

Carol Ferez from RCPA started the meeting with Updates. She talked about Governor Shapiro's budget. While it was not the greatest news, there will be a continuation of the enhanced rates for CPS and transportation services. Kristin Ahrens is supposed to be putting an announcement out regarding this.

Tele-medicine is now a new stand-alone service and will no longer be bundled. An example given is an organization called Station MD. Station MD, who is a member of RCPA, is trained doctors in IDD. They are available 24 hours a day and can give advice and do emergency refills. Some agencies already have a contract with them.

RCPA, PAR, Alliance, and MAX met with Lindsey Maudlin, Deputy Chief of Staff for Governor's office and Meghna Patel, Deputy Secretary of Policy and Planning (also from Governor's office), to present their united budget request and the reasoning (work force crisis, providers closing, challenges with pandemic, etc.). They explained the ask is for 430 million that would have a federal match. The hope is that additional funding will help providers to increase wages for staff.

They also discussed regulatory and policy changes that could help our system and the challenges we face. One of the examples discussed was the fact that OLT allows for rounding of units of service, while ODP does not. This leads to providers losing needed funds. They are interested in continuing this discussion.

Carol also asked if anyone was experiencing problems with SIS reassessments occurring that resulted in much lower scores. This seems to be a pattern occurring across the state right now. Since many individuals are due for the 5-year reassessment. Carol is advocating for providers to have the ability to appeal these decisions and the retroactive rate change that results in providers owing money back to ODP. People can send a brief email to Kristin with the conditions surrounding the decrease in the SIS score using their MCI # (no names). It was also mentioned that we should remind Kristin that the rates were never to be determined based on the SIS score.

Karen Jacobsen talked about the START program. Allegheny County is doing a pilot program with START (Systemic, Therapeutic, Assessment, Resources and Treatment) that will address people with complex needs / high end users. Brenda Bulkoski reported that about 1/3 of the potential pilot participants reportedly have SIS 1/1. Karen added that this demonstrates what providers have known all along. The SIS does not do a good job of capturing the complexities of people with high end behavioral healthcare needs.