizona is doing well as it relates to the services is that we’re taking Medicaid monies and not turning it into a medical model. We’re doing it to enhance people’s lives. That’s what results in us making true outcomes and making people’s lives better.”

Themes: Alternate Service Delivery Model (continued)

- Changes in Provider Reimbursement Rates
 - Noted in 6 provider forums
 - Tucson, Prescott, Mesa, West Phoenix, Flagstaff, and Chandler
 - 7 distinct references to concerns with rates decreasing for providers under this model
 - “I’m concerned about the rates when we go to contract with the health providers, with the insurance companies. We have an okay rate now. I know that insurance companies have low rates. And right now, we’re doing the best we can with what we have, and I couldn’t go any lower as a provider. And to pay our providers, our therapists, they can’t go any lower.”
 - “...I contract with United Healthcare currently to serve the EPD population [...] And they take 10% right off the top, right off the fee for service schedule. So what makes me think they’re not going to take 10% off my DDD rate schedule? It’s what they do. And it’s not right. And so I’m absolutely opposed to this. It’s a bad idea.”

Themes: Alternate Service Delivery Model (continued)

- Negative Precedents Set by Other States
 - Noted in 4 provider forums
 - Tucson, Sunnyslope, Mesa, and Flagstaff
 - 5 distinct references to limited success of this model in other states
 - “Every state that has tried this is just having all kinds of problems with it.”
 - “I spent some time looking at what’s happened in other states, and I can’t find any successes. Every state that has tried this is just having all kinds of problems with it. I think that there’s an idea that there is, for the State, that there would be some kind of economies of scale. That in the long run, there would be money to be saved. Well not only do I not believe that, but I don’t believe that this is the place that you want to try to save money. These are people’s lives. This isn’t an acute illness, this isn’t even a long term illness. This is a whole different service, and these MCOs just aren’t set up to handle that at this point.”

Themes: Alternate Service Delivery Model (continued)

- Elimination of Small Providers
 - Noted in 3 provider forums
 - Tucson, Surprise, and Chandler
 - 6 distinct references to small providers being eliminated
 - “The only way they [MCOs] can save money is to eliminate providers, cut rates, and reduce services in order to improve their return.”
 - “My concern is there’s over 500 agencies in Arizona, and we all operate at different levels of, you know, size. [...] Yeah, maybe the first year they might just give everyone a contract because of utter chaos, right. But then after that, when it’s time to renew, they may just decide to go with the larger agencies, and half of us are going to go out of business.”



Thoughts on Governor Ducey's Executive Order

Summary of Results

Themes: Responses to Governor's Executive Order

- Funding/Rate increases to compensate providers for new requirements
 - Noted in 9 provider forums
 - Tucson, Yuma, Sunnyslope, Prescott, Mesa, West Phoenix, Central Phoenix Flagstaff, and Chandler
 - 16 distinct references to the need for compensating providers
- “I would insist as a provider that every bit of it [new requirements] be 100% included in my rate. For example, if a client is never to be alone with staff, imagine the cost. Two people on every transport, two people on every awake at night. Two people bathing, two people changing, two people doing everything.”
- “I know these work groups [created after Gov.’s EO] are going to come up with all kinds of suggestions, and some of them will be implemented. And my biggest concern as a provider is that there’s going to be some suggestion or some change that’s not going to be funded. So on this list, the governor and the legislature and all the powers that are considering these suggestions need to make sure that there’s dollar signs tied to what we have to implement.”

Themes: Responses to Governor's Executive Order (continued)

- Sexual Violence Training
 - Noted in 7 provider forums
 - Yuma, Prescott, Mesa, West Phoenix, Central Phoenix Flagstaff, and Chandler
 - 11 distinct references to the need for training
 - Some advocated for training members, caregivers, and providers
 - “And so you’re teaching not just the individual themselves, but you’re also training staff, because some staff have really hard times with boundaries, because they want to be the friend, they want to be the whatever, and so you’ve got to teach staff also how to approach the individual with touch, and boundaries, and personal space and all that. Because we all work together, so it has to be not just the individual with IDD.”



Thank You!